Book Reviews

Political Theory


In his survey of pragmatism, Michael Bacon explains the key ideas of its leading architects, from the original nineteenth- and early twentieth-century founders to mid-century and contemporary philosophers. A contestable tradition, reflecting interactions with other philosophical influences, pragmatism includes a diverse array of major philosophers identifiable by the concepts they use rather than by their self-identification. Seeing pragmatism in this way, Bacon rejects the notion that pragmatism flourished with Pierce, James and Dewey and then declined after the Second World War, only resurfacing when Rorty published his Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature in 1979.

In the interim, Bacon shows, the analytic philosophers Quine, Sellars and Davidson appropriated pragmatist themes involving the role of language, meaning and communication to refine positivism. The neopragmatism of Rorty problematizes realism and anti-realism, attacking representationalism and advocating a romanticist aspiration for community self-creation and social progress, whereas that of Putnam finds facts and values interdependent and accountable to the real world. Continental and pragmatist themes merge in Habermas, whose acceptance of pragmatism’s vision of fallibilism, naturalism and socially constructed knowledge takes a transcendental turn, and in Bernstein’s use of Rorty, Gadamer and Habermas to reassess fallibilism and pluralism, objectivism and relativism, and democracy. Piercean themes are resurgent in Haack, whose epistemological project combines foundationalist and coherentist epistemological strategies, and in Misak, who argues that inquiry leads to truth and that truth finds confirmation by inquiry. Finally, the normative rationalist approach of Robert Brandon and the linguistic and anti-representationalist perspective of Huw Price exemplify pragmatist themes. In concluding, Bacon points to common themes, the focus on the practical, the concern to get things right, the recognition of fallibility of actions based on reason, and an inclination for meliorism.

Overall, this is a concise, reliable and lucid overview of major pragmatist thinkers. Its inclusive perspective on pragmatism, while contestable, is instructive. It brings to light ideas of old and new contributors, though one might wish for overviews of others as well, for example George Herbert Mead or Cornell West, or chapters on the recent proliferation of work going on within the traditions of Pierce, James and Dewey. Nonetheless, Bacon’s wide-ranging overview expands our understanding of the pragmatist tradition as a perspective emphasizing that humans rely on cognitive tools to mediate and reconstruct their relations with the world. Finally, its substantive achievement underscores the urgent need for a fuller exploration of the ways in which various pragmatisms provide new capacities for advancing political and social theory.

Joel Wolfe (University of Cincinnati)


This work offers a critical perspective on what has become a ‘paradigmatic issue’ of the age (p. 1). David Barnard-Wills examines the ease with which the inevitability of surveillance has become endemic in UK discourses. Using Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of empty signifiers, Barnard-Wills demonstrates that prerequisites for surveillance – necessity, legitimacy and appropriateness – are broad and can be universal in their application. Empirical evidence is structured around four reference points including oppositional discourses, to demonstrate that surveillance is not solely the prerogative of government.
Theoretically, the book is situated within a wide definition of the political: ‘relations of power and strategies by which subjects are able to contest, negotiate and modify the practices that shape their identities and conduct’ (p. 5). The author adopts a post-positivist conception of power and conceives identity as ‘a series of institutional reputations’ (p. 163). It is argued that a nexus of surveillance, identity and language has assisted the management of individuals through the medium of information and that technology is leveraged towards concerns of security and capitalism, rather than the realisation of human potential.

Because of its density in places and significant cost, the book may be most advantageous to postgraduate researchers of surveillance studies, governmentality, identity, power, British politics and discourse theory. The discourse theory chapter (pp. 61–94) is particularly self-sufficient and defines key concepts of post-Marxist discourse theory. It provides a rigorous methodological standard to draw upon. Barnard-Wills justifies the applicability of discourse analysis against its critics. The book provides guidance for those researching problematic concepts; the author examines ‘surveillance’ via its contestations to enable the concept to become identifiable.

Notwithstanding the epistemological caution that Barnard-Wills predicates (p. 90), his evidence is persuasive. While Foucault’s principal ideas such as governmentality and subjectivity are included, Barnard-Wills evidences Foucault’s concept of resistance with striking examples such as the rejection of criminal subject positions by recipients of speeding tickets (p. 130) and opposition groups contesting ID cards with decentralised professional knowledge. This is a thoughtful depiction of the salience of power/knowledge to resistance (p. 107). Finally, Barnard-Wills makes a crucial intervention by illuminating how shortcomings associated with surveillance tend to fall unevenly. Because technological ‘truth’ is favoured and human truth is denied credibility (p. 174), ‘social sorting’ by credit agencies becomes effective (p. 87). The book implicitly debunks assumptions of a binary trade-off between matters of material equality and liberty. It is a shame that this was not elaborated further.

Cherry M. Miller
(University of Birmingham)


In this monograph, John Barry, Irish Green Party politician and Reader at Queen’s University Belfast, seeks to move from a simulative politics of sustainability to one that will help make the inevitable transition to a climate-changed and carbon-constrained world desirable. Following those critics who argue that too much emphasis has been placed on justice in the abstract in contemporary liberal theory, with the result that actually existing injustices are left aside, Barry unfolds some advantages of focusing on presently existing unsustainability for shaping a politics concerned with both social and ecological issues. The resultant green republican methodology builds on the traditions of civic republicanism in thinkers like Machiavelli and the US Founding Fathers to recommend an agonistic politics centred on freedom exercised within ecological, social and psychological limits.

For Barry, such republicanism would help to precipitate a transition away from a harmful ‘business as usual’ approach that leaves the assumptions of neoclassical economics as virtual dogmatic truths in our present context. In this manner, a green republicanism would challenge the underpinnings of current unsustainable practices. In this area, for example, a neoclassical approach that seeks to maximise growth will strive for everyone to purchase a certain product and never share. However, political economy along green republican lines will encourage citizens to realise that sustainable desire can be based on ‘pleasure through’ use via cooperative sharing (as opposed to ownership). Social goods like libraries, light rail, laundromats and even mandatory sustainability service thus become part of Barry’s method for addressing presently existing unsustainability.

Barry certainly has a point. Often today it seems that politicians of all stripes in liberal democracies are claiming a sustainability-styled moral high ground while failing adequately to address a myriad of difficult issues that fall under the rubric of actually existing unsustainability. The question here is one of emphasis. As Barry notes with reference to the writings of Václav Havel, it is important that dominant ways of thinking do not limit moral horizons or images of possible

The history of political thought is bound to its defining historical context. This contention, so frequently affirmed that it threatens to collapse into a mere platitude, does not necessarily commit one to the severer strictures of the Cambridge School, but merely suggests, with some justification, that we must seek to base exegesis on sound historical foundations.

There are a number of political thinkers, however, whose thought seems to strain this otherwise worthy maxim, in a manner that can lead to either unusual insight or disabling anachronism. Hannah Arendt is one of these thinkers. The challenge of simultaneously doing justice to historical context and gleaning insights of contemporary significance is especially acute in Arendt’s case, since her work demands a willingness on the part of her interpreters to walk a tightrope between historical context and philosophical insight.

It is one of the great merits of Finn Bowring’s study that he manages to negotiate the myriad pitfalls of both perspectives. Although written as an introduction to Arendt’s thought – and arranged accordingly, with each chapter exploring a different aspect of her work, ranging from the spectre of modernity to feminist thought – Bowring manages to explore the grounds of Arendt’s work – its historically mediated character, inseparable from her biography – and its significance for contemporary debates about the fate of the political, in the broadest sense of that often treacherous term.

Given his aim of highlighting the importance of Arendt’s thought for the social sciences, while remaining alive to its historically grounded lacunae, Bowring’s thoughtful reading of her work in relation to other influential thinkers, including Weber and Foucault, who also grappled with the inherently ambiguous ‘modernity problem’, is especially welcome and undeniably acute. While its introductory character defines its style and inflects its scope, Bowring’s exploration of Arendt’s work, at once historically nuanced and philosophically engaging, manages to rise above the limitations of its form. In the same manner that it traverses the historical and the philosophical, without losing sight of the centrality of either, his study achieves its twinned aims: unveiling the continued vitality of Arendt’s thought for the social sciences – a challenging enterprise in its own right – while also, in the same breath, providing an incisive interpretation of her many original contributions to social and political philosophy.

Mark Bode
(University of Adelaide)


This collection of Michael Shapiro’s work is one of three books in Terrell Carver and Samuel Chambers’ series ‘Routledge Innovators in Political Theory’ and, like the other two, it presents a range of work from an author they view as pivotal to the canon of political theory. This fascinating collection covering the issues of discourse, culture and violence is presented by the editors as a selection of Shapiro’s key ideas about the vast range of sources that can be discussed and dissected in the study of political philosophy. In the introduction Carver and Chambers pay homage to Shapiro’s considerable success in demonstrating an interdisciplinary approach across his large body of published work. This book provides an interesting starting point for students hoping to become better acquainted with the sometimes ground-breaking works of Shapiro.

The first of the reprinted Shapiro texts, ‘Metaphor in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences’, introduces the reader to a number of different approaches to discourse analysis and considers the role of metaphor in the discipline of political theory. His inclusion of hermeneutics, phenomenology, empiricism, linguistic philosophy and post-structuralism covers a range of ontologies and discusses the key thinkers in each area. This is a useful article for anyone looking into discourse theory and makes for an engaging opener to a

Christopher Hrynkow
(University of Saskatchewan)
fascinating collection of essays. Shapiro is well known not only for his work on language and discourse but also for his use of alternative sources as considerations for practitioners of political theory and his studies of philosophical ideas and concerns in contemporary culture. To represent this in the selection of texts Carver and Chambers have included his essay ‘Manning the Frontiers: The Politics of (Human) Nature in Blade Runner’, which provides a detailed consideration of both Philip K. Dick’s story and Ridley Scott’s film as a way of considering the boundaries between the human/animal distinction and Adam Smith’s assertion of the importance of empathy.

Shapiro’s work is not in any way an easy read and students approaching his texts should be aware of the challenging nature of his publications. However, this well put together collection provides more than simply an introduction to his work and would be well worth consideration as key reading on courses in which culture, violence or discourse play a fundamental role.

Gemma Bird
(University of Sheffield)


Claudio Corradetti sets out in his book to accomplish three things: a reconstruction of the historical and philosophical tradition of human rights; a discussion of the validity of human rights; and a discussion of the relationship between human rights and democracy. To that end, he recruits a number of the most important thinkers working in the field today.

Two provisos are in order at this point. First, Corradetti explicitly rejects natural law accounts (presumably in the form of those that motivated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) as a useful justificatory starting point for discussion of human rights. Second, Corradetti’s selection of authors does not encompass all philosophical traditions today. It would best be described as a selection of thinkers working in the continental tradition (under-represented, for instance, would be Anglo-American thinkers such as Raz, Beitz, etc.). In fact, other than David Reidy’s survey article and Rainer Forst’s article on the right to interpersonal justification as a foundation for human rights, prominent thinkers in the Anglo-American tradition are less represented than the title, or Corradetti’s introduction, might suggest.

These comments should not be taken necessarily as criticism of the book. Rather, Corradetti has assembled an impressive collection of writings on human rights from thinkers inspired by continental philosophers (most notably, the work of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas – who himself contributes an article on the relationship between dignity and human rights). The collection serves as a useful introduction for scholars interested in the emerging European jurisprudence on human rights.

The book begins with a discussion of the origins of human rights by Jeffrey Flynn, Reidy’s aforementioned article and a piece by William Scheuerman arguing that the many contemporary traditions in human rights are a great deal more radical than previously thought. In the second section, the book builds on the genealogical work of the first section, developing an argument that the justification for human rights should be found in political, moral or anthropological claims of equal citizenship.

In the third and more innovative section, the book considers the question of whether or not there is a human right to democracy. The section begins with a piece by Seyla Benhabib, arguing that there is a basic right to interpersonal justification that is best understood, against Joshua Cohen’s argument to the contrary, as a right to democracy.

The other articles in the section then discuss ways in which this right to democracy might be cashed out in an increasingly international world (at the level of the EU, for instance) or in the face of new emerging technologies.

Kevin W. Gray
(American University of Sharjah, UAE)


Leadership Matters is a comprehensive study with paradox as its central theme. The authors hope to unpack this sufficiently so that its ‘power’ can be ‘unlocked’ and ‘unleashed’ (p. 27). I do not think this hope is realised but (paradoxically) this is because they
do such an excellent job of developing their idea. Paradox, they maintain, is inherent in leading and bound to show itself anew in each specific and contextual locale where leadership occurs. This inevitably leads to a contingent and highly situational take on the subject which is resistant to the performative treatment they seem to be attempting. In this attempt, however, something very valuable is produced: a vital case for appreciating the genuine contradictions of leadership in action. That this fulfils the more modest goal of preparedness through enhanced understanding makes it no less interesting or enabling.

The opening chapters cover the paradoxes and definitions of leadership, respectively. Subsequently the book is structured as a learned tour examining leadership across different fields. These are fields of life as opposed to fields of study per se. There are chapters titled ‘What Hollywood Can Teach Us about Leadership’ and ‘Leadership as a Performing Art’. Three chapters are devoted to the ‘Classics’, so the book spans eras and does so with remarkable erudition. The chapter on ‘What Politics Can Teach Us about Leadership’ is impressive. Politics is where the difficult dialectic of leadership is played out most publicly and controversially. This often happens with the hindrance rather than help of a public less well versed in political responsibilities than in our ability to catcall towards those who have chosen that occupation, which is ‘among the hardest professions’ (p. 195). Although it does not entirely characterise their world view, not everyone will embrace the politically realist stance the book sometimes adopts. The book may also be criticised for being too ‘Americentric’, yet the relevance of cultural context to leadership is emphasised repeatedly throughout. The value of this book is significant. Its nuanced depth and sophistication are necessary and on the whole it is fair to plural perspectives. Nowhere is this better on show than in the following passage, worth quoting in full as it captures the spirit if not quite the intent with which the book is presented: ‘Leadership will always mean different things to different people. For most of us it is an evocative word rich in positive meaning, as in empowerment and liberation. Yet for others it connotes manipulation, deception, intimidation, or coercion. And everyone is partly right’ (p. 26).

Richard Cotter
(National University of Ireland, Maynooth)


The aim of this book is to elaborate on the project of phronetic social science, which was first introduced in Bent Flyvbjerg’s Making Social Science Matter, published in 2001. Flyvbjerg’s argument was that ‘as the social sciences study human interactions that involve human consciousness, volition, power and reflexivity, attempts to build generalizable, predictive models such as those for the natural world are misplaced and even futile’ (p. 1). Indeed, something different was needed; Aristotle’s concept of phronesis – ‘practical wisdom on how to address and act on social problems in a particular context’ (p. 1), was expanded to include a rigorous analysis of power and presented as the solution. Nonetheless, while the theoretical argument was convincing, followers and critics alike were pointing to a lack of illustrative case studies and asking: how is phronesis supposed to be applied? As an answer to this question, the book ‘responds with cases demonstrating specific instances where researchers have actively worked to implement a phronetic social science, that is, phronesis used to deliberate and act in relation to substantive issues in social science and policy’ (p. 3).

The book is divided into two parts: while the first four chapters provide a theoretical context, the remaining eight chapters offer a set of diverse disciplinary case studies – all aiming to demonstrate what applied phronesis entails. As such, the book adds two interesting developments to the phronetic project: what it means to be a phronetic researcher and the concept of ‘tension points’, introduced in Flyvbjerg’s own chapter. As for the latter, tension points are ‘power relations (that are) particularly susceptible to problematisation and thus to change, because they are fought with dubious practices, contestable knowledge, and potential conflict’ (p. 100). Such problematisation of praxis is exactly the strategy phronetic researchers adopt in order to challenge existing practices and to replace them with new and better ones. Being a social scientist is about process – contributing to real world change – not simply publishing books. Exemplified by the case studies, in which each of the authors describes their conduct in relation to the process of making their social science matter, the book
offers a comprehensive idea of what it means to be a phronetic researcher.

Overall the book succeeds in what it sets out to do. The combination of the concern for ‘tension points’ and guidance on what it entails to be a phronetic social scientist equals a strong case for conducting real social science.

Andreas Aagaard Nøhr
(Aberystwyth University)


Paul Gilbert aims to ‘join the assault on the politics of cultural identity’ (p. 13), which he thinks has ‘problems and deceits’ and is ‘in several respects morally pernicious’ (p. 14). The author’s attention is focused mainly on what he takes to be the foundational philosophical claims of multiculturalism. On his account, contemporary multiculturalists have inherited – seemingly en bloc – a Herderian thesis about the metaphysics of cultural identity. But this view is mistaken, Gilbert argues, because cultural identity is not psychologically necessary, unitary or deep. Rather, cultural identity is a diffuse and surface-level political phenomenon, which emerges from specific circumstances and is used to support particular political claims.

Gilbert’s most stimulating thesis is that ‘political expressions of identity stem from external and contingent constraints’ (p. 67). He argues that cultural identity itself is a product of circumstance – often ‘a response to a specific sort of insecurity’ (p. 90) – and does not depend on anything like a deep Herderian foundation or unity. Although the Herder–multiculturalism linkage has been well played out in the literature, Gilbert argues, because cultural identity is not psychologically necessary, unitary or deep. Rather, cultural identity is a diffuse and surface-level political phenomenon, which emerges from specific circumstances and is used to support particular political claims.

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Theorizing Power is a largely successful endeavour. However, some readers may find the attempt to distil half a millennium of theory into a slim volume too ambitious. In weaving together so many strands of intellectual history the treatment of some authors can be underdeveloped. The historical analysis of Hobbes, for example, does not address the debate between him and republicans such as James Harrington (pp. 45–8). This is further complicated by the oversight of contemporary neo-republicans, such as Philip Pettit. Obviously, there is only so much one can do in any single work, but given that both historical and contemporary republican theorists have written on the distinction between dominating and non-dominating power, as well as how power can be made legitimate, it seems directly relevant to Hearn’s project and is a curious omission. Nevertheless, Theorizing Power is an admirable work. It has clarity in its prose that makes somewhat impenetrable authors like Bourdieu accessible for students and those uninitiated in the higher mysteries of continental theory. It also provides a conceptual framework for analysing contemporary power relations which other academics may find quite useful in their research.

Gwilym David Blunt
(University College London)


There are not enough theoretical books on ideologies in the field of international relations; this welcome addition, at the intersection of political science and the history of ideologies, is Alex Hybel’s sixth book, appearing in the book series ‘Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics’.

The concept of ‘ideology’ is defined and conceptualised in many ways in the opening pages (see pp. 8–13). One simple definition could be kept tentatively as the means to express ‘values, beliefs, and ideas’ (p. 1). The possible uses of ideology by political leaders can be numerous, including ‘to create a political community’, to ‘transform a political community into an agent in the form of an empire or state’, validating ‘the use of violence’, etc. (p. 1). From the start, Hybel links ‘ideology’ with ‘power’ because both are ‘interconnected’, although he admits these two concepts are not synonymous (p. 9).

The seven chapters revisit about two millennia of world history under the spectrum of ideologies, from late antiquity to the Crusades, and further. The insistence on religions (Christianity, Confucianism, Islam) is central because these strong ideologies ‘stood firm against adaptation’ (p. 201). But even religions are conceptualised here in political terms: for example, Confucianism is an ideology that ‘objected to the idea of enlarging the empire’s material wealth via trade and the conquest of distant territories’ (p. 204). About half of the book concentrates on the period prior to 1900; the second half focuses on the twentieth century and more recent years. However, the first 100 pages provide the seeds of what is to follow, as the author demonstrates how new ideologies can emerge and be catalysed by nationalism, as in France during the Napoleonic wars (p. 74).

Every chapter is interesting and original; the sources and documentation used are impressive in number and quality. While the central parts discuss various systems of ‘conflicting ideologies’ that characterised the twentieth century (fascism, communism and their ‘anti’ counterparts), chapter 6 highlights ‘the resurgence of forgotten ideologies’, especially in Africa, after the end of the Cold War. Various cases appearing after 1991 are discussed, such as some new forms of nationalism, ethnonationalism and fundamentalism in Rwanda, Congo, Nigeria and Ghana (p. 173).

Because of its efficient interdisciplinary approach, The Power of Ideology is an important book, essential for university libraries, and will be instructive for advanced undergraduates in history, political philosophy and international relations.

Yves Laberge
(University of Rennes)


Is the concept of ‘charisma’ still a meaningful category for understanding the politics of an age characterised ever more by routinisation of secular democratic politics? Max Weber’s invocation of this term suggests that it is not and perhaps this explains why the term has
increasingly come to refer to ‘exceptional leadership or celebrity’ (p. 27). The essays collected in this volume set out from Weber’s original formulation of the concept of charismatic authority, but do not simply remain loyal to it. Rather they seek to challenge and qualify it in order to ‘clarify the range of meanings the concept can bear and what useful analytical work it can do’ (p. 1).

The book’s main argument, and intended contribution to the literature, is that the concept can be profitably invoked in understanding one significant aspect of modern politics: nations and national movements. Charismatic leaders, in these contexts, appear as personifications of the spirit of nations or movements they are identified with and claim to represent. In some cases such identification takes place only at the moment of their emergence, while in some others it continues to exert its influence through the founding myth. In the first occasion, the appeal of charismatic leaders stems from their challenge to the prevailing order of values. As an instance of the founding myth constituting the identity of nations, on the other hand, their invocation serves to provide legitimacy and protection for the already existing values and order. These theoretical insights are exemplified in this book by a focus on individual charismatic leaders which characterises the historical journey of the concept in the last 200 years, emphasising its various appearances in different national circumstances. They utilise a combination of historical and sociological method (discourse analysis and interviews) and cover Giuseppe Garibaldi, Abraham Lincoln, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Gamal Abd al-Nasser, Kemal Atatürk, Jörg Haider and Nelson Mandela.

Most of the chapters are well written and effectively explicate nations and national movements as contexts conducive to the emergence of (extraordinary) leaders, but they fail to convince that the concept of charisma is analytically more useful in understanding them than the concept of leadership. Readers might also be disappointed by the absence of introductory and concluding remarks by the editors of the volume, explicitly stating their aims and summarising the findings. Nevertheless, the book will appeal to sociologists, historians and political scientists interested in nationalism.

Gülşen Seven
(Bilkent University, Ankara)


The Enlightenment was animated by the belief that reason, not superstition, tradition or religious revelation, should guide human action. Since the birth of the Enlightenment, or ‘Age of Reason’, various individuals have questioned the ability of reason to achieve the goals attributed to it. In particular, scepticism about reason’s neutrality and its subsequent capacity to serve as a mechanism for overcoming disagreements about matters of fundamental importance to individuals has not only remained but, in important respects, become more pervasive. With In Praise of Reason Michael Lynch seeks to offer an effective rebuttal to the naysayers, while acknowledging that reason is not self-sufficient.

According to Lynch, ‘In the broadest sense ... reason is the ability to explain and justify [to others] our beliefs and commitments’ (p. 3). However, he also notes that, in a ‘narrower sense, “using reason” means using certain methods, appealing to certain sources, and engaging in certain practices ... [rather than] others’ (p. 3). It is scepticism regarding the narrower understanding that Lynch seeks to invalidate.

Lynch asserts that scepticism about reason emerges from three sources: (1) the belief that all reasoning is, in effect, retroactive rationalisation; (2) the conclusion that arguments supporting the use of reason are unavoidably circular; and (3) the determination that the use of reason represents merely one of many legitimate ‘subjective’ approaches to decision making. Such scepticism critically undermines our ability both to ‘agree on the facts’ and, in turn, make collective decisions about how best to respond to those facts (p. 9).

However, the principal focus for Lynch is not facts, per se, but rather ‘how best to go about learning about the facts’ of a given situation. It is the epistemic principles we employ that ‘tell us what is rational to believe’ (p. 7). Essentially, an effective response to scepticism about the use of reason requires being able persuasively to defend one’s epistemic principles, using a ‘common standpoint’ that does not involve circular reasoning. Without such a common standpoint it will often be impossible to decide collectively how best to respond to disagreements, and such a capacity is fundamental to the maintenance of a civil liberal democratic society that respects the human dignity of all its members.
In Praise of Reason offers a very thoughtful, balanced and persuasive defence of the value of using reason as the basis for collective decision making – it is an argument that sceptics and defenders alike should read.

Shaun P. Young
(University of Toronto)


Hans Morgenthau was one of the fundamental shapers of modern international relations theory in America in the late 1940s–1950s with his famous book Politics among Nations, which became one of the central textbooks on the subject. Morgenthau is better known for his American writings than his earlier European writings. This publication is the first English translation of his early work La notion du ‘politique’ et la théorie des différends internationaux, one that he wrote in 1933 between his doctoral dissertation of 1929 and his Habilitation in 1934. The translation of this little-known work is published here for the first time since the original, with an extended introductory essay by the editors Hartmut Behr and Felix Rösch.

The volume offers the English-speaking scholarly community a first-hand opportunity to see this work which has played a role in the debate among scholars of international relations theory about the connection between the realism of Hans Morgenthau and the political and legal teaching of the still controversial Carl Schmitt. The fact that the translator chose to title the translation of Morgenthau’s work as The Concept of the Political plays on the suggestion that Morgenthau has a debt to Schmitt’s thought. Yet the thrust of the introductory essay – which fills nearly half the volume – is that Morgenthau was attempting to challenge Schmitt’s main teaching as being not concerned enough with ethics and justice, and that this little essay here was a challenge to Schmitt’s writing.

So this volume, both the extended introduction and the translation, should be welcomed not only as a means to assess the validity of the Schmitt-Morgenthau connection, but also by those scholars interested in the development of Morgenthau’s thought. The extended introduction not only addresses the translated item but also gives a general overview of Morgenthau’s work, his ‘epistemological commitments’ and an examination of his twofold examination of power. The editors, as well as the translator, also do a very good job of catching all the philosophical references that Morgenthau utilises in his text – especially Morgenthau’s use of Nietzsche’s Übermensch (pp. 58–60) – a term fraught with the racial supremacy issue due to the Nazis’ misappropriation of the concept. Thus the introduction alone makes this book a must for those interested in Morgenthau’s thought, both in the history of political ideas and in international relations theory.

Clifford Angell Bates Jr
(University of Warsaw)


The aim of this collection of essays is to offer new interpretations of Marx’s writings by showing his distance from the dogmatic and economistic streams of Marxism of the twentieth century, as well as to suggest the usefulness of his theoretical work for the contemporary world. The first part of the volume assembles texts that focus on the re-reading and reinterpretation of Marx’s work from an interdisciplinary and contemporary perspective. The second part deals with the global reception of Marx after 1990.

The first contributions examine the crucial points of liberal, post-colonial, feminist and ecological criticism of Marx by setting them against novel readings of Marx’s writings. In this vein Kevin Anderson challenges the post-colonial criticism of Marx, notably by Edward Said who, according to Anderson, ignores Marx’s early writings, and accuses Marx of adopting a unilinear and Eurocentric mode of development, thereby failing to incorporate race, ethnicity and gender in his theory. Anderson offers numerous passages of Marx’s writings on India, China, Poland and Ireland to refute this accusation.

Similarly, Paresh Chattopadhyay corrects some deep-reaching misunderstandings about Marx’s visions of socialism and communism, showing that the concept of real existing socialism, conceived as a transition from capitalism to communism, is Lenin’s invention, and has nothing in common with Marx’s idea of socialism as the free and equal association of individuals. Michael Lebowitz reinterprets the Marxian idea of the inherent
tendency of capitalism to transgress all barriers in the context of climate change, whereas Georg Comninel re-reads Marx’s theory of emancipation.

Musto, Craver and Wallis reassess Marx from the perspective of political philosophy, while Rick Wolf approaches Marx’s writings from an economic perspective. He traces Marx’s theories of crisis, focusing not only on contradictions inherent in the cyclic nature of capitalist modes of production, but also elaborating possible Marxian solutions to its recurrent crises. Elen Meikins Wood assesses the actuality of Marx’s writings from a historical perspective.

The second part of the work offers valuable insights concerning the reception of Marx and Marxism in different parts of the world after 1990. The articles introduce the main actors, theories and difficulties for the new and critical perception of Marx after 1990 in Europe, Latin America, the anglophone world and Asia.

Marx for Today is a valuable and a highly commendable book for all those who wish to understand the value and the actuality of Marx’s theories for the present time, as well as for those who do not wish stereotypes and prejudices to inform their opinion of one of the most important thinkers of our times.

Scott Nelson’s book is firmly in the tradition of the post-structuralist, post-critical, postmodern and post-Marxist left (in the footsteps of Michel Foucault and his intellectual progeny) and it is an attempt to overcome what they see as the hegemonic forces of liberalism which seek to enslave humanity via economic and legal norms that deny mankind his inherent political power. This tradition of scholarship likes to show that if one looks at the origins of early modern thinkers (e.g. Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes) one can discover various contradictions in these thinkers that so problematise the concept of sovereignty and its expression in today’s world.

Nelson’s book is thus more a survey of this Foucauldian (and like-minded) critique of the various early modern thinkers at the heart of both liberalism and sovereignty. Nelson retraces in the first four chapters the intellectual and metaphysical representations of early liberalism (from Bodin to Kant) as the core foundation of the development of the concept of sovereignty. In the fifth and sixth chapters Nelson shows how the economic dimension of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberal thought lets loose forces which contradict and overpower the model of sovereignty that was previously established by early liberal thought (especially Hobbes and Kant). The main contribution that Nelson’s book offers is his succinct and effective presentation of this Foucauldian narrative about the trajectory and limits of the concept of sovereignty.


This book is about the concept of sovereignty as the core concept of modern politics for the theoretical foundations of both domestic and international organisations that give shape and structure to our political life. Thus to have a deeper and fuller understanding of sovereignty requires the flushing out and examination of the theoretical foundations of so central a concept.

For such flushing out one is directed to the very origins of early modern political thought, especially that of Bodin, Hobbes, etc. Yet these very same thinkers are also held to be the sources of liberalism, which is an attempt at overcoming or transcending the forces of political power (be it power over others or the power to join together). This is what most who comment on the nature of politics hold sovereignty to be, through either economic, legal or some other trans-political set of norms. Yet the book is much more than that.


John Parkinson’s book sets out to challenge the all-too-prevalent view in political theory and political science of democracy as a series of abstract and disembodied procedures that take place increasingly in the virtual world of modern communication technology. He asserts the importance of physical public spaces for democracy, and emphasises the performative nature of democratic activity. He thus seeks to defend a particular understanding of liberal deliberative democracy by establishing what kinds of spaces are required for democratic performance, drawing on evidence from
eleven capital cities around the world. He examines in detail the physical setting of deliberation in assemblies, the accessibility of assemblies to the public, the formal spaces of public protest and the importance of less formal sites of public engagement and representation, such as city parks and memorials. This empirical investigation is prefaced by a very careful conceptual analysis of the main terms of his argument, particularly with respect to the concepts of democracy, the public, and public space. In the conclusion, the book provides a comparison and tentative ranking of the examined capital cities in terms of the quality of the democratic public space they provide, and suggests ways in which democracy might be enhanced through the reform and reconfiguration of public space.

This is an important book. Parkinson is right to criticise democratic theorists for their failure to recognise the importance of the physical setting of democratic action and its performative aspects. His view of deliberative democracy is improved by an appreciation of how a major part of the performance of democratic politics involves contestation rather than agreement. Nevertheless, there are some significant problems with the argument. These stem from what is at times too uncritical an interrogation of the idea of liberal deliberative democracy, and a failure to establish convincingly the centrality to democracy of representative assemblies and the public space that surrounds or is in close proximity to them. It is important to establish a distinctly political understanding of democratic public space, but Parkinson goes too far in distancing himself from broader (sociological) accounts of the way in which what are deemed as public spaces shape and are shaped by democratic performance. These accounts rely on a conceptualisation of how relations of power are inscribed in a variety of spaces of democratic performance. At best Parkinson alludes to such relations of power, but for the most part his analysis of them remains underdeveloped.

Jason Edwards
(Birkbeck, University of London)


Influenced by critical theory, this book seeks to identify the ‘disagreements’ among the protagonists of ‘development’ and ‘antidevelopment’. It is divided into three sections, each of them having separate introductions. The first section, ‘Grounding the Development Debate’, presents the theoretical foundations of the work – it particularly emphasises ‘human unity’, characterised by recognition and self-understanding. Martha Rabbani favours ‘moral recognition’ because it does not attach any conditions such as appropriating certain ‘symbols’ – upon which ‘ethical recognition’ is granted. The second section, ‘Truth and Power in the Development Debate’, comprises two chapters. It starts with a critique of the development project, which is triumphant and believed to be symbolising truth just because it is supported by power, but which rather is ‘only answerable to claims of self-preservation and survival’ (p. 78). Contrarily, in the final section, ‘Redefining Development’, Rabbani argues for the power of dialogue, which requires questioning and inclusion, where participants must be allowed ‘a comprehensive assessment and validation of truth’ (p. 107). Towards such an end, the seventh chapter emphasises the possibility of ‘mutual understanding and agreement ... due to the normative condition of human interdependency’ (p. 138). The title of the last chapter, ‘Development as the Collective Search for Truth’, is self-explanatory. Students and researchers of political philosophy may find the book interesting, but its often strong normative claims are not always supported by adequate empirical evidence.

Rabbani is not sufficiently clear on what she means by ‘development’ and ‘antidevelopment’. We subsequently feel (particularly from the penultimate chapter) that antidevelopment is characterised by traditionalism and community life, whereas development emphasises globalisation, free market, human rights and universality. However, if that guess is correct, such classification is clearly problematic as it does not adequately deal with the complexities involved in the understanding of development. While being quite sensitive on the issue of social inclusion, Rabbani also points out the psychological dimensions of oppression; however, attributes like universal friendship and dialogue are sometimes too idealistic and broad categories to address some issues of social divide – such as gender and ethnicity – which nonetheless require specific attention. As a philosophical treatise, the book is conceptually well founded, but the title should have emphasised themes like ‘human unity’ instead of development. The author introduces a new type of thinking, vaguely reflecting an oriental approach to life, but we
could only characterise this work as a classic in the political theory of development if its arguments were empirically grounded and validated.

Sujay Ghosh
(Uluberia College, West Bengal)


The authors argue that the student of political thought must understand both the historical development of political thought and the key philosophical issues. Accordingly this introductory text adopts a dual approach with each chapter addressing historical and conceptual aspects.

Section I focuses on Plato and Aristotle and asks if there is a universal moral order and whether politics is natural. Section II addresses modern political thought, specifically Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Owen. The conceptual issues covered in this section include the nature of freedom, the social contract and socialism and the artificiality of man. Section III discusses contemporary political thought and begins with utilitarianism and rights before explaining how Rawls, Cohen, Nozick and Walzer address questions of distributive justice. Following this, the relationship between liberalism and multiculturalism is examined by returning to Rawls and analysing the ideas of Kymlicka and Parekh. The final section considers challenges to universalism and foundationalism by exploring international political thought, conservatism, feminism and anti-foundationalism.

For this second edition the new chapter on international political thought is a welcome and timely addition. Each chapter ends with topics for discussion, a critical glossary and suggestions for further reading. This book will be of great benefit to those new to political thought, particularly those who require an introduction to the history of political thought and contemporary political thought in one book.

This book succeeds in its aim of providing the reader with the necessary tools to engage with political ideas. The original and useful dual approach allows the reader to apply the ideas of political thinkers to core theoretical topics. As well as being provided with a political vocabulary, the reader is shown how ideas which today may appear irrelevant and odd, such as Plato’s philosopher-kings, raise important contemporary issues, for example the objective basis of morality. Although historians of medieval political thought will be disappointed that such thinkers as Augustine and Aquinas are omitted, some of the issues they focused on are dealt with by reference to other thinkers such as Aristotle. By giving greater attention to the often overlooked Robert Owen than to traditionally very prominent thinkers like Machiavelli and J. S. Mill, the authors have produced an interesting and innovative book. This well-written and thoughtfully structured book is likely to succeed in encouraging the reader to explore the thinkers and topics raised in further depth.

Daniel Duggan
(Durham University)


The area of literature, politics and economics is a growing interdisciplinary field of study. Avital Ronell’s new book is an important contribution to this newly evolving aspect of literary theory. The financial crisis has been the outcome of various political decisions. Ronell takes issue with one such decision: the resolution to go to war with Iraq in a coalition of the willing. In order to finance such a war the cost of borrowing had to be kept artificially low and an economic culture of debt had to grow until it burst in the various debt bubbles from 2008 onwards. Now we have to live under the economic conditions of de-leveraging – in other words, austerity.

The Iraq War and its human, cultural, economic and academic consequences motivated the conception of Ronell’s book. The book opens with a description of contemporary work environments: ‘I look at my colleagues and see brilliant scholars ground down by the institutional praxeology, turned over to the bureaucracy of teaching, its unending evaluations and business-like downgrades, as if “results” could be yielded in the traumatic precincts of learning’ (p. ix).

Ronell’s critique of the current obsession with measurable and quantitative results is related to the main arguments in her fine book about authority. She discovers that Goethe was fascinated by how much the power of numbers (statistics) and economics is founded on negativity, on zero, on lack. Debt which should provide the foundation for growth and success is the
psychoanalytical paradigm of the loser son who, though lacking the power of the father, does everything to outdo the father in his eventual grip on power, gain and success. The problem is not losing but the societal/psychological norm of winning, of showing measurable results that one has beaten father at his own game.

Ronell takes issue with Plato’s exultation of authority which is a form of winning beyond the application of brute force: ‘The main dilemma of his political philosophy required that Plato find a means of coercion that parts ways with violence and proves stronger than persuasion and argument’ (p. 27). This midway position between persuasion and violence shapes Kojève’s, Strauss’ and Arendt’s respective political philosophies. To find an alternative to this fraught paradigm, Ronell turns to literature – to the work of Kafka. Kafka ‘starts and stays on zero’ (p. 132), renouncing outdoing father. Ronell has written a beautiful and timely book in support of the highly underrated and immeasurable zero position.

Michael Mack
(Durham University)


This book provides the most exhaustive normative account of constitutional referenda (CR) to date. Given that CR are an ever-growing global phenomenon, the book is timely. It is also well informed and persuasive. It tests the democratic pedigree of CR against the principles of neo-republicanism and deliberative democratic theory. It is often claimed that CR are undemocratic, for they are controlled by elites. Yet Stephen Tierney shows that the opposite is often the case. The democratic success of CR is very dependent on the legal and political context, both internal to the polity that holds the referendum and external to it. Further, when properly designed, CR can score higher than representative decision-making devices in terms of participation and deliberation, thus complementing them.

While the central chapters of the book address the above-mentioned topics and some further criticisms, the design issue is addressed in the remainder of the book. The stages, settings and modes of deliberation that can be incorporated in CR are carefully analysed in this latter block.

This is empirically informed constitutional and political theory at its best. It masterfully brings a rich range of case studies and evidence from the social sciences to the assessment of the operations of CR. Yet it also makes a compelling case for referenda as a deliberative and participatory constitutional tool that complements traditional representative channels. Given the current discrediting of some such channels (notably, political parties), Tierney’s book is a much-needed contribution.

Let me briefly flag two concerns, though. First, Tierney’s use of neo-republican theory is certainly very sophisticated. He correctly distinguishes between elitist and popular strands within republicanism, and embraces the latter. Yet he fails clearly to separate civic republicanism from civic humanism. When his argument falls into the latter, it becomes perfectionist and loses force. Second, Tierney claims that, when properly designed, CR can improve citizen engagement and deliberation. Stakes are high in CR, for their upshot is a piece of constitutional law that is typically very cumbersome to change and whose legal and political influence is pervasive. Greater citizen engagement is to be expected as a result. However, deliberation also requires a disposition to act impartially and to change one’s mind, as Tierney rightly notes. Now precisely because the stakes are so high in CR, citizens are also less likely to be open-minded and more prone to rent seeking. Tough bargaining among polarised parties rather than genuine deliberation is to be expected.

Iñigo González-Ricoy
(Universitat de Barcelona)


This book constitutes a reaction to the contemporary dystopian outlook which hinders projects for social and political change. Additionally, it represents a shift from traditional utopias of eternal ideals ostensibly applicable everywhere and in every epoch. These essays envision an existential utopia which has an open-ended character, attuned to the singular contexts and ever-changing events shaping the community.

The first four chapters (written by Nancy, Vattimo, Franco de Sá, and Vieira and Marder) set the tone of the book and defend the need for an existential utopia. As Nancy asks: ‘What should come in the name of
This book cleverly reclaims the duty to find the ‘other of utopia’ to overcome the limits of ‘another utopia’, but this is an enormous challenge that cannot be resolved in 150 pages. An often repeated theme in the conclusions is that blueprints for the future must be avoided, that openness is necessary or that utopia cannot be programmable. These are attractive propositions, but the essays should arguably start at this point, rather than conclude with these elusive words. To put it bluntly, most arguments here are a postmodern sleight of hand which say very little.

Full of oxymorons, Cavalcante’s essay goes off topic, because its aestheticism is somehow pleonastic and gloomy, distant from an urgency to overcome the status quo. To a certain extent, Barachi’s paper also offers another perspective that is forced, unnecessary in comparison with other questions raised in the book. Perhaps this is a trivial detail, but the word utopia appears just tangentially on the penultimate page. Kellner and Levita’s papers provide deep analyses of Ernst Bloch’s writings and bring forth conclusions that are difficult to disagree with, such as ‘a commitment with a deeper humanism’ (p. 98). However, if the overall pledge is to envision an existential utopia, their arguments fall short if they stop with this plea.

As Ramoneda auspiciously identifies, ‘postmodernism and anti-utopianism go together’, and this book fails to overcome this trap: utopias are too onerous to grasp using a postmodern lens. Perhaps this is why Davis’ ‘utopianism for grassroots social change’ is very appealing, but difficult to conceive. In the last chapter, Albritton writes of a utopia that navigates among the principles of cooperation, democracy and equality, but all his proposals could be pursued by a prosperous welfare state. If this is ‘the practical utopia of the twenty-first century’, this book lacks persuasiveness, strength and imagination. New perspectives on utopian thought are still required.

Pol Bargués
(University of Westminster)


This important book takes up some of the most significant explanatory and normative questions posed by the persistence of nationalism. The first part develops a comprehensive theory of nations and nationalism, building on Bernard Yack’s earlier (and influential) arguments about the myth of the civic nation and the relationship between popular sovereignty and nationalism (both of which appear here in revised form). According to Yack, communities in general are characterised by a form of social friendship in which we are ‘connected by feelings of mutual concern and loyalty’ (p. 57). In the special case of national communities, these feelings are inspired by the joint ‘affirmation of a shared inheritance of cultural artefacts, such as languages, relics, symbols, stories of origin, memories of traumatic experiences, and so on’ (p. 69). Thus, nations are cultural heritage communities. Meanwhile, nationalism mixes beliefs about political legitimacy with feelings of special concern and loyalty towards co-nationals. Consequently, nationalists are distinguished by ‘the way in which a combination of beliefs and sentiments motivate them to seek a particular good for the members of their own nation’ (p. 115).

Throughout, Yack emphasises the particularism of nationalism – that it urges us to want the best for our nation – and resists attempts to characterise the phenomenon in terms of an abstract commitment to a philosophical principle.

One of the reasons why nationalism is so explosive is that nationalist beliefs about political legitimacy tend to intensify nationalist sentiments, weakening ‘our resistance to doing morally abhorrent things’ (p. 216). Nationalism thus poses a ‘moral problem’ for normative political theory, which is the subject of the second half of the book. In common with other liberal nationalists, Yack seeks both to (partially) absolve nationalism and to demonstrate its compatibility with liberal principles. Yack’s primary defence of nationalism is that it is a form of social friendship, and that social friendship is an important part of the moral universe, providing its own reasons for action alongside other values such as justice. At the same time, Yack does not shy away from nationalism’s darker side. Some of the most stimulating arguments are found in the closing chapters, where Yack argues that we cannot have the good in nationalism without the bad, and that the prospects for normalising or eradicating nationalism are bleak.

Normative political theorists will benefit especially from the breadth of Yack’s scholarship, his deeper than
usual engagement with nationalism studies and his innovative mapping of the conceptual terrain.

Andrew Shorten
(University of Limerick)

Global Justice and Avant-Garde Political Agency

Lea Ypi commences with an account of the bombing of Guernica by the Nazis, and of the response given to a Gestapo soldier by Picasso regarding the latter’s depiction of the destruction, to the effect that it was the soldier who had created the scene. Ypi uses this to draw attention to the relationship that we who critically evaluate events of a social and political nature have to those events. ‘Avant-garde work’, she argues, ‘is best understood as a kind of activity that aims to refine the lens through which reality is observed, to articulate and interpret the concerns and commitments of one’s contemporaries, and to analyse current events with an eye to both critique and innovation’ (p. 2). Picasso’s belief that an artist is also a political being inspires Ypi’s ‘activist political theory’ and her understanding of the theorist’s emancipatory task.

The global justice debate is the site of Ypi’s activist theory. She argues that the well-known positions of cosmopolitans and statists in this debate have ‘shortcomings’ which have a shared origin: ‘they stem from the confusion between ideal and non-ideal categories in investigating the place of normative principles and their relationship to political agency’ (p. 3). Before we reach her discussion and constructive argument about this confusion Ypi provides us with two necessary preliminaries: a fine historical reading of cosmopolitanism, and an account of ‘activist political theory’ and her ‘dialectical approach’, which she subsequently uses to reconcile ideal and non-ideal theory.

This persuasive and deft reconciliation takes place in the middle section of the book. Ypi argues that while cosmopolitans and statists both work in ideal and non-ideal registers of political thought, they tend to be in the wrong register at the wrong time. Agency, for example, is discussed from an ideal perspective, when it should start with existing agents. Two chapters discuss the state and global egalitarianism in this vein. The final section analyses global justice using the dialectic approach over three chapters; it does this in a way that reconnects principals and agency using Ypi’s preferred ideal and non-ideal configurations. The book ends by returning to the cosmopolitan avant-garde, who Ypi argues ‘would transform society following a dynamic similar to those of previous artistic and political innovators in critical historical stages: inspiring the emergence of new normative interpretations; enriching, correcting and adapting ... taking the lead in persuading fellow citizens to endorse emancipatory political projects’ (p. 155).

Anthony J. Langlois
(Flinders University, Adelaide)

International Relations

Global and Regional Problems: Towards an Interdisciplinary Study by Pami Aalto, Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio (eds). Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. 244pp., £55.00, ISBN 978 1 4094 0841 3

Appearing in ‘The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms’ book series, Global and Regional Problems gathers together nine essays plus an introduction. Although there are countless edited books about global issues, this one is original not only because the co-editors are scholars from Finland, but mainly because the authors focus on the interdisciplinary dimensions of research and innovate in their conceptualisation of international studies.

The introduction is very rich in innovative ideas. We already knew about the three steps between disciplines, which are multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity; but now we are offered a new term, ‘neo-disciplinarity’, which is almost like a fourth dimension in research (p. 20). This term is so important and ground-breaking that it should have been included in the book’s title. According to Aalto, Harle and Moisio, ‘Neo-disciplinarity represents the radicalization and institutional consolidation of some transdisciplinary strategies’ (p. 20). Obvious fields using neo-disciplinarity are diverse and already familiar: ‘part of IR, gender studies, development studies, environmental studies and Cultural Studies’, but also peace research (p. 21). Further on, in his excellent critique of scholars in international relations, Vilho Harle argues that most academics pretend to work in interdisciplinarity, while in fact it is ‘its multidisciplinarity form’ (p. 27) with which they are involved.

Most chapters present a case study centred on a continent (Asia, Africa) rather than a country (except
two distinct chapters on ‘nuclear Iran’ and another on higher education in Finland). But the topics are not as relevant as the methodological and theoretical dimensions employed, at least in terms of interdisciplinary openings. For instance, chapter 8 examines climate change in the circumpolar region, concluding that ‘What climate change can do for interdisciplinarity is to help us to bridge persistent gaps between physical-natural science understandings and cultural-social-economic understandings’ (p. 192).

The tenth chapter, by Fred Chernoff, is a welcome conclusion which opens new avenues. The author acknowledges some problems such as ‘the absence of an overreaching theory in IR theory’ (p. 228). Furthermore, the conclusion insists on ‘the need for interdisciplinarity solutions’, since ‘different theories (and different philosophical underpinnings) lead to different policy solutions’ (p. 235).

In sum, this innovative collection opens new doors but is not definitive; other open-minded scholars could benefit from the neo-disciplinarity perspectives and doctoral candidates could be inspired by this very interesting framework. But Global and Regional Problems confirms again that new directions and frameworks in transdisciplinarity research often come from Europe.

Yves Laberge
(University of Rennes)


‘History is a pack of lies we play on the dead’ (p. vii). This quote from Voltaire is the inspiration and starting point for Jeffrey Bader’s insider account of the Obama administration’s China policy. He states that his goal is to provide an account of this policy area that would create a context for future historians and scholars examining US foreign policy and the Obama administration. As much as this is an insider account, this volume is also a memoir as Bader incorporates his own political experiences, insights and personal history into his writing. The result is an account of the central plank of US foreign policy between 2008 and 2012.

To accomplish these goals Bader explores the historical and political contexts of various policies on East Asia that the US government pursued. He analyses the United States’ relationship with China, its strategic alliances with Japan and South Korea, and the role of regional organisations such as ASEAN. Looking beyond the US, Bader also discusses the wider international community’s involvement in East Asia and its impact on US foreign policy. At the centre of Bader’s argument is the Obama administration’s attempt to recast US foreign policy towards East Asia.

Bader’s work appears at times unashamedly pro-Obama and provides little criticism of his leadership. Much of the book defends Obama before and during his first term in office by addressing specific attacks on the President from the international press as well as from Republican commentators. It is also worth noting that this short volume was released in the run-up to the 2012 presidential election, which has been one of the closest elections in recent history. This is an observation that any future historian or academic will have to keep in mind when using this text.

With that criticism made, Bader comfortably reaches his goals for writing this account. He displays the inner thinking of the Obama administration on handling specific issues as well as highlighting the development of strategies and opinions on the region. He also furnishes the reader with fascinating accounts of the workings of international relations which will interest anyone intrigued by the mechanics of modern diplomacy. Indeed, this volume is a must read for any historian or academic working in the field of American foreign policy.

Philip Gannon
(Durham University)


The policy of development aid is a modern phenomenon. However, it is more often presented in the field of international standards regulating relations between the Northern and Southern countries. Also, more and more scholars are becoming interested in this issue. Books
present aid policy as, among others, a tool of public diplomacy or an element of foreign policy. The idea of development aid is also analysed in the context of international cooperation or ethical and moral dilemmas. Most studies remain, however, quite general, and the available sources are rarely a subject of original narrower analyses. Christopher Wraight’s The Ethics of Trade and Aid: Development, Charity or Waste? and Jennifer Clapp’s Hunger in the Balance: The New Politics of International Food Aid attempt to fill this gap in foreign aid discourse.

Recently, we have witnessed arguments about the effectiveness of development aid. Controversies may be seen in, among other areas, the case of food aid, which is analysed in Clapp’s book. The author presents a succinct and full assessment of modern food aid, discussing its nature and specificity. In this book on the policy of aid giving she deftly avoids ideological arguments and opinions, focusing instead on an objective analysis of the influences involved. The beginning of the study is devoted to presenting and assessing the actions of the authors of food aid in history. Further chapters provide case studies of the policy of aid giving in the US, EU, Japan, Australia and Canada. They outline each country’s specific history of aid giving and relate it to the changes in its main purposes, then highlight the key ideas, institutions, interests and organisational characteristics that make each case unique. Clapp raises the issue of ‘tied’ aid, as well as the more controversial subject of debates on the transfer of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the framework of food aid. She ends each chapter with a summary of the main purposes of and influences on aid, and a question about future challenges for food aid giving. The summary forecasts the further success of food aid policy, and simultaneously warns that for millions of people dependent on food aid the consequences of political discrepancies, incoherent actions and conflicts may be equal to death.

In the second book, Wraight considers the philosophical debate surrounding the interdependence between development aid policy and international trade. Wraight searches for the answer to the question about developing countries’ engagement in trade with developed countries. His contribution to understanding the complexity of the ethical issues of development aid policy is invaluable. His book is an interesting analysis of relations arising in recent history between trade and development aid. Moreover, it is conducted in the discourse of philosophy and ethics, which makes the book exceptional. Difficult and complicated terms connected with development aid, international trade and philosophy, described by Wraight, become comprehensible even for an average reader. The author manages the subject brilliantly and presents it in easy and clear language. This book would also make pleasant reading for scientists. Those who are aware of the complex ties between ethical and economic theories will find many sections here that cast new light on thus far poorly understood terms.

Furthermore, both these books are interdisciplinary in nature and offer an interesting voice in the discussion of the modern, changing policy of development aid. These monographs are based on research that boldly encompasses several fields of study: economics, political science, international relations, sociology and – in the case of Wraight – philosophy and ethics. Such an interdisciplinary depiction of development aid policy is a great strength rather than a disadvantage and this approach to the research subject enables the authors to give a broad, full and exhaustive presentation of the issue. It also helps the reader to understand easily this complex topic.

The books are structured in a straightforward way. The contents presented at the beginning are consistently realised, making the books clear and easy to follow. Altogether, they are a stimulating and pleasurable read. The conclusions are not only a summary of the issues but also consist of the clearly articulated opinions of the authors, worked out at the meeting point of theory and practice in the context of a feeling that clear concepts suitable for operationalisation better serve actions for the reduction of poverty. The multidimensional depiction of the subject alongside a skilful connection of different levels and aspects of development aid is the highest quality of both books.

The focus of these books serves as an asset and strength in making an intellectual contribution that will be of interest to academics in, among others, development studies, political science, economics and philosophy. Clapp and Wraight’s studies are recommended if not necessary reading for the analysis of development aid policy. Such books are also particularly recommended for every reader who takes seriously the duty of civil responsibility towards people in need all over the world.

Katarzyna Jarecka-Stępień
(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)
Are sanctions effective? This question has triggered a long-standing and ongoing debate that has attracted the attention of practitioners and scholars alike. The interest in these foreign policy tools has increased since the end of the Cold War, when military operations in international crises or failing to act in the event of gross human rights violations might no longer be feasible options. Thus, the use of economic statecraft has not only come to occupy a middle ground between two extreme choices; its use has also grown exponentially in the last two decades as new actors have resorted to sanctions as a means of achieving foreign policy goals.

Yet while the use of sanctions has gained momentum, little seems to have been learned about their effectiveness. On the contrary, the academic and political debate remains similar to two decades ago with the persistence of two clearly delimited positions. On the one side stand the supporters of sanctions, who believe that these are useful foreign policy tools to achieve political goals; on the other, their detractors portray sanctions as rather ineffective measures.

The existence of this clear-cut dichotomy is, if anything, an epistemological matter. Indeed, the disputed aspects of this debate can be reduced to methodological and measurement issues. Four of these are particularly relevant in the literature. First, ‘there is no real agreement among scholars on how to define sanctions’ (Eriksson, p. 12). Second, the efficacy of sanctions has not only been measured in a rather unsatisfactory way, but the goals against which these tools have to be measured are not always clearly defined. Third, sanctions practice has evolved substantially since the beginning of the 1990s, when the total trade embargo on Iraq and the grave consequences it imposed on the population paved the way for the use of ‘targeted’ or ‘smart’ sanctions. This development has substantially modified the assessment of sanctions, as the level of analysis has shifted from aggregated units (states) to disaggregated ones (individuals). Finally, most of the literature has addressed sanctions episodes as static events, failing to account for the interaction that actually exists between senders and targets before and during the existence of the sanctions regimes.

With these issues in mind, the two books reviewed here represent a breath of fresh air entering a stagnant debate. While Mikael Eriksson and Clara Portela acknowledge the problems outlined above, they propose new approaches that improve our knowledge of how, when and why sanctions work. This is achieved through both methodological and conceptual improvements, including interviews with targeted individuals and research into the psychological aspects of sanctions.

Conceptually, the authors understand that sanctions regimes cannot be seen ‘as a stand-alone policy’ by themselves (Eriksson, p. 7), but that they form part of broader strategies of ‘senders’ to achieve a foreign policy goal. Portela and Eriksson are thus right in devoting attention to contextual factors that impinge on the success of sanctions, such as the occurrence of parallel political developments, the institutional settings in which the sanctions regimes are implemented or the interaction between senders and targets.

Methodologically, the complexity of measuring ‘sanctions efficacy’ motivates the authors to employ alternative concepts such as ‘sanctions contribution’ (Portela) and ‘impact’ (Eriksson). The latter is especially interesting as it disaggregates the impact that sanctions have on the sender, the target and the overall conflict, respectively. Its flexibility also permits the capture of a ‘multivariate process’ (Eriksson, p. 41) which goes well beyond the material disruption caused by sanctions, affecting the perceptions and psyche of senders and targets. A case in point is the often neglected cost that stigmatisation inflicts on the targeted individuals.

Portela’s proposal to measure the contribution of sanctions to the senders’ demands is also noteworthy. By employing an innovative methodology to identify necessary and sufficient conditions, she is able to identify the combination of factors under which different types of European Union (EU) sanctions are more likely to be successful. One of the main findings of her study is the fact that different instruments within the EU’s sanctions toolbox are more effective than others. This, the author claims, is attributable to the number of actors involved in the sanctioning process, the objective of the sanctions (whether they seek to coerce, signal or constrain the target) and the importance that targeted leaders attach to them.

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With regard to the sender, both authors point towards the importance of institutions and the number of veto players as important factors in sanctions’ success. More concretely, ‘the many institutional steps from adoption to implementation and management are likely to dilute the original intent and goal of the targeted sanctions and render the policy less powerful’ (Eriksson, pp. 177–8).

Finally, Portela and Eriksson seem to suggest that targeted sanctions are not problem-free measures, as they still harm the civilian population through side-effects or by directly affecting the human rights of the targeted individuals. While this normative dimension remains largely unexplored in the literature, it raises promising questions in the growing field of ‘smart sanctions’ research.

Borja Guijarro-Usobiaga
(London School of Economics and Political Science)


In global politics it is increasingly common to stress the rule of law, but while most states, most of the time, follow international law (to use Louis Henkin’s well-known formulation) there remain not infrequent actions that are formally illegal. As Richard Falk points out in the introduction to this book, that the rule of law has some purchase on the practice of global politics has forced even realists to develop wider political arguments for supporting actions that they see as justified through national interest when such actions are unsupported by international law. The trope of legitimacy has become a favoured option, with the Kosovo intervention presented as illegal but legitimate.

In this book a distinguished group assesses the question of legality vs. legitimacy and its use in contemporary global politics, including Christine Chinkin, Ann Orford, Friedrich Kratochwil, Ramesh Thakur and twelve others. Chapters range from Thakur’s discussion of the UN and the illegitimacy of many economic sanctions, to Amy Bartholomew’s assessment of the increasing use of ‘imperial law’ by the US, and from Orford’s discussion of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as an engine of legitimacy to Daniele Archibugi and Mariano Croce’s argument that using the promotion of democracy to legitimate action by the ‘international community’ can corrode democratic accountability as legitimation. Elsewhere in the volume contributors examine issues of legitimacy, legality and the environment, international criminal tribunals and nuclear non-proliferation.

Editors always have a hard time encouraging contributors to adopt mutually consistent and complementary argumentative modes, and this volume is not an exception. However, in his introduction Falk makes a virtue of this situation and here at least this variance in approach is useful as from the range of chapters and approaches the reader can start to stitch together their own position on the legality/legitimacy question. Perhaps as befits contemporary global politics it is difficult not to concur with the mood of the volume that while the positivistic notion of legality limits us to binary political assessments, in a complex (global) political environment the utility of ‘legitimacy’ is as a set of norms and values that can be responsive and flexible to shifts in appropriate and acceptable authority. Overall, while presenting few firm and agreed answers, the chapters collected in this volume offer considerable food for thought and deserve to be read more widely than the specialised international law or global governance audience to whom the book might initially appeal.

Christopher May
(Lancaster University)


The Browne Review, the new fees regime and the increasing emphasis on National Student Survey (NSS) results have added greater weight to calls for better teaching in higher education. As a result, the number and range of publications dealing with the topic of enhanced teaching practice is increasing at an exponential rate. However, few books have explored the particular challenges of teaching politics and IR, which is why this volume, edited by Gormley-Heenan and Lightfoot, must be regarded as an important new resource.

The book is divided into four sections. The first examines the broad issues surrounding how politics and IR degrees are now taught in the UK – the focus of the book is on higher education in the UK although the content will be of use to politics lecturers anywhere
in the world. The second section focuses on best practice in delivering teaching and the fourth section looks at the relationship between teaching and research. The contributions in these sections include reflections specific to our discipline and will undoubtedly be of value both to new and to more experienced lecturers.

However, it is the contributions in Part III, dealing with teaching the politics curriculum, which this reviewer believes are the most interesting part of this volume. As politics lecturers we are all aware that our subject matter is contested and that our teaching will inevitably be influenced by our own world view. Gormley-Heenan’s chapter on political bias and chapters on teaching gender (Rowley and Shepherd), terrorism (Roder) and race (Spencer) provide helpful tips on how best to approach these issues in the classroom. More importantly, they invite the reader to reflect critically on how we currently engage with module content that on first reading appears ‘neutral’.

The contributions to this book are written by politics lecturers who have utilised various approaches to improve their students’ learning experiences. They offer tips on what works for them and this volume is full of ideas that could be adopted by other lecturers. However, the most valuable contribution of this volume is the reminder to us all, regardless of how much or how little teaching experience we have, to reflect on our own practice, to try new things and to remember that students engage best when taught by enthusiastic lecturers who value their role as teachers as much as their research agenda.

Laura Cashman
(Canterbury Christ Church University)


There has been growing attention to the roles of international actors such as China, Brazil and Turkey which have traditionally received little attention in the accounts of global politics. At the same time, this trend has been mirrored by the deepening economic crisis in Europe and North America, traditionally considered to be the hubs of world affairs. Indicative of the weight and significance of non-Western actors on the global stage, such developments seem to challenge the conventional frameworks of international relations (IR). What appears confounding for mainstream IR is that the rising non-Western powers are just as skilled and willing to engage in the global playground as the Western ones.

As John Hobson convincingly demonstrates, IR’s difficulty emanates from the Eurocentrism of the discipline. The required qualification is that the Eurocentrism underwriting international theory should not merely be equated with hegemonic penchant and colonising inclinations. Instead, as Hobson discerns, Eurocentrism is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that incorporates different (and sometimes contradictory) tendencies. His book therefore provides what is probably the most detailed account to date of the ‘promiscuous discourse’ (p. 3) of Eurocentrism in the study and practice of world affairs.

Hobson’s incisive process tracing unfolds in four stages. First, he focuses on the 1760–1914 period, which marks the beginning of Eurocentric thinking in IR. Second, he explores the ‘high tide’ (p. 131) of Eurocentrism from 1914 to 1945. Third, he discusses the ‘subliminal Eurocentrism’ (p. 183) dominating the Cold War. Finally, Hobson considers the developments in Eurocentric thinking during the 1989–2010 period. What such an account poignantly evinces is that despite its universalist and universalising claims, much of mainstream IR has been motivated by the ‘parochial normative purpose of defending and celebrating the ideal of the West in world politics’ (p. 344).

In this way, Hobson has crafted an unusually thoughtful and carefully written rethinking of IR. His prescient analysis offers original perspectives on both the study and practice of international affairs. It is to be expected that the book will be of immense interest to students and scholars of international relations. At the same time, it will be welcomed by all those interested in challenging the Eurocentric tendencies of international history and political theory.

Emilian Kavalski
(University of Western Sydney)


What should we expect of all the ‘short encyclopedias’, ‘handbooks’ and ‘companions’ that publishers are pushing nowadays? I admit my biases: they should provide cogent
overviews of the most important topics and research programmes, with a bit of critique of the existing literature and some sense of where the field can most usefully go next. Otherwise, the project is just another collected volume. In these terms, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Warfare* is a collection of essays on various topics, all loosely related to war. Part I consists of six papers that review classic writings, particularly Clausewitz and Mahan, and adopt a decidedly historical approach. Prospective readers should be warned that ‘modern warfare’ does not mean contemporary warfare. Part IV contains six studies of ways that popular culture has intersected with war in such places as Yugoslavia, East Germany, Iraq and the USA. Other essays deal with military intelligence in the first half of the twentieth century, Plato’s ideas about wartime leaders, the role of (British) women in the Second World War, the interplay between civilisation and savagery as illustrated by the exigencies of war and what Niccolò Machiavelli might have said about the foreign policy of George W. Bush.

This leaves eight chapters that cover broader issues in a more systematic fashion. Myriam Cavelty surveys the landscape of computer war, and provides a comprehensive bibliography. Jari Eloranta explores patterns of military spending during the twentieth century, at least for the great powers of Europe and the US. Mark Phythian offers observations on trends in the global arms trade, particularly from Europe to China and the Middle East, and includes developments up to the present day (that is, to 2007). Chris Kinsey tells the story of several private security companies that were active in Africa and Iraq from 1990 to 2008. Helena Carreiras traces the rise of women’s participation in the armed forces of ‘western democracies’ (including Turkey and Hungary), and discusses whether or not the inclusion of women has been a good thing. David Whetham gives a thumbnail sketch of ‘just war theory’, which overlaps quite a bit with Christopher Waters and James Green’s excursus on international law. Just war and other legal matters get covered once again in Steven Haines’ analysis of foreign interventions to end genocide. Postgraduate students will learn much from Cavelty, and Waters and Green represent the sort of succinct guide to the subject that we might expect to find in a handy, single-volume reference work.

Fred Lawson
(Mills College, California)


The focus of this volume is to illuminate the various grievances that the Muslim world has against the US. According to the author, these grievances arise from a widespread belief in the Muslim world that America has betrayed its liberal values in order to further its own self-interest. In chapters 1 and 2, Steven Kull makes the case for why Muslims are angry with America, and in turn why this causes them to support groups like al-Qa’eda. To Kull this anger stems from Muslims buying into the idea of a liberal world order only to be repeatedly betrayed in favour of American *realpolitik*. The author holds that this narrative sustains Muslim anger and distrust towards America.

In chapters 3 to 6, Kull addresses four common grievances in the Muslim world regarding America: first, that America coercively dominates the Muslim world; second, that the US seeks to undermine Islam; third, that the US undermines democracy in the Muslim world. The fourth and final grievance is that US support for Israel comes at the expense of the Palestinians, and by extension the larger Muslim world. Kull does provide suggestions on how the United States could improve its image in the Muslim world, yet these proposals come across as either unworkable or unrealistic.

Despite Kull’s laudable and extensive efforts to explain Muslim attitudes, his work falls short in providing an in-depth explanation for these attitudes. This results from his methodology which relies upon public opinion polls and focus groups. Rarely is the reader treated to additional investigation which would further elucidate what Muslim respondents think and feel when they respond to these mostly closed-response questions.

In this regard, while I find many of Kull’s findings interesting, I hunger for more detailed explanations. For instance, why is it in his polling that Palestinians appear to be more conservative on political issues than the rest of the Muslim world? Another intriguing question is why Azerbaijan and Indonesia have polling numbers that indicate a more progressive, US-friendly viewpoint?

In this regard, while I find many of Kull’s findings interesting, I hunger for more detailed explanations. For instance, why is it in his polling that Palestinians appear to be more conservative on political issues than the rest of the Muslim world? Another intriguing question is why Azerbaijan and Indonesia have polling numbers that indicate a more progressive, US-friendly viewpoint?

A final shortcoming of the book is that it veers away from explaining Muslim anger in chapters 7 and 8 and
instead wanders off into explaining why some Muslims have an affinity with al-Qa’eda and what type of society Muslims desire. While these are certainly interesting topics, they detract from the central focus of the book. Yet this deviation does not deprecate the overall quality of this work, and as such Kull’s work remains a worthy addition for those interested in understanding the contentious relationship between America and the Muslim world.

Mark Grzegorzweski
(University of South Florida)


War is one of the most studied subjects, yet a vast literature lacks good general and comprehensive studies of the phenomenon and its associated elements fully updated for the contemporary world. The two weighty tomes reviewed here promise, at face value at least, to help fill that void.

Comprising 46 short chapters authored by a strong list of academics, policy makers and military practitioners, The Oxford Handbook of War is divided into ten parts. Part I addresses the basic nature and characteristics of war and its causes, with opening chapters by eminent strategic thinkers Sir Lawrence Freedman and Hew Strachan. The following five sections address moral and legal aspects of war; theories of warfare; war’s conduct at the political-strategic level; non-Western perspectives; and the military conduct of war, including, inter alia, chapters on the three major geographical domains, counter-insurgency and logistics. Part VII dissects the role of industrial, economic and technological factors and is followed by sections on civil–military factors; societal aspects; and finally, a section on the future of war. The editors provide a thoughtful and sound, if disconcerting, conclusion on the unpredictability of war in a time of international systemic uncertainty.

The Ashgate Research Companion to War takes an altogether different approach. The subtitle gives an indication of the book’s perhaps hopeful intent: to investigate the origins or causes of war and identify avenues for war prevention. In their introduction the editors introduce readers to the concept of ‘polemology’, a term coined by the rather obscure late French theoretician Gaston Bouthoul to describe the multidisciplinary historical approach to the study of war he developed in the post-Second World War period. The book explicitly sets out to introduce this French concept to the English-speaking world by gathering together a collection of essays on war from ‘different theoretical and cultural perspectives’ (p. 4). The book is divided into four parts. The first provides a wide range of historical and theoretical perspectives on the phenomenon of war and its causes. The second part consists of eight studies of especially war-prone periods, ranging from the wars of ancient Athens through to the interwar period in Europe and the origins of the Second World War. The third part includes essays on the Cold War and a disparate series of essays on contemporary aspects of warfare ranging from the employment of child soldiers through to cyber-warfare and the implications of climate change for violent conflict. The final part applies big picture ideas from political science theory on the patterns of major power war, including two chapters by the leading proponents of ‘long-cycle’ theory and a conclusion that attempts to apply the principles of ‘polemology’ to the contemporary world and identify ways to avoid future great power conflicts.

A highlight of the Ashgate volume is Azar Gat’s short summary of his book-length study of the role of war across the entire history of human civilisation. Most of the historical chapters tend towards descriptive narrative, however, raising questions about their role within the overall collection. The history itself is dominated by political science, but with a definite bias to the abstract world of international relations theory rather than to the more practical, policy-relevant realm of strategic studies. The last part relays the unhelpful message that the theory of cyclical patterns of great power conflict suggests that such wars may, or may not, recur in the coming decades: a convoluted way of stating that the future is unknowable, and war unpredictable.

Both books have a strong Western cultural bias. Indeed, the Ashgate book is wholly Atlanticist in its authorship and, other than a single chapter on Islamic warfare, heavily Eurocentric. This is surprising given the stated ‘polemological’ aim to take into account
different cultural perspectives, which in the book seems to amount primarily to publicising in the English language literature the perspectives of little-known French intellectuals: a narrow, if worthy, outcome. The Oxford collection in contrast makes a concerted effort to widen its focus, with the section on non-Western ways of war providing chapters on Russian, Chinese and Japanese perspectives. Another chapter surveys the emerging powers of Brazil, China and India. Most notably, the chapter on Japan is written by a retired Japanese admiral and that on China by leading People’s Liberation Army strategist Major-General Peng Guang Qian, the latter quite a coup for the editors.

Ultimately, the value of *The Ashgate Research Companion to War* is primarily limited to disseminating the ideas of French thinkers to a wider, English-speaking audience. However, if a comprehensive study of war from different perspectives is the aim, then it is the *Oxford Handbook of War* that achieves the task successfully. It is a fine primer on many, albeit not all, contemporary aspects of war, which will appeal to students from both civilian and military worlds at all levels, while also providing a valuable reference tool for even the most seasoned of researchers.

Chris Rahman
(Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security [ANCORS], University of Wollongong)


Although globalisation is not a new topic in the social sciences, it has been a controversial subject over the years. This becomes even more evident when globalisation deepens and develops to its contemporary phase, in which the advance of telecommunications, democracy, culture and the financial, economic and migration flows are interconnected. Luke Martell’s book is an answer to the demand for a multifaceted and closer-to-societies look.

The author’s main concern in this work is fundamentally to rescue the connection of political science and economics with sociology, by creating a reliable bridge through which the studies of the latter, when applied to international relations, can acquire proper consistency. In other words, what the author mainly seeks is to frame the great themes of international relations within sociological aspects, namely migrations, culture, economics, war and also the organisation of the international system itself. Therefore such an approach may provide the necessary background for understanding these topics in a broad sense.

The way the book is organised is useful both for those who have never had contact with a sociological approach to international relations and for researchers aiming to understand which are the state-of-the-art paths of debate adopted in this field of investigation.

The division of the chapters is remarkable (thirteen in total), as it allows a focus on each of the issues and makes a connection between them. Thus the thesis of the book is continuous rather than fragmentary as might be found in a textbook. Through a robust bibliographic review, Martell also manages to articulate the main authors and their themes within the sociological spectrum, without losing sight of its peculiarities (the chapters referring to migrations, culture and the relation between democracy and justice deserve a special highlight).

Contrary to what is usually found in books related to the sociology of IR, Martell is not extreme at any point. He provides balanced analyses of all the themes discussed. Moreover, while not to say that his analysis lacks originality, one can consider that his moderate pessimism provides the book’s tone and, precisely for this reason, he turns it into an instigating guide for a multidisciplinary area of international relations.

Fabrício Henricco Chagas Bastos
(University of São Paulo)


This volume, edited by B.J.C. McKercher, gathers a significant collection of texts on key issues of diplomacy such as context, great, middle or developing powers, international organisations and military alliances, economy, conflict and cooperation. The volume aims to provide a better understanding of contemporary diplomatic practices in the context of the twenty-first century, starting from the idea that great powers always seek to defend their strategic advantages and secure their position in the international arena (p. xv). This is to be done through non-contentious means by giving a comparative time and space to all issues
discussed. It should be mentioned that the context of diplomacy plays the role of an introduction rather than following the pattern established by the rest of the chapters.

The prologue of the volume begins with a declaration by Lord Palmerston made in 1848 regarding Britain’s conduct of foreign relations: ‘[we] have no eternal allies, and have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is in our duty to follow’ (p. xv). Starting from this, the editor makes a comprehensive presentation of the main theories of international relations in the post-Cold War context. In spite of its very clear and concise language, the volume is addressed to the educated reader who is already acquainted with the issues debated.

The volume is divided into seven parts, each of them being allocated a comparable amount of space and time. The collection benefits from the contributions of authors who come from a diverse background in academia, think tanks, the military or the governmental sector. A positive aspect of the editor’s work is the idea of gathering together studies covering the three degrees of evolution of the world powers: emerging, medium and great powers. Each of these studies is perfectly structured and emphasises its purpose precisely, without being distracted by unnecessary detail. The main strength of the book lies in the extensive amount of information and analysis, which is well ordered and follows a similar pattern through the volume. As a side note the lack of a general conclusion is regrettable as it could have provided the reader with a rounder perspective of the findings and would have given the book an overall symmetry.

The contributions are all very well written; the lines of reasoning are fluid and easily understood. The tone is a neutral one: as the aim is to investigate and corroborate the information, the authors contributing to this volume refrain from becoming judgemental towards any of the practices and policies described. Overall, the volume represents a good starting point in exploring contemporary diplomacy and international relations, and is recommended for both academics and non-specialists. It can be valued not only for finding basic information, but also for interpretation, analysis and reference.

Andrei Alexandru Babadac
(Université Libre de Bruxelles)


What does the study of world politics entail? Is it merely an account of the multitude of international interactions, their histories and likely trajectories; or is it an exploration into what global life should and should not be like? What is the role of international affairs scholars – are they merely observers or are they activists? These have been some of the questions that have dominated the field of international relations ever since its beginnings. Himadeep Muppidi’s prescient account demonstrates the fictitiousness of the binaries underpinning most of these inquiries. The normative and the descriptive in the study of IR need not be construed as opposites; instead, the consideration of international affairs does not have to be dispassionate to be deemed objective. On the contrary, as Muppidi’s own polemical account vividly reveals, rigour and emotion can coexist on the academic page just as they do in the complex patterns animating global life.

Apart from rethinking the practices of world affairs, Muppidi’s project is also programmatic – it puts forth a proposal for an anti-colonial IR. As he demonstrates, the ‘colonial imaginary’ characterising the discipline has ‘acted to constitute, unilaterally, the ostensibly universal and seemingly objective character of the categories and modes of knowing of the colonizer’ (p. 52). In other words, Western theories and practices have not only othered the non-West, they have also rendered it redundant. With considerable honesty and tenderness, Muppidi reveals that non-Western actors ‘are always already dead within the world of international relations. Their voices, consents, and worldviews do not go into the making of the core concepts of IR. Their difference does not make a difference to our theorizations and imaginations of world politics’ (p. 161).

What emerges from the exploration is a perceptive challenge to the dominant discourses and analytical frameworks of IR. At the same time, Muppidi’s discerning account raises a number of probing questions whose response entails a profound rethinking of the disciplinary purview. Furthermore, this is a book that must be read by anyone thinking about committing to a lifelong journey in the study and practice of global affairs. In this respect, Muppidi’s thoughtful and extremely accessible exploration of the colonising framework dominating the
Emilian Kavalski
(University of Western Sydney)


In recent years there has been a remarkable proliferation of literature – critical and exhortatory – about the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). While this has included many derivative contributions, Anne Orford’s International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect constitutes a compelling and original critique which transcends the often circular – and largely unhelpful – academic debates to date.

Orford argues that R2P is the latest manifestation of a world view that can be traced to Dag Hammarskjold’s tenure as UN Secretary General. Hammarskjold’s understanding of authority as protection, she argues, echoes the works of Hobbes and Schmitt and sacrifices constitutional accountability and popular sovereignty for the greater good of protection (p. 170). An agenda that links ‘authority, responsibility and protection’, she argues, ‘is at once revolutionary and authoritarian’ (p. 109). The conflation leads, via the centralisation of power for the benefit of the many, to the denial of individual agency and, in the Schmittian conception, to the point where ‘the freedom of the individual was incorporated above the material interests or needs of any given individual or group’ (p. 111). R2P’s conception of authority as the capacity to protect ‘tends to privilege certain kinds of institutions and certain forms of action over others ... the turn to protection functions to privilege de facto over de jure authority, or fact over right’ (p. 133). While R2P recognises both the state’s and the ‘international community’s’ jurisdiction and responsibility, it crucially fails to outline how authority transfers from the former to the latter. Orford suggests these are more than obscure theoretical or legal concerns as the policies ‘implemented through the responsibility to protect concept have limited the capacity of decolonised states to realise self-determination, to redistribute property, to restructure authority and to exercise power over life and death’ (p. 208).

There is arguably an inflation of the deleterious impact of R2P; there is too little analysis of the way ‘humanitarian interventions’ were authorised in the post-Cold War era prior to 2005 when there was arguably even less regulation. Orford does an excellent job of uncovering concealed normative agendas, but are these agendas inherently nefarious or just naïve (p. 209)? Her claim that ‘only the “international community” ... may legitimately stage a revolution in the decolonised world’ is questionable in the light of the events in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya which occurred soon after this book was published (p. 209). Nonetheless, this is a book of immense importance and one that serious scholars interested in R2P – whatever their pre-existing views – should read.

Aidan Hehir
(University of Westminster)


This book is written by eighteen of the best experts in the field of the Middle East and comprises 36 chapters. The main purpose and focal point of this book is to analyse the changes in the Arab world and the authors aim to do this on both a small and large scale by providing a general theoretical framework. Their other purpose is to provide analysis for the better understanding of changes in the Arab world and, as a result, help American politicians in their policy making.

In this book, the Middle Eastern countries are divided into three groups. The first group consists of countries that have experienced a revolution. Egypt, Tunisia and Libya are among these. The second group includes countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Jordan, Morocco and Algeria, which face the possibility of revolution. The third group includes countries such as Iran, Turkey and Israel which seek to influence the Arabian revolutions.

In addition, issues such as the causes of the Arab revolutions, the role of Islamist forces, the impact of the revolutions on Arab–Israeli peace, the role of media in the revolutions and other aspects are discussed. Another purpose of this book is to evaluate the influence of great powers such as America, Russia, China and Europe in the framework of the Arab Spring.
In view of these features it can be considered that this book is one of the best works that has been written about different aspects of the changes in the Arab world. It should be said that the authors have been able to achieve their aims in analysing the different aspects of the Arab Spring very well. The other feature of this book is its attractive and up-to-date topics. Moreover, it is well organised in terms of method and chapter classification and the reader can understand its concept easily. Despite these positive points, it seems that in some cases the aspects of policy making and recommendations for American politicians are somewhat underdeveloped.

Ghasem Torabi
(Islamic Azad University, Hamedan Branch, Iran)

The US–EU Security Relationship by Wyn Rees.

This is a study of security narrowly defined as issues that involve questions of force. It focuses on a paradox: a growing divergence between the US and the EU concerning many security matters but convergence in order to deal with new security challenges in the face of which ‘the US and the EU have been obliged to find innovative ways of working together’ (p. 14).

In the opening chapter US–EU differences are carefully drawn: the US is primarily a unitary state with a strong sense of sovereignty and purpose and able to project hard power globally, and the EU is less than sovereign, troubled by divergent views from within, unable to project global hard power, but which embraces globalisation, multilateralism and holds up an attractive, ethical and multilateral model of soft power. There is nothing here to surprise the reader, but this is followed by the intriguing issue of whether the two can successfully complement each other. This is a discernible sub-theme that runs through successive chapters.

Much of the book is a litany of differences that have troubled security relations, or about misperceptions of worth: ‘The US has not accorded the EU sufficient credit for the transformational role it has played in central and eastern Europe and the stabilizing influence it has projected into the Balkans and north Africa’ (p. 104). Perhaps it is inevitable that the two sides, which have different capabilities and differing attitudes to so many issues, would find it difficult always to give credit where credit is due.

However, homeland security, which is the area that has thrown up the most novel challenges, has also prompted closer cooperation. Here are the strongest forces of US–EU convergence. ‘What has emerged has been a major area of activity that did not exist prior to 9/11’ (p. 155). This is remarkable because the US has been engaged in a war on terror, at least until President Obama took office, whereas Europeans have viewed matters in terms of criminal outrages requiring commensurate address. In short, Americans and Europeans might disagree on the nature of the terrorist threat, how best to deal with it and what are its causes, but they have still managed to cooperate. Tantalisingly the paradox of divergence and convergence remains, but close security relations between the two traditional allies continues.

Rees is rightly known for his expertise in security studies and this book will not disappoint those who want a comprehensive and well-written analytical account of US–EU security relations. It is well constructed and a very impressive synthesis of the extant literature leavened by the author’s own original research.

Alan P. Dobson
(St Andrews University)

The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research by Alex Schmid (ed.).
Abingdon: Routledge, 2011. 719pp., £150.00, ISBN 978041541578

The number of publications on terrorism and counter-terrorism has grown exponentially since 9/11. Security scholars often find it difficult to keep up to date with this ever-growing literature, and that is why the publication of this overview of the field of terrorism in the last two decades should be welcomed. The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research has been edited by the well-known expert Alex P. Schmid, in his capacity as director of the prestigious Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) at the University of St Andrews. The handbook’s unique selling point is that the chapters are based on the questionnaire responses of 92 terrorism experts from more than 20 countries, as well as the
specific scholarship and experience of the contributors and the editor, who has authored 4 and co-authored another 4 out of the book’s 10 chapters. Unsurprisingly, the 92 terrorism scholars consulted hold very different views on the various topics covered in this handbook: from the definition of terrorism and typologies of terrorist groups, to the leading theories to study political violence, and the best databases and resources on terrorist incidents. Reaching a final conclusion or synthesis on these issues is unfeasible and, therefore, this systematic review should be seen as a state-of-the-art collection of scholarly research on terrorism studies.

The breadth and depth of the chapters and appendices of this encyclopedic handbook will catch the attention of scholars of violent politics. They might be particularly attracted to the chapters on ‘theories of terrorism’ and ‘databases on terrorism’. First, the chapter on theories is indicative of the field, as it is mostly devoted to non-state terrorism. The authors are quick to conclude that there is ‘no general theory of terrorism’, and argue that this is partly due to the absence of a generally accepted definition as well as conceptual stretching of the term ‘terrorism’. These shortcomings have long been identified and, unfortunately, are likely to be some of the defining characteristics of the field in the near future. Second, the chapter on data sets provides a valuable overview of twenty public databases on political violence. Given the recent trends in the social sciences, a chapter on internet-based sources is most welcome, as it encourages academics to mix qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

As a final point, the volume would have benefited from including a chapter on how terrorism subsides or ends. The field of terrorism studies has devoted substantial attention to how political violence starts (root causes), but much less research has focused on how it declines. Fascinating work is being published in this area, and governments and societies affected by insurgent terrorism would have been interested in this emerging topic. In spite of this minor shortcoming, research institutions that focus on security issues would do well to add this handbook to their library catalogues.

Diego Muro
(Barcelona Institute of International Studies [IBEI])
upon a number of important contemporary issues, such as rape as a weapon of war, terrorism, the impact of popular and visual culture, flexible female employment, ethical consumption, trafficking and prostitution. The main strength of this textbook is that it demonstrates to its readers that ‘the personal is international’ through accessible and well-written chapters, captivating examples, original seminar exercises and photographs. As the contributors ‘Think Small in Order to Think Big’, they convincingly show that international relations is peopled by persons – men and women – who matter.

Petra Debusscher
(Ghent University)


The present volume has been written by leading experts of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and continues this Swedish institution’s tradition of publishing a survey of the world military condition every year since 1969. The book contains extensive information about military developments, military costs in different countries, worldwide arms transfers and sales, weapons manufacture, the status of nuclear weapons and peace-building efforts by the United Nations, as well as important military information about the world’s major countries in 2010.

Therefore, the main objective and also the authors’ main argument are to provide the latest information and analyses of the military situation in 2010. Accordingly, military developments that occurred in the world in 2010 are considered first. Following this, the latest developments in the field of military budgets, transfer of weapons and production of weapons are examined. The next chapter addresses the status of unconventional weapons and finally the conclusions are presented.

The authors have achieved their goal of presenting accurate and comprehensive information regarding the latest military changes and trends in 2010 and therefore this book is likely to be useful for military and security experts and those in need of military information and data. Nevertheless, the book lacks a certain creativity and innovation in terms of theory or methods. In other words, there is a lack of any theoretical analysis and considerable reliance on the presentation of raw information and data.

It should also be pointed out that, given that the authors of this book are Western writers, they have observed military issues from the perspective and approach of Western countries. Consequently many of the problems of non-Western countries have not been studied. For example, civil wars and limited wars, which are the main problem for non-Western countries, have been given little consideration by the authors.

Ghasem Torabi
(Islamic Azad University, Hamedan Branch, Iran)


The Politics of Military Occupation offers a systematic and normative analysis of the curious nature of military occupations as an underdeveloped theoretical concept in international law. Stirk employs normative legal arguments as the basis for a comparative analysis of military occupations so as to reveal their political nature. The urgency to view them from this perspective highlights the uncertainty that exists as a constant across different occupations. The argument situates the discussion of occupations into a language that can be understood by both scholars and practitioners in the field. Most importantly, Stirk endeavours to operationalise military occupation as a form of government, that is, a political phenomenon. The concept of establishing military occupations as a category within a typology of governance is a difficult but meaningful task given the varied contexts and circumstances that (loosely) serve to define how they are conceived of in scholarship and in collective memory.

Written in a clear and erudite style, the book does a commendable job of focusing on the main conceptual points while providing detail through the frequent use of historical examples to provide context to the more nuanced legal arguments. The first part addresses the main difficulty of outlining the basic definition of military occupations both from a historical evolution of the concept (as distinct from conquest) and from a moral dimension. The middle section of the text discusses the distinctions between military and civilian governments in military occupations. The later chapters address the more contested
notions of political obligations under occupation, the concept of sovereignty as a key element in international relations, and justice under the laws of occupation. The final substantive chapter takes up the contemporary dynamic of military occupation as a means for regime change. A short conclusion provides some review and final thoughts. A highlight of the work is Stirk’s discussion of sovereignty and obligation in the context of the norm of self-determination.

This monograph is not about ‘politics’ in terms of the everyday operation of government. In this context, politics is employed so as to elucidate the theme that military occupations are in fact political and as such they represent a distinct conceptual framework of governance. Stirk succeeds in tracing the outlines of a dynamic and evolving concept in international law in a way that helps to make sense of a phenomenon that seems to defy conceptualisation.

Christopher M. Brown (Arcadia University, Philadelphia)


The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is an introduction to China’s policy towards Africa. It is a welcome initiative that enables researchers interested in Sino–African relations to access a systematised collection on four fora capturing the essence of the partnership. This offers a unique opportunity to compare policy achievements across different fora, track certain policies and assess whether they were successfully fulfilled. It also brings the researcher one step closer to evaluating the realities of the ‘win-win’ cooperation that is often supposedly associated with China’s involvement in Africa.

The study offers a valuable historical background on Sino–African relations which goes to show that the ever-growing presence of China in Africa is not recent, but rather goes back to as early as the 1950s. The book offers excellent arguments on the importance of Africa to China’s policies, from securing an ‘all-weather friend’ in the post-Tiananmen events to the extent to which trade levels feed into the legitimacy of the ruling party in Beijing.

The author succeeds in showing the imbalance in Sino–African cooperation by rightfully observing that while China is one player with a clear agenda of national interests and priorities, Africa comprises multiple players which lack coherent bargaining preferences (p. 94). Africa’s lack of initiative to take on bargaining responsibility is viewed by Taylor as the main challenge to the future of the forum and partnership in general. The author warns against a repeated chapter of economic dependence where Africa lies at the receiving end (p. 101), and explains how this is not preferred by Chinese leaders.

The historical descriptive approach with case-by-case analysis of FOCAC is very helpful. It offers a structured reading of the fora providing an overview of key policy points from previous agendas, then segueing into the forum’s key concerns and policy agreements. This approach facilitates a systematised analysis without ignoring the unique contexts in which each forum happens. For example, the reader is alerted to the way in which post-Tiananmen influenced FOCAC I in favour of African interests, and the Olympic Games in the midst of the Sudan crisis impacted on FOCAC III, while the global financial crisis influenced FOCAC IV negatively as far as African interests were concerned.

Taylor’s endeavour is innovative and breaks new ground in regard to understanding Sino–African relations. However, the book could benefit from being more representative of African narratives and perspectives on the issues of win-win cooperation; the sources listed are heavily drawn from Chinese newspapers and Chinese government documents while very few African sources are mentioned.

Lina Benabdallah (University of Florida)


This work is a collection of articles, book chapters and conference papers by author Marc Trachtenberg, which have been woven together to ‘show through example how to go about doing good [historical work]’ (p. vii). The central argument is that explanations of international political phenomena are best achieved through rigorous theorising as well as attention to method.
In particular, Trachtenberg highlights realist IR theory and its focus on the exigencies of the international state system (chs 1 and 2). To be sure, theory does not always cleave to empirical reality; indeed, Trachtenberg sides with Kenneth Waltz in suggesting that good theory should not ‘mirror’ reality (p. 48). However, theory can sharpen scholars’ expectations about state behaviour and, in this way, can significantly improve the quality of research.

Trachtenberg leads by example. Six empirical chapters showcase his scholarship on events such as US policy towards Eastern Europe in 1945 (ch. 3) and the 2003 Iraq War (ch. 9). At every turn, theoretical expectations about state action inform Trachtenberg’s selection and interrogation of sources. Commensurate with his reputation as a world-class historian, he is assiduous in providing evidence for his analyses. He not only quotes heavily from relevant primary sources, but also extensively notes the secondary literature too, including works that exhibit differing interpretations of primary documents from his own.

The book’s main limitation is its failure to highlight the (not inconsiderable) weaknesses of extant IR theory. This is especially true of Trachtenberg’s treatment of realism, but all theoretical lenses come with attendant analytic costs. How, then, should scholars decide a priori which theoretical lens will grant them the most leverage on a particular question or historical event? More broadly, Trachtenberg might also be charged with overstating the utility of deductive theorising in general; purely inductive research is given short shrift, and there is little discussion of theory building. As a final note of caution, Trachtenberg’s clear commitment to positivistic social science will perhaps render this book of less use to those on the ‘critical wing’ of security studies.

Nevertheless, The Cold War and After remains a useful ‘how to’ guide for those interested in doing historical research. It will be a particularly valuable asset for (post)graduate students, although established IR scholars will also benefit. For those occupying the broad centre of international studies, this book is a master class in historical and qualitative methods.

Peter Harris
(University of Texas at Austin)


In this book John Vasquez and Marie Henehan explore the idea that the study of the past hundred years shows that disputes over territory have played the greatest role in creating and expanding war. The first part of the book has a mainly theoretical context in which the authors have attempted to analyse theoretically the relationship between territorial disputes and wars.

In this book the main questions are: why do most wars occur between neighbours and those having common territorial disputes? And which of these two variables is the main reason for war: contiguity or territory? To answer these questions, the authors examine the extent to which other factors involved in territorial disputes increase or reduce the likelihood of war. In addition they explore the relationship between peace and territory, thus clarifying many aspects of the relationship between the two critical subjects.

This is without doubt one of the best books written on the topic of conflict studies with the emphasis on territory in causing a war. Despite this, it seems that there is too much emphasis on the role of territory as the most important cause of war, ignoring other factors and variables. The history of wars shows that factors other than territorial disputes have a central role in war. In addition, in many cases, territorial disputes have often been a pretext for war with other objectives in mind.

Similarly, an important part of the disputes between East and West during the Cold War era after the Second World War concerned political and ideological disputes. We are also now faced with disputes and wars where territory is the least important factor. In addition, most recent conflicts have not occurred among neighbours or because of territorial disputes, but are between local groups, which often have very broad implications. Dozens of internal conflicts among African countries and civil conflicts in some countries in the Middle East and other regions of the world can be used to illustrate this point.

Ghasem Torabi
(Islamic Azad University, Hamedan Branch, Iran)
Comparative Politics


While labour plays an important role in many accounts of democratisation, we know very little about how it has fared in the aftermath of democracy’s ‘Third Wave’. And while scholars have long studied the various effects of neo-corporatism in Western Europe, we know equally little about corporatism and its effects in new democracies. José Alemán’s Labor Relations in New Democracies: East Asia, Latin America and Europe is an important contribution to filling these gaps.

I would highlight three of the book’s multiple findings: first, labour has benefited comparatively little from democratisation in the Third Wave. Second, labour market regulations play an important role in providing workers with the political leverage to negotiate effectively. Higher employment protection is associated with a higher likelihood of corporatist bargains, more wage-setting regulations with higher wages and a greater likelihood of strikes. Third, stronger labour unions are associated with more industrial conflicts in new democracies. As a consequence, social pacts have little impact on preventing industrial conflicts.

The book assembles an impressive array of evidence. A statistical analysis using panel data on wage developments and strikes is followed by an analysis of the determinants of social pacts using qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) on an original data set and case studies of labour politics after democratisation in South Korea and Chile.

The statistical evidence is largely convincing and Alemán should be applauded, particularly for creating a novel data set of social pacts, and more generally for his close attention to questions of measurement and conceptualisation. While the two case studies do not introduce much novel primary evidence, they are well written and tightly argued, adding much to clarify and support Alemán’s claims.

Generally convinced by the book’s arguments, I wish it had engaged more with historical and contextual factors. Alemán is aware of the importance of historical legacies, ending his book by emphasising ‘factors that have proved more durable and resistant to change than many recent transformations would seem to suggest’ (p. 147). Yet in his theorising and analysis, questions of path dependence, sequencing and institutional interaction are mostly absent. And while the case studies mention the role of industrial and productive structure, these issues are missing from most of the analysis. Here the book might have benefited from engaging with the ‘Varieties of Capitalism’ literature which describes labour relations in the context of the broader structure of the economy. These quibbles aside, Alemán has written an important book, with a wealth of information that should appeal to scholars of corporatism and of democratisation as well as those interested in the political economy of new democracies.

Sebastian Karcher (Northwestern University, Illinois)


Through seventeen essays contributed by world-leading experts in the area, this volume edited by Gilman, Goldhammer and Weber is an outstanding contribution to contemporary study of the underside of global political economy – the so-called deviant globalisation – its complexity and the implications for the contemporary international system.

Contrary to conventional arguments, the book advances several critical hypotheses which position illicit activities not only as an indispensable part of legitimate trade, but also as the driving force that enables the free market to function. The authors develop a Durkheimian approach within which they argue that there is no mix of policies and law enforcement strategies that may ever be able to curtail cross-border deviant activities. Deviant globalisation is a permanent phenomenon. The goal should not be to eliminate deviant globalisation, but to cushion the shocks and disturbances of its underbelly.

Deviant globalisation is important as it satisfies contemporary collective desires that have created lucrative opportunities for entrepreneurs to generate profits from the moral outrage and the so-called ‘regulatory arbitrage’. For those in the global North, deviant globalisation presents opportunities for meeting unfulfilled and/or unavailable demands – deviant goods and serv-
ices. The global South, however, utilises deviant globalisation as a way of generating personal wealth. Often, illicit economies may even be necessary for some communities to survive and boost economic development.

Although the authors do not aim to be comprehensive, the collection of essays ranges from the black market in human organs and trafficking in hazardous waste, to arms trafficking, criminal insurgencies and cybercrime. The wide selection of case studies reinforces the book’s statement that deviant globalisation manifests itself in various ways and in multiple locations and is deeply embedded in formal economic transactions.

One of the merits of the volume is its combination of the theoretical framework presented in the introduction and conclusion and in-depth case study materials. Having provided vivid examples of thriving shadow industries, the book could have been improved by establishing clearer causal links between illicit activities and traditional notions of wealth, power and development. Furthermore, although the theoretical framework is persuasively articulated in the introduction, only some of the authors of the edited volume’s essays have managed to develop explicit links with the theoretical arguments advanced by the editors.

Despite some minor gaps, the book is a great source of inspiration for future studies and an excellent source of information on a wide range of issues. It will be interesting both for graduate students as well as for advanced scholars of international relations, security studies, criminology and other related disciplines.

Yuliya Zabyelina
(Masaryk University, Brno)


In this book Carol Graham presents a persuasive case for using the responses to happiness surveys to inform public policy. This represents a departure from the usual focus in economics on measuring well-being in terms of income. As Graham notes, income provides an unreliable guide to how well a person’s life is going, in those cases where his or her consumption choices depart from what is in his or her best interests – consider, for example, the revealed preferences of those suffering from obesity or an addiction. Based on her own extensive research, Graham finds that happiness is correlated with the same set of background factors – income, health, macroeconomic stability, employment, age and friendship – within a wide variety of countries. Paradoxically, however, income is only weakly correlated with happiness across countries.

In addition, Graham’s own research reveals that those living in unfavourable circumstances (e.g. poverty) may report being as happy as those living in favourable circumstances (e.g. affluence). According to Graham those two paradoxes emerge because of the capacity of humans to adapt to their surrounding circumstances. On the one hand, those living in adversity take greater pleasure from the little they can achieve, although they find it more difficult to adapt when they are surrounded by people who are more fortunate. On the other hand, those living in prosperity are more likely to be frustrated by a failure to achieve the more demanding goals they set themselves. Graham develops the intriguing suggestion that those with inadequate opportunities are more likely to adopt a conception of happiness that emphasises the day-to-day experience of pleasure and pain, while those with sufficient opportunities are more likely to adopt a conception that emphasises how well their overall life is going. Indeed the evidence suggests that the two paradoxes disappear when survey respondents are asked to rank their life according to the best possible life they can imagine.

The main merits of this book lie in its examination of the determinants of happiness and in its defence of the importance of happiness surveys for designing and evaluating public policy. Surprisingly, we are not presented with much argument as to why we should prefer happiness to objective list measures of well-being. It is noteworthy that the main correlates of happiness would typically feature on such a list. Moreover, they are immune to the phenomenon of adaptation so superbly elucidated by the author in this book.

Simon Wigley
(Bilkent University, Ankara)


This book is a sequel to Hallin and Mancini’s widely acclaimed book Comparing Media Systems (2004), in
which they developed the framework to study the media–politics relationship and classified their cases in one of the three models: Democratic Corporatist, Liberal and Polarized Pluralist. These typologies are based on four dimensions of media systems analysis: (1) structure of the media market; (2) political parallelism; (3) professionalism; and (4) the role of the state. Hallin and Mancini proposed that media systems outside the Western world of established democracies could fit into the Polarized Pluralist model, which is debated in this book. The models advocated by Hallin and Mancini are empirical and not normative, in which they also acknowledge the dynamism and the constant historical change that often accompany the development of media systems.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I consists of seven case studies from individual countries, while Part II comprises multi-case studies, focusing on methodological issues for the comparative study of media and politics. Many of the authors found existence of several characteristics of the Polarized Pluralist model in the respective cases they studied. Some found the existence of the traits of each of the three models in non-Western countries. For example, Hadland noted the presence of the features of each of these models in South Africa. What is fascinating about the study is the attempt by each scholar to suggest additional variables, taking into account peculiarities of respective cases to explain media systems rather than mechanically applying Hallin and Mancini’s three models.

Drawing upon the concept of ‘hybrid regimes’, Volter has proposed an additional model to study the media–politics relations in new democracies. Similarly, Roudakova argues for looking at the processes while acknowledging the importance of structural or systems-level analysis in studying the relationship between media and politics. This becomes imperative in new democracies/hybrid regimes where ‘media outlets have been particularly important sites for social and political mobilization, division, containment and conflict’ (p. 272). While critiquing Hallin and Mancini’s model, McCargo argues that one should ‘recognize the importance of diversity’ while studying the media systems in a broader geographical context and characterises the media in the Asia-Pacific region as ‘Partisan Polyvalence’ (p. 204).

The book makes valuable and intellectually stimulating contributions to extending the dialogue among scholars studying the media systems in the Western and non-Western worlds and unravels the complexities in applying a framework outside the cases of original analysis. It is a welcome addition to the debates on comparative media research and would be useful for scholars of media and communication studies, political sociology and comparative politics.

Taberez Ahmed Neyazi
(Kyoto University)

Comparative Regional Integration: Europe and Beyond by Finn Laursen (ed.). Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. 282pp., £60.00, ISBN 978 1 4094 0181 0

One of the main puzzles in the field of comparative regionalism is the role-model impact of the European Union. Almost everyone knows that the EU is *sui generis* and it is therefore very difficult, if not impossible, to copy the regional integration process in Europe. However, the EU has long been the reference point for academic studies and policy debates on regional integration schemes in other parts of the world. Hence, to make an explicit comparison between the EU and other regional projects is a welcome sign of scholarship to tackle this important puzzle.

As the subtitle of this book suggests, ‘Europe’ is at the centre of comparative inquiries conducted by the authors. Organised according to different continents, Part II of the book (chs 4–6) focuses on the difference between Europe and North America; Part III (chs 7–8) explores the inspirations that South America and Africa have drawn from the EU; Part III (chs 9–10) looks into the European lessons for East Asia; and Part IV (ch. 11) draws a grand comparison among NAFTA, ASEAN, MERCOSUR and the EU. These detailed analyses, unlike other edited volumes on comparative regionalism (including Finn Laursen’s previous book with the same title), go well beyond the description of individual regional projects and dwell firmly on the comparative studies of regional integration schemes.

Furthermore, several chapters comparatively examine specific aspects of regional integration and produce very interesting findings. In chapter 6, Robert Finbow focuses on the labour relations in NAFTA and the EU. His analysis points to the well-known difference of minimal vs. full institutionalisation between the two, and further shows that Europe has been gradually moving towards a ‘soft law’ approach to tackle the diversity among its
member states. In chapter 9, Sebastian Krapohl and his co-authors examine the diversified paths of judicial integration in NAFTA and MERCOSUR. Their study reveals that, though NAFTA and MERCOSUR differ in their judicial institutions, the two regional entities have both established a consistent case-law tradition—a feature not very different from the experiences of the EU.

Indeed, regional integration is a complex process. It may involve some or all of the economic, political, legal and security aspects. It may also be pursued under the different structure of domestic politics and international relations. These complexities make it difficult to conduct fruitful studies in comparative regionalism, and they also make it important to appreciate the unique experiences of European integration in a comparative framework. The book has made an important contribution in this regard.

Min Shu
(Waseda University, Tokyo)


The idea behind this book is a good one. Many claims have been made about the nature of post-Soviet regimes but there has been little by way of a consolidated review of the subject. This volume brings together theoretical discussions and case studies, with editorial synthesis in the introduction and the conclusion. The theory comes in three chapters by Timm Beichelt, Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, and Gero Erdmann, and focuses on different issues and problems that arise with the idea of regime hybridity. Beichelt argues that it makes sense to talk about regimes in the post-Soviet space as hybrids for conceptual and empirical reasons; they do not fit into ‘pure’ categories like ‘democracy’ or ‘autocracy’, and their existence as ‘hybrids’ shows that the condition of hybridity can be a durable one and the nature of hybridity can be changeable. Levitsky and Way review how uneven ‘playing fields’ in electoral politics sustain undemocratic rulers. Erdmann discusses the difficulties of using neopatrimonialism to discuss post-Soviet politics because of the ambiguities of the concept which make it of limited use for empirical work.

The case-study chapters are grouped in three sections. Russia gets three chapters: Margareta Mommsen uses systems theory to argue for the inherent instability of the regime; Vladimir Gel’man reviews the array of authoritarianism to be found sub-nationally in Russia; and Alexander Motyl argues that Russia is fascioid, that is, close to, but not quite fascist according to his synthetic definition of the term. In the next section two countries that have had colour revolutions—Ukraine and Georgia—are analysed as poor examples of democracy by Heiko Pleines, Pamela Jawad and Christian Timm. Finally, Central Asian politics is reviewed in essays by Paul Georg Geiss, who very usefully examines the tension between neo-patrimonial and bureaucratic-developmental states in the region, Sebastian Schiek and Stephan Hensell on Kazakh neopatrimonialism and the politics of elite inclusion, and Alexander Wolters on Kyrgyzstan.

All of the chapters are interesting and thoughtful but they are not always well integrated with the other chapters in the book. There is some dialogue—but it is by default—between Erdmann’s chapter and those of Geiss, Schiek and Hensell, while Mommsen and Wolters share some theoretical ground. Part of the problem is that some of the chapters feel as though they are being shoehorned into the volume: three of the chapters have been published in slightly different fashion elsewhere. Despite these problems this volume is still a very useful and commendable addition to the literature.

Neil Robinson
(University of Limerick)

General Politics


Anthropologist Marc Abélès’ book The Politics of Survival turns on the idea that the shift towards neo-liberal principles in an era of globalisation has essentially fostered a displacement of power from the political realm to the economic one. For Abélès, the obsessive, survivalist modernity associated with neo-liberalism is not only rife with discourses of risk and instability but also ‘reveals itself through the syndrome of insecurity and the persistent anguish concerning the durability of our world and our possible future’ (p. 102). This anguish, as
Abélès puts it, is practically reflected in emergent fears over potential catastrophes expected to take place in the future and is born out of the fetishisation of urban insecurity and ecological disaster.

Furthermore, the overwhelming focus on survival in the face of future catastrophe at the expense of present realities broadly underscores ‘the effects of the interiorization of the neoliberal moment in the contemporary political imaginary’ (p. 13). In short, what Abélès seeks to draw attention to in this book is why the focus on curtailing the destructive effects of economic and technological advancement ultimately shapes the ‘horizon of threat and survival’ (p. xiii). This argument leads, then, to the question of the kinds of action needed to reverse the trend of making survival the sole form of politics and to re-situate a more thoroughgoing focus on proper political concerns like social justice and economic equality.

Abélès suggests that the obsession with survival can be mitigated though a renewed focus instead on a politics of convivance – from the Latin, *cum vivere*, meaning ‘living together’ (p. 11). Convivance, according to Abélès, is based on participation and shared identity in the present, and ‘implies the possibility of realizing harmony between beings within society’ (p. 11). Overall, *The Politics of Survival* contains some fascinating discussions, and while it is not entirely novel, it provides a fresh look at the preoccupation with living and surviving in uncertain times, and is therefore worth reading by students of contemporary political studies.

Akin Akinwumi  
(Simon Fraser University, Vancouver)


While Machiavellian shrewdness and environmental activism may seem unlikely bedfellows, Compton and Bailey’s latest offering is a guidebook packed with politically savvy approaches to improving climate change policy. *Climate Clever* seeks to apply realism to a policy realm that has often placed principles above pragmatism and struggled as a consequence.

Although starting with congratulations for the reader on becoming the new Minister for Climate Change, the text provides strategic advice for climate campaigners as well as policy makers. ‘Introduce a policy in a form that is essentially toothless in order to get the required mechanisms in place, then adjust its settings bit by bit over time’ (p. 25), they advise, before drawing empirical examples of their adage from the European Emissions Trading Scheme. Broken into four tactical approaches – unilateralism, the art of persuasion, political exchange and shifting the balance of political resources – the text aims to provide solutions for any policy context, despite the primary focus on the UK and US.

With academia and activism often struggling to unite, *Climate Clever* impressively marries both worlds to produce a book that is small, portable and accessible, but also well researched and analytical. As a result, the text is just as appropriate for the desks of Whitehall civil servants as it is for the back pockets of activists. The chapter examining how to change the terms of political exchange is a particular highlight because of its combination of pragmatic *realpolitik* with large-scale policy reforms. For example, soon after recommending the centralisation of planning powers to minimise Nimbyism, the authors outline how the state could and should invest in the energy sector. To some readers, recommendations such as semi-nationalisation of energy companies may appear idealistic. Yet as the authors later point out, political contexts can be changed overnight if windows of opportunity are exploited effectively.

Rather than advocating every approach in all situations, the authors provide a menu of policy proposals to be consulted when the political reality allows. As such, *Climate Clever* combines the shrewdness required to manoeuvre effectively in cynical political contexts with a positive outlook that finds solutions where others would see only barriers. Compton and Bailey have produced a guidebook that reads without pretence, but with a prescient awareness of political reality. Indeed, as the book concludes, ‘When you think policy, think strategy too’ (p. 120).

Paul Tobin  
(University of York)


This collection of papers contains contributions from current or former members of the Department of
Politics at the University of Hull. The editors have managed to combine some excellent original articles, most notably from Noël O’Sullivan and Bhikhu Parekh on the philosophical rationale of the welfare state, with some novel and interesting perspectives that widen the discursive context of welfare. But the quality of papers is uneven to say the least.

The main problem revolves around the central thesis that most contributors uncritically accept: that the welfare state is withering. Although there is clearly a crisis of the welfare state because of a mismatch between available funding and the extension of entitlements, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) figures clearly show that welfare expenditure in most developed societies remains static at around 25 per cent (with the notable exception of Sweden where welfare expenditure has been falling for the last decade from a high of around 35 per cent in the mid-1990s). So crisis of welfare state yes, but withering?

The parameters of the crisis are well sketched in O’Sullivan’s and Matt Beech’s contributions, while Edward Page adds a useful perspective by focusing on the role of the bureaucracy, and Parekh considers the tensions between multiculturalism and solidarity. Simon Lee and Richard Woodward provide insights into the shift from mutualisation of risk to privatisation of individual gains, a key concern for long-term welfare funding. Justin Morris and Nicholas Wheeler focus on the conditions of international solidarity and welfare regimes and usefully broaden the context of discussion to geopolitical issues, while Mahrukh Doctor provides an instructive view of the Brazilian welfare regime.

There are, however, some contributions that can hardly disguise their ideological slant. Jack Hayward starts with a polemic against ‘reactionaries’ who want to roll back the welfare state. As mentioned above, there is in fact little evidence that welfare expenditure is falling, and the only evidence Hayward brings to the table is a citation of Wilkinson and Pickett’s book The Spirit Level, which notably does not make the point of decreasing welfare expenditure but of the effects of different welfare regimes in different states.

Other contributions may be of more interest to students of defence or the environment, and in fact might have been better placed elsewhere. Overall, this collection of papers offers some well-argued contributions but also some weaker, mainly polemical papers.

Axel Kaehne
(Edge Hill University)


A compelling account explaining terrorism requires two things: rigorous multi-level analysis with an interdisciplinary approach and in-depth exploration into terrorism past, present and future. Explaining Terrorism, a collection of carefully selected essays by Martha Crenshaw, fulfils these requirements. Guiding the reader through her journey on the study of terrorism, Crenshaw demonstrates how her take on the causes, processes and consequences of terrorism have changed since her first publication in 1972.

The book is organised into four sections, with an introductory chapter that sets out a framework to integrate the rest of the essays. The first set of essays offers insightful analyses of concepts and causes of terrorism as well as a convincing argument on the irrelevancy of the ‘old’ vs. ‘new’ terrorism dichotomy, since what is said to be new and what is said to be old reveal many similarities rather than firm differences (p. 66). Moving to the analysis of different approaches explaining terrorist behaviour, the second set of essays identifies which approach has more explanatory power: organisational, strategic or psychological. Crenshaw argues that the organisational approach with its focus on group dynamics is more relevant than the psychological approach, and a terrorist act is more instrumental at the collective level. The remaining two sets of essays consider government policies towards terrorism, and the organisational and psychological conditions that may lead to a decline of terrorist tactics. With regard to the former issue, a careful policy-making process is assumed to have a better chance of producing substantive policy even though Crenshaw admits that such an assumption would be difficult to measure.

Covering more than 30 years of research, this impressive collection of essays is well organised and full of arguments that push the reader to reconsider recent literature on terrorism. Nevertheless, Crenshaw sells herself short by choosing not to include more in-depth analyses of empirical cases. Therefore, readers unfamiliar with her 2010 research project Mapping Terrorist...
Organizations on developing models to produce a comprehensive comparative framework to study the evolution of terrorist organisations and trace their interaction over time, which will be applied to the case of al-Qa’eda and its affiliates, may think that terrorism, a highly visible and empirical subject, is studied in an overly abstract way. However, this should not hold them back from reading this accessible and innovative approach to the study of terrorism, which will surely be a great asset to those studying terrorist violence.

Ahmet Tolga Turker
(Istanbul Arel University)


Rethinking Contemporary Feminist Politics is a comprehensive account of the practices of three prominent UK feminist groups: the Fawcett Society, Women’s Aid and the website The F-Word. The ‘rethinking’ of the title refers to Dean’s reformulated understanding of radical politics, which takes cues from the radical democratic politics of Ernesto Laclau and seeks to move away from an understanding of the 1970s feminist ideals of autonomy and purity as fundamental to feminist radicalism. The book argues that, while some aspects of contemporary feminist activity may be interpreted as affirming a ‘deradicalisation’ thesis, it also consists of practices with a radical potential.

The book can roughly be divided into a theoretical section, consisting of a critique of narratives of feminist decline and an account of radicalism which draws on Laclau, Hannah Arendt and Linda Zerilli, and an empirical section consisting of detailed analysis of the three feminist groups. Both are interesting and valuable. Dean’s reworked account of radical politics is particularly important, providing a means of critiquing feminist practices without recourse to a narrow and prescriptive understanding of what feminism ‘ought’ to be. Meanwhile, his balanced discussion of contemporary feminist politics resists, as Dean puts it, an ‘overly celebratory’ account while also refusing totalising narratives of decline.

Nonetheless, while Dean constructs a convincing challenge to such narratives, he tends to be overly dismissive of the concerns of the authors discussed. The book contains little sustained consideration of why autonomy might be valuable to feminists and why its (perceived) loss might be mourned. This dismissive attitude persists into the empirical chapters. While Dean aims to challenge accounts of institutionalisation and de-radicalisation, for the most part the feminist groups discussed are not analysed in their interactions with the state. That they engage with state institutions is acknowledged, but the effect this might have had on their discourse is not examined: when Women’s Aid gives evidence to parliamentary committees, for example, does it alter its language to suit the changed discursive terrain? This is an unfortunate omission, as these instances have the potential to provide compelling evidence for or against the de-radicalisation thesis.

Dean’s optimism concerning feminist resurgence will as such be unlikely to convince those feminists who do value the ideals of autonomy and purity. However, the above criticisms do not detract from his rethinking of radicalism, which provides an extremely useful framework for the analysis of counter-hegemonic practices.

Fran Amery
(University of Birmingham)


Mark Drumbl’s newest book is an excellent contribution to the topical study of child soldiers, a field caught up in debate regarding the responsibility or lack of responsibility that child soldiers may bear for the acts of atrocity of which they are causal agents. In this book, Drumbl points to the unique position that child soldiers occupy on the continuum between responsible perpetrator of atrocity and blameless victim. He writes that ‘although scattered and incomplete, accounts of the conduct of child soldiers during atrocity-producing conflicts offer corrective counterweights to the dominant assumption of faultless passive victimhood’ (p. 81).

Drumbl acknowledges that despite the efforts of international law and policy to eradicate child soldiering, the practice persists globally and he turns, therefore, to issues of post-conflict reintegration and asks, among other questions, whether child soldiers are necessarily well served by formulaic stereotypes that no child can ever volunteer to participate in armed groups or commit human rights abuses without being forced. His reasoning for shedding light on the inaccuracy of the non-responsible agent lens through which child soldiers are generally viewed, he
argues, is to ensure that former child soldiers have an appropriate voice in the reconciliation and rebuilding processes that post-atrocity societies face.

In this book, Drumbl ‘advances the normative claim that transitional justice initiatives other than criminal trials, in particular truth commissions and endogenous mechanisms, can help facilitate reintegration and reconciliation in cases of child soldiers implicated in acts of atrocity’ (p. 20). It is interesting that, given his dismissal of the passive victim imagery, he wholly rejects the capacity of criminal trials to address the responsibility of child soldiers, especially those who might be deemed most responsible for acts of mass human rights violations. This argument, though, is consistent with his previous work that casts doubts on the usefulness of retributive justice processes (trials) to address the wrongdoing of those who contribute to mass atrocity.1

Overall, this is an insightful and ambitious project that aims to shake up the common NGO doctrine regarding children’s participation in armed conflict and will, no doubt, prove to be controversial. This book asks that the response to child soldiers be built on a more nuanced perception of their roles and responsibility, and suggests that such an approach should inform the development of law, best practices and policy.

Note

Kirsten J. Fisher
(University of Ottawa)


This volume engages the theory of development pioneered by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum and their capability approach (CA). Its chapters are an invitation to participate in the growing academic and policy discussion of human development. The focus on the CA is put at the forefront from page 1 where Esquith states the chapters’ intention to ‘extend, criticize, and reformulate the capability approach to human development’ (p. 1), but the book does not limit its discussion to these ideas, adding to what Dower presents as the globalisation of ethics in development (ch. 9). While providing interesting and compelling discussions, the volume lacks a unified examination of issues of power and institutions in development ethics.

The book operates around a central tension in development – analysed by Thompson in chapter 8 – between the need to give in to the ‘urgency’ of discussing the morality of development policies and practices and the need to create a space of deeper political and philosophical reflection on development issues, a tension clear throughout the chapters. Along these lines, some authors seem to accept the CA at face value, aiming at improving or extending an already taken-for-granted approach. That is the case with Alkire’s chapter arguing for further empirical engagement with the CA in a ‘prospective analysis’ of its applicability (ch. 1) or St Clair’s argumentation in favour of a pragmatist methodology in engaging with concrete everyday policies of multilateral institutions that assume the CA as their goal (ch. 5). The more philosophical or political revision of development ethics comes from the chapters of Schmid, criticising the lack of questioning of whose freedom the CA aims to favour (ch. 2); Gasper and Truong, who question the human conception of the CA from several humanist perspectives (ch. 4); and Feldman’s chapter criticising the liberal-capitalist assumptions that go unchallenged at the basis of the CA (ch. 6). Both Barkin (ch. 7) and Little (ch. 3) are in a middle terrain, presenting acute critiques of the CA using relevant empirical examples of regional development.

The book gives an informed and critical reading of broad issues of development and ethics, and it covers an interesting variety of arguments suitable for academics and practitioners. However, if the interest of the reader is to find a systematic discussion of the CA, or an in-depth engagement with arguments of institutions or power in development, these expectations may be disappointed by the lack of an overall clear perspective between chapters.

Ana Estefanía Carballo
(University of Westminster)


Transformative Policy for Poor Women provides an insightful and practical framework for feminist policy analysis,
filling an absolutely crucial gap in feminist development literature. Perhaps the most common feminist critique of development concerns the disconnect between feminist development theory, institutional policy and implementation. This criticism is ubiquitous and scholars have so far appeared unable to account for policy failure and provide a new way forward. Bina Fernandez’s work, while inspired by this critique, succeeds in introducing a new path for feminist research with a focus on social justice.

Fernandez develops a new framework for the analysis of policy, specifically anti-poverty policies aimed at women in developing countries. This framework has four parts: the first looks at ‘constitutive contexts’ of policies, which comprise the social, historical, economic and political context of the state and its social relations. Second, it analyses policy representations in terms of the construction of problems, solutions and the assumptions that underlie both. Next, the framework moves to explore policy practices, which refer to political technologies and strategies that mobilise certain representations. Finally, policy consequences are analysed in terms of the outcomes (intentional and unintentional) of policy, its achievements, its persistent failures and responses to these failures. Fernandez evaluates the extent to which policies are transformative through the use of Nancy Fraser’s framework of redistribution, recognition and representation. The author applies her framework to an in-depth case study of an anti-poverty policy in two Indian states, the aim of which is to bring poor people above the poverty line through self-employment, micro-credit and the creation of self-help groups. Further case-study material comes from anti-poverty policies in Peru, Brazil and Malawi.

Fernandez’s framework is a useful tool and her findings confirm some long-held beliefs of feminist critics, grounding them in a rigorous study that includes policy recommendations for transforming anti-poverty policy. The book is noteworthy for its development of a far-reaching and theoretically considered framework for policy analysis: by rejecting a reductive policy design/implementation binary, Fernandez provides insights into the flaws written into policy and reproduced through informal policy practices. The work is theoretically dense and is written in a very technical and jargon-heavy style.

It will prove a useful text for specialists although it requires a large amount of background knowledge and so may be less appropriate for students. Nonetheless, Bina Fernandez’s contribution to feminist development literature is a significant step forward in addressing the gap between feminist hopes for transformative policy and the reality of development policy today.

Sydney Calkin
(University of York)


With a former foreign secretary and the current leader of the opposition now among their kin, the ‘Milibrand’ is stronger than ever. Yet although this text results from the lecture series that bore their father’s name and despite the fact that it includes speeches from David and Ed, it goes beyond both family ties and the London School of Economics, at which its editors were based, to provide a broad analysis of the governance of climate change.

Broken into three parts – the challenges climate change poses, social justice and where to go next – the text features prominent experts from a variety of fields to explain ‘why acting now in relation to climate change is scientifically rational, economically sensible and ethically desirable’ (p. 10). In so doing, the current international climate change regime is repeatedly yet constructively criticised, with the final chapter calling for a ‘building blocks’ approach to replace the existing all-or-nothing ‘global deal’ perspective.

Although four years have passed since the speeches by Ed and David Miliband, their printed presence here provides a useful practitioner perspective to complement the rest of the book’s academic tone. Alongside strong chapters on the science, economics and philosophy of climate change, two contributions are worthy of particular note. First, Held and Hervey provide a powerful critique of the current format of climate change governance, as well as recommendations for future national and global policy. Second, Beck and van Loon offer a superb chapter on global inequalities, cosmopolitan realpolitik and the need to ‘modernize modernity’. Not only does this chapter feature original and provocative conceptual arguments, but it is written in such a concise yet erudite manner that quotes from the text are certain to be hallmarks of student essays on the subject for years to come.
Having created an accessible volume that covers a breadth of issues relating to climate change governance, the text achieves its objective of catering to both academic and non-academic tastes (p. 144). While specialists may have hoped for further in-depth analysis regarding global institutions and states’ behaviour within them, the strong theoretical insights and policy proposals that are included in its pages make this book necessary reading for anyone in the field. In sum therefore, *The Governance of Climate Change* provides a vital snapshot of the contemporary global climate change arena while also setting the agenda for future policy discussions.

Paul Tobin  
(University of York)


Following Vladimir Putin’s re-election as Russian President in 2012, the head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, speaking in Moscow, claimed that ‘The conditions [for the campaign] were clearly skewed in favour of one candidate. Also, overly restrictive candidate registration requirements limited genuine competition. While all candidates had access to media, only one candidate – the current prime minister – was given clear advantage in the coverage’ (Daily Telegraph, 5 March 2012).

Why would incumbent leaders, often intent on trying to win an election through electoral malpractice, invite electoral observers to monitor elections and run the risk of such damning reports?

Susan Hyde shows in this book that the number of domestic elections around the world that have been observed by international monitors has increased dramatically since the 1960s. In fact, it is now an international norm. Why did this norm develop? Hyde presents an original theory. Borrowing from George Akerlof’s 1970 work,1 Hyde argues that international actors, with limited information about other international actors, will be more likely to interact with those that have credible reputations. Since the early 1960s (but increasingly from the 1980s) powerful states have expressed a desire to support democratic regimes. This in turn incentivised developing and democratising states to invite electoral observers to monitor their elections so that they could send signals to the world that they were truly democratic and ‘credible’. States therefore perceive that election monitoring can bring about increased trade, investment, foreign aid, legitimacy and prestige, and even undemocratic states will therefore imitate successful benefit-seeking signals.

Hyde contrasts her ‘instrumental or “rational”’ (p. 22) approach to existing theories about international norm development such as those based on advocacy and norm entrepreneurs or the enforcement powers of strong states (pp. 15–22). As such, she offers an original theory of norm creation that can be used to explain other international norms, such as why states allow weapons inspectors. This book will therefore interest scholars and students of international relations. However, one key strength of the book is that it is premised on an original data set of all national elections in the world from 1960 to 2006. This allows basic empirical questions to be answered with confidence about the frequency of election observation for the first time, and more sophisticated hypotheses to be developed and tested. It is therefore essential reading for scholars and students interested in electoral integrity and malpractice and has already become a key book in the field.

**Note**


Toby S. James  
(University of East Anglia)


In this volume, Robert Kirkman brings an ethical perspective to bear on urban and suburban environments. His central purpose is to support a deliberative framework for making productive decisions about land use, one that is ultimately geared towards supporting humans to flourish. In this regard, he focuses on a policy framework that is meant to encourage reflection on issues of character, motivation and consequence. Kirkman’s case studies and other examples are drawn principally from the US context. Writing from within that context, he challenges several assumptions about land use in North America. For example, Kirkman

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questions the idea of judging green space in relation to a yardstick of wilderness. Such judgement, he argues, favours a rather misguided view of pristine nature which, in turn, understands environment as something amorphous, somehow existing apart from people, and destroyed as soon it is touched by human hands. In contrast, this monograph’s framework seeks to encourage deliberation on issues arising at intertwined individual, social and ecological levels, helping moral projects that shape landscapes to support human flourishing better in an integral sense. Further, explicitly connecting ethics and politics, Kirkman suggests that applying this framework among both allies and opponents on specific issues of metropolitan growth would serve to clarify points of convergence and divergence in terms of interests, which can help avoid conflict arising from snap judgements and dialogue-ending positioning.

The Ethics of Metropolitan Growth manages to addresses a wide range of issues at the intersection of politics and space in an accessible manner. As such, it is easy to imagine motivated policy makers and higher-level undergraduates in the US reading through its pages over a couple of days and being rewarded with a good understanding of issues in play – some of which they may not have otherwise considered – when making decisions affecting the built environment. Additionally, in terms of cross-cultural comparison, the corresponding constituencies in places like the UK can interact with this volume to consider how their situation diverges from or is paralleled by Kirkman’s US-themed content. This exercise can provide further insight into both the subject matter of metropolitan growth and the cultural specificity of ethics. In the classroom context, this volume may be helpful as its well-crafted prose often introduces relevant concepts in a nuanced manner that could serve as a basis for deeper discussion. In summary, proportionately to the effort required, reading The Ethics of Metropolitan Growth will represent time well spent.

Christopher Hrynkow
(University of Saskatchewan)


In the complex and changing world we are currently confronting, it is crucial for everyone interested in the discipline of political science to have an all-embracing knowledge of ‘the processes and decisions that define the outputs of a political system’ (p. 1). Arriving at an opportune moment in which more information about public policy decisions is being demanded, this contribution by Knill and Tosun is a guide for submerging oneself in the universe of public policy, understood as the study of the whole process of public decision making (taking into consideration the interrelationship between the three major subject areas: polity, politics and policy).

In order to explain the variation and change in public policy, the authors adopt a broad positivist approach focused on the resources, interests, norms and constraints of the actors participating in the policy process. Following this logic, the volume presents the state of the art in public policy analysis and the avenues through which the current research can be upgraded. In order to do this, it is structured into twelve chapters assembled in a carefully chosen sequence, facilitating the submersion of the reader in the subject of public policy.

It is possible to find three main axes through which this volume is structured. The first four chapters consist of a comprehensive introduction to the basic aspects of the study of public policy, explaining what public policy is, the nature of public policies, the central institutions and actors behind the process of policy making and the main theoretical approaches that have been developed to understand this phenomenon. The next four chapters are dedicated to explaining the different stages of policy making, from the initial phase of problem definition and agenda setting through the steps of decision making and policy implementation until the final evaluation phase. The final chapters deal with the current challenges for the study of public policy, including discussions about the concept of governance, the emergence of public policies beyond the state, debates about policy change and policy convergence and ending with the future challenges for public policy analysis.

Developed in a comprehensive and didactic manner, the explanations given throughout the book are enriched with the systematic use of real-world examples used to illustrate the empirical and theoretical puzzles of public policy. The result is a major new text specialising in the theory and practice of public policy analysis which succeeds in absorbing
the reader in the fundamental riddles of public actions.

Israel Solorio Sandoval
(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)


This book offers a detailed look at the rise of political marketing and its impact on political campaigns, opening with a summary of the development of modern political communication techniques in US presidential elections since the 1950s. Focusing on the election and image-building campaigns of individual candidates, the book interweaves examples from the US and France, including Barack Obama’s 2008 and Nicolas Sarkozy’s 2007 campaigns to highlight the nuances of modern campaigns and the adoption of sophisticated marketing techniques throughout many political systems. Addressing every aspect of the political marketing process, it covers the analytical and information tools available to candidates, the political marketing techniques from traditional modes through to web and social media innovations and, finally, the elements that contribute to the actual running of election campaigns from finance to the roles played by key members of staff.

The book is organised into four key sections, with the first tracing the evolution of modern political communication in campaigns and outlining some of the reasons for the rise in political marketing in the US, including the frequency and number of elections, the rapid growth of modern media and the high level of freedom in political advertising compared to other countries. The second section explores the foundations of modern political marketing, examining its roots in commercial marketing and how it has evolved in a political context. The third section discusses the breadth of available marketing tools including direct marketing and uses of the web and new media and the final section offers a practical guide to the day-to-day running of campaigns, covering pivotal decisions such as the choice of resource and campaign management style.

In his conclusion, Philippe Maarek suggests that the rise of political marketing may have contributed to the decline in voter participation through the simplification and depolitisation of political messages, and that the more traditional methods of campaign communication which have been discarded may have encouraged greater political participation. Given the continuing concern around the decline of electoral participation, it would have been interesting to see this proposition backed up with some empirical evidence regarding the relationship between the two.

Overall, Campaign Communication and Political Marketing provides a comprehensive insight into the workings of modern electoral campaigns and will be of interest to anyone interested in modern political campaigning and to those who may be interested in using political marketing techniques themselves.

Cheryl Anderson
(University of Manchester)


This is a collection of essays from the past 40 years from two leading UK and US health policy analysts. It is not a ‘greatest hits’ (in terms of citations) or a ‘best of’ collection, but rather a ‘painful exercise in selection’ (p. xii) by the authors of ‘case studies’ that aim to ‘map the territory of health care and to provide the reader with the analytic tools required to navigate it’ (p. xi). The intellectual style is ‘an unapologetic eclecticism’ (p. xiii) that is multidisciplinary and historical, and based on a ‘trinity of conceptual building blocks’: ideas, institutions and interests (p. 2).

The text consists of thirteen chapters with 26 readings, mainly focusing on the UK (Klein) and the US (Marmor). Two introductory chapters are followed by ‘case studies’ (i.e. previously published articles) on diverse areas: the high politics of systems change over time; explanations of conflicts; ideas; values, policies and programmes; the state and the medical profession; comparative analysis; resources and rationing; patients, consumers and citizens; the politics of panics; the politics of health crusades; and new paradigms (health care to population health).

There are some differences in style. Klein is a fine essayist who presents memorable terms and metaphors on almost every page. My favourites include the ‘drive-in church’ (p. 93), ‘Cleopatra’s nose version of...
the internal market’ (p. 104) and ‘O’Gofe’s blunder in over-predicting the crisis of the welfare state in the West while under-predicting its collapse in the East’ (p. 203). Marmor has a more conventional academic style with more tables, diagrams and footnotes (171 in one article). My favourite piece is his demolition of fads and fashions, particularly the ‘linguistic muddle’ of managed care with slogans with antonyms of no appeal, no credibility or null category (pp. 162–3).

This text brings together in a convenient collection some more or less accessible sources (book chapters, some less familiar journals). The introductory chapters could be useful for students, and all would benefit from reading (or re-reading) the material here. However, there is limited new material (ch. 2 on ‘What’s Special about Health Care’, brief introductions to the chapters and a brief ‘coda’). I would have liked to see more reflection, perhaps with the authors critically reflecting on each other’s work. Nevertheless, the ‘conceptual precision and verbal clarity’ (p. 540) perfectly illustrate the art and craft of policy analysis as applied to health care.

Martin Powell
(University of Birmingham)


‘This isn’t your daddy’s news environment’. McCombs, Holbert, Kiousis and Wanta paraphrase this advertising slogan to point out the changes in ‘media landscapes’. The main ones are: (1) revitalisation with the assistance of the web of traditional news media; (2) more varied offer of types of public affairs content; (3) use by traditional journalists of new digital technology; (4) exponential increase of channels of communication; and (5) a mixture between entertainment and news. This new scenario is the stage of an old relationship: news and public opinion.

Since Lazarsfeld, Lippmann and Lasswell, many books on the effects of mass communication have been written. But this book is very different: in the style chosen – a handbook – and in a direct invitation to reflection, it revisits and updates classical communication theories, converts complexity into simplicity and adds analysis and (normative) assessment to theory and empirical principles. As a central and delicate concept, ‘civic life’ could have been defined.

Giving voice to decades of empirical studies, some dichotomies are explored, namely: news and public opinion; informed citizens and democracy; news and entertainment; political communication and news media; and classical and new media.

The main interesting findings and principles that this book emphasises are the consistent impact over time of media on the shaping of public opinion and the trend of voters who were heavy users of one news medium to become heavy users of other news media as well. The authors discuss media convergence, whereby the media agenda of issues available to citizens now uses both online and traditional media. The better education of newspaper readers compared to television viewers is anchored in the digital advent and news media are the most-used information source for public affairs. The authors consider the influence of individual differences and styles of news on the level of acquisition and they show a clear linkage between news use and forms of political participation; similarly, there is a polarisation of news and, through this, a polarisation of the audience.

The book discusses the creation by news media of awareness among the public about a variety of public issues and the positive relation between exposure to news and knowledge about politics and public affairs. Lastly, the analysis showcases the possibility of news to shape the breadth and depth of public opinion issues discussed by political elites and the hierarchy of media effects.

This is a well-written book which shows that, as in the past, the classical triangle of news media, politics and public opinion still has a strong mutual influence. This is today’s mass communication reality and ‘this is [also] your daddy’s reality’.

Célia Belim
(Technical University of Lisbon)


The reasoning behind empirical research in political science has motivated scholars to explore how causality impacts on research methods. During the last decade of
the twentieth century, some political scientists cited the restrictiveness of non-experimental data as something that might prevent researchers from asking important causal questions. In their book, Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab, Rebecca Morton and Kenneth Williams make a contribution to the literature explaining how to conduct causal research.

The book is divided into five parts, which include an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter covers the gaps that exist in political science research by pointing out that the existing approaches are unable to answer causal questions. In chapters 2 to 6, the authors review some causal theories and then make predictions about the relationship of information by providing examples from information and voting. In chapters 7 to 10, they address what makes an experiment successful by emphasizing the validity of experimental research and theory testing. In chapters 11 to 13, fresh perspectives are offered on ethical decision making and political science experiments. In the book’s conclusion, the future application of causal methodologies and the combining of different methods are suggested as improvements to current approaches.

The weakness in the book appears because, although the authors open up an introductory option to causality in political science, they are not able fully to offer a causal method for the study of political science.1 Morton and Williams’ book is well written and informative and is recommended to students, researchers and scholars of political science.

Note

Fatemeh Shayan
(University of Tampere, Finland)


Positing that ‘[a] whole historical chapter – that of neoliberalism – has now closed’ (p. 1), this collection seeks to study the interrelation between migration, work and citizenship in today’s ‘Great Recession’. The editors situate such analysis in the context of emerging ‘social counter-movements’ and raise the question of migrants’ role within them. The contributions, mostly written by senior academics, trace out important aspects and perspectives for such interdisciplinary research.

Introducing the volume, Munck, Schierup and Wise provide context to the four sections. The first section on new migration patterns is opened by Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson who highlight the colonial legacy as a key to understanding contemporary EU migration management towards Africa. Branka Likic-Brboric discusses how after EU enlargement the regime of mobility deepened inequality and undermined the European Social Model. Conceiving the US border regime as a business opportunity for human trafficking, Rodolfo Casillas relates the subsequent rise of criminal networks to processes of societal decomposition in Mexico.

The second section sheds light on how migration is related to the emerging regime of ‘precarious work’. Stephen Castles elaborates on the ‘international mobilization of workers’ (p. 63) involving differential mobilities and rights as a function of class, gender, race, legal status, etc. Focusing on the intersections between ‘precarious work’ and ‘precarious citizenship’ in the third section, Luin Goldring and Patricia Landolt explain different pathways of migrant workers with precarious status in Toronto. The fourth section scrutinises the migration–work–citizenship nexus in the broader context of ‘social transformation’. Milena Chimienti and John Solomos criticise theoretical accounts that overplay the political significance of the sans papiers movement in Western Europe but ignore the existential dimension of the struggles. Underscoring the vitality of the immigrant labour movement in the US, Ruth Milkman presents the three strands of the movement and the synergies they create.

While the book offers a critical perspective on the neo-liberal era, it fails to substantiate its claim about the ‘new global order’. Since the contributions hardly address the crisis and emerging trends, it remains unclear what is supposed to be ‘new’. It is also unfortunate that the editors’ proposal to conceive of migration as a social movement is largely unheeded. Except for Milkman’s chapter, migrants do not appear as political agents. Nevertheless, most chapters are well written and inspiring for further research and will be of
interest to an audience of advanced scholars from a variety of disciplines.

Markus Kip
(York University, Toronto)


In the post-Second World War period, the subject of ‘development’ has been one of the most controversial themes in the field of political economy and has been treated as a sub-field for a long time. In this book, Anthony Payne and Nicola Phillips – recognised authors in international political economy – reconstruct the theoretical trajectory of development, producing a new conceptual autonomy that has been missing for quite some time.

The authors articulate their approach along three macro axes: first, development is regarded as a strategy to be considered within the socio-political structure of states, individuals and social groups, which are its promoting agents. Second, ideational dimensions are used to conceive the many different criteria in order to comprehend what development is and how to achieve its stages. Finally, the historicity of development is considered as an epistemological element which merges the analysis (rather than conceiving development in purely historically contextualised terms) and thus removes the idea that it is possible to determine a specific point in time to explain the complexity inherent in the theme.

Two things are especially remarkable in this work. First, the organisation of the chapters around the essence of each theoretical tide is precisely one of the best points. By doing so, the authors are able to classify in a dynamic way each of the theoretical models – from classic debates to new approaches – without segregating themes such as inequality and poverty from China’s rise in the world economy in their analyses. The second highlight is the analysis of extensive references in order to compose a robust panorama for each angle of the main subject. The authors’ synthesis of the main concepts, debates and controversies within each field together with direct and detailed sources is particularly commendable.

Usually critics would classify Development as a good ‘textbook’, although it is much more than a useful guide for development studies. It is an elaborate work in political economy that succeeds in the skilful task of putting studies about development on an independent baseline, situating it at the heart of the ‘new international political economy’.

Fabrício Henricco Chagas Bastos
(University of São Paulo)


This work examines the discourse surrounding women who carry out suicide bombings as well as women whose attempts to carry out suicide bombings were thwarted. In order to portray a balanced perspective, Julie Rajan examines Western narratives of women suicide bombers as well as narratives of the local societies of the women. The book is concerned with how these narratives represent and analyse the gender of the bomber. It thus provides a global review of the relevant discourse and a critique of how that discourse is gendered. The author argues that regardless of the attack carried out, in both Western and local discourse and throughout multiple media such as print journalism, documentaries and local narrative accounts as well as much Western academic literature, the focus is predominately on the gender of the person who carried out the attack rather than the political nature of the attack. This stands in contrast to how the women present themselves, thereby diminishing the political nature of the attack. The author examines some of the frames used to examine the women in Western discourse, such as mad, suicidal, mentally challenged, sexual and victim. These are examined alongside local discourses which frame the women as mothers of the nation and glorious martyrs.

There is undeniable value in a text that examines both Western and local discourses of women suicide bombers, especially as the author successfully negotiates the fine line between completely denying the political agency of the bombers and attributing so much agency to them that the societally imposed gendered limitations of their actions are completely ignored. The author thus demonstrates how the actions of women suicide bombers are political as well as regulated by gender. This being said, the argument in the book

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develops episodically and suffers from a lack of clarity and organisation. It would have been strengthened by more careful attention to avoiding unnecessary repetition in some sections and making more concrete links in others. There have been several works written in the field of feminist security studies that make similar arguments, yet some of these seminal texts were overlooked in the author’s review of the academic discourse. Overall, while the aim of this text is laudable, and much of the discourse reviewed illustrates the author’s point, it falls short of expectations through the manner in which the review is conducted.

Caitlin Ryan (University of Limerick)


Constitution 3.0: Freedom and Technological Change presents a comprehensive exploration of the impact of evolving technology on law and ethics. Divided into four parts, the book provides a forum for some of America’s pre-eminent legal scholars to discuss the potential constitutional cases and controversies that may continue to arise with the advancement of innovation. In Part I, the idea of a surveillance society is dissected through the lens of the Fourth Amendment. Part II focuses on the concepts of freedom of expression and the extent of privacy in the milieu of internet communications. The penultimate part of the book contains two chapters that discuss the intersection between neuroscience and constitutional law. The final part also explores the evolution of the law with respect to medical science, but it concentrates on genetic engineering and its effect on the constitutional definition of personhood.

What is distinctive about this book is that although it is aimed at readers with a grounding in constitutional law, the text remains accessible to any reader with an interest in the legal ramifications of developing technology. Ultimately, the editors have successfully presented a range of innovative and provocative discussions that will engage a multitude of audiences. Given the modern and intriguing themes contained within the text, the book is a noteworthy one, which will certainly allow for continued dialogues on law, ethical behaviour and technology. Jeffrey Rosen highlights this aspect of the collection in the introduction by stating that ‘[c]itizens disagree vigorously and plausibly about whether judges should take the lead in adapting constitutional values to changing technologies or whether the more effective and democratically legitimate responses should come from the political branches or the private sector’ (p. 8). Constitution 3.0 boldly and successfully tackles these divergences of opinion and generates additional fodder for discussion. Overall, the book’s allowance for future discourse on these controversial topics is especially appropriate, given the dynamic nature of the American Constitution, individual interpretation of the law, and global technological advances. Lawrence Lessig’s assertion in the epilogue encapsulates this dynamism: ‘Constitutional meaning comes just as much from what everyone knows is true (both then and now) as from what the framers actually wrote’ (p. 244). The recognition of this evolving quality throughout the text makes this book valuable and unique.

Amanda Harmon Cooley (South Texas College of Law)


This well-written and carefully structured book, aimed at scholars, journalists and people working in international and non-governmental organisations, focuses on the plight of civilians in modern warfare and the processes to establish their identity that are considered to be the main causes of their vulnerability.

The first part considers the assumptions and attitudes of nation states towards civilians, with a particular focus on American war ideology, explained through material that stretches from the first Seminole war to President Bush’s war on terror. Further historical examples are the deportation of Japanese-Americans in the United States and of Crimean Tatars in the Soviet Union in 1942–4, the bombing of Germany in the Second World War and the treatment of child soldiers in Chechnya by the Russian government and media.

The second part deals with the instruments of international law, weakened by a dehumanised definition of civilians’ identity based mostly on what they are not – a conceptual vacuum that is filled by the militaristic
framing of war and the prevailing institutional influences of law, military strategies and soldiers’ experiences. Some well-chosen case studies sustain the argument, for example Israeli soldiers’ perception of Palestinian civilians during the 2009 Gaza war and the second Lebanon and Gaza wars. Two chapters explore the role of reporters and pundits in defining civilian identity.

The book’s third part challenges the assertion that some level of civilian devastation in modern warfare is inevitable, uncontrollable and necessary. In the field the best results come from a division of labour between UN and non-UN operations, but new measures that build on partial achievements could be established to minimise civilian suffering: an increased attention to assumptions of the ways in which gender, age and military status combine to underpin civilians’ identity could be a key factor in developing protections and remedies; the example of the international tribunals on the massacres in Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone that have accomplished the objectives set out at their establishment must be followed; and the engagement of states to prevent genocide should be more systematic.

The authors recommend a set of policy directives to undermine the prevailing perspective of civilian identity, such as developing an effective system of monitoring civilian fatalities, public witnessing of civilian war victims’ stories and compelling nation states to make amends through monetary compensation, livelihood assistance, memorials and apologies to the innocents of war.

Luigi Petrella
(University of Newcastle)


At this juncture, a substantial part of security studies literature is stirring up fears about the assumed consequences of natural resource scarcity and climate tipping points for international stability. The editors of this book make a valuable contribution to the growing environmental security scholarship by disentangling and enriching its narrow focus on environmentally induced violence, refugees and disaster scenarios. They aim to do so by critically rethinking environmental security from the bottom up.

The investigation into what exactly constitutes the environmental dimension of human insecurity ranges from the conceptual engagement with environmental injustice, climate change knowledge systems and the silent oil peak, to carefully chosen empirical case studies. These embrace issues such as the chronic exposure to industrial pollution in Canada’s Chemical Valley and the correlation between global demand for coltan and sexual violence in the Congo. The authors widen the geographical focus of environmental problems harming human well-being by pointing to relations of dominance and marginalisation between, as well as within, national boundaries north and south of the equator. It becomes clear that human insecurities resulting from environmental insecurities are highly unequally distributed – and so are the benefits linked with natural wealth. Root causes and ways out of environmental insecurity can be found in the making of the global political economy and in local responses. From this perspective, social conflict, criminal activity and sabotage are understood as logical outcomes or even conscious resistance to environmental injustice, which is not inevitable or naturally given but subject to political change.

Variations in the approaches applied can be attributed to the complex subject matter but also to a degree of incoherence regarding the authors’ critical understanding of the meaning of security. In some of the articles environmental security is treated as a positive quality relating to human well-being and emancipation, and in others as a problematic development at the policy level which perpetuates certain interests by undermining the democratic process. This divergence contributes to an inconsistent use of terminology, which again reflects the contested nature of the subject within the environmental security and the wider security studies field.

However, the contributors are largely united in the normative choice of their referent object. They give a voice to powerless communities beneath and beyond the modern nation state which are too often excluded from analysis and made invisible – those who are most vulnerable and affected in their everyday struggle by the many realities of environmental insecurity.

Manola Grotjohann
(Aberystwyth University)

In recent years political theorists have become increasingly interested in lotteries as a tool for decision making or the selection of public officials. Ultimately, however, this topic remains rather marginal in the political science literature, as well as in real-world institutions (with the possible exception of the accounts of deliberative democracy and citizens’ juries). Against this background, the collection of essays under review represents a helpful effort to provide theoretical underpinnings for future research. Its editor, Peter Stone, claims that his anthology includes ‘every significant theoretical paper on lotteries published in English between 1959 and 1998’ (p. 2).

The essays can be divided into three main categories. The first set of authors tackle the question of ‘what is lottery?’ (in chronological order: Sher, Kornhauser and Sager, and Wasserman). The second group is interested in the assignment of political office by lot (Mueller et al., Mulgan, Engelstad and Knag). Finally, a number of authors focus upon the random allocation of goods (Wolle, Greely, Goodwin, Eckhoff, Hoftee and Broome). These papers are preceded by a thoughtful and extremely useful road map (the editor’s introduction), as well as by an article published in 1959 by Swedish sociologist Vilhelm Aubert (ch. 1). According to Stone, Aubert was the first author to tackle the topic from a theoretical perspective since Thomas Gataker’s Of the Nature and Use of Lots (1619).

Any scholar interested in random selection in public life should have this reader in their library. Apart from the theoretical insights, especially with regard to the relationship between lotteries and theories of justice, it contains insightful examples from the use of lotteries in the past (in places such as ancient Greece, medieval Italian republics and Swiss cantons) and references to key authors (e.g. Aristotle, Montesquieu, Rousseau and Dahl).

The main limitation of the book is inherent in its declared focus upon papers published in English only. The risk is that significant theoretical insights in other languages are ignored. Finally, it is a pity that this volume, especially with respect to its declared scope as ‘a reader’, does not provide an index of authors and key concepts, or a handy overview of the cited literature at the end of the book.

Note

1 See, e.g., H. Buchstein, Demokratie und Lotterie, 2009; F. Cordano and C. Grottanelli (eds), Sorteggio pubblico e cleromanzia dall’antichità all’età moderna, 2001; and Y. Sintomer, Petite histoire de l’expérimentation démocratique: Tirage au sort et politique d’Athènes à nos jours, 2011.

Nenad Stojanovic
(University of Zurich)


Anders Strindberg and Mats Wärn provide the readers of Islamism with a collection of case studies on violent Islamist groups in various Muslim communities in the world. Two questions that are chiefly discussed in this book are why Islamism is adopted by the groups under study and whether or not Islamism is prone to militancy, and if so, then why? The authors prioritise the self-understanding of Islamist activists and intellectuals in order to understand Islamism and underline the importance of socio-political contexts in which Islamist groups emerge and thrive, because these contexts are the medium in which their messages of Islamism are able to resonate with their audience.

The book begins with an introduction, followed by a critical survey of definitions of Islamism. The third chapter describes the theoretical construction that is informed by Frantz Fanon’s philosophy of subaltern violence, the concept of context in deriving meanings from social and political facts, and social identity theory for examining the relevance of Islamism for a certain group or community. This is followed by case-study chapters which include Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and Palestine’s Hamas and Islamic Jihad (ch. 4), al-Qa’eda (ch. 5), Lebanon’s Hezbollah (ch. 6), Algerian Islamist movements (ch. 7) and Western Europe’s Islamist movements (ch. 8).

The novelty of the approach taken by Strindberg and Wärn lies in showing how Islamism, as both ideology and identity, becomes relevant for a movement because of the power relations between and among the state and society where it emerges, as Islamism provides an alternative source of social identification, and thus dignity, for subaltern people marginalised by the state and/or neo-colonial power. The latter respond in ways that nurture or replicate this marginalisation in society,
while hardliners of the state gain benefits from the existence of ‘threatening Islamists’. Similarly, violence becomes a relevant strategy for a weak actor in facing a hegemonic power that only understands its subjects through the use of deception, lies and violence to subjugate them.

This book lacks components that can help readers, graduate students and researchers on Islamism derive key findings, such as a concluding remark in each chapter and signposts that limit different thematic discussions. Most importantly, the authors should have allocated a specific section for comparing the character of Islamist groups and their political contexts which would help readers understand the similarity of the meaning of Islamism for these groups and the different manifestations that it takes.

Ali Wibisono
(University of Nottingham)


Should states retain the autonomous right to control who enters their borders or should individuals have the right to freedom of movement across open borders? These are the ethical questions that form the basis of the debate between Wellman and Cole, providing the subject of this timely and highly readable book. Divided into two sections of roughly equivalent length, the co-authors each present their theoretical perspectives on admissions policies and highlight the prevailing tensions in contemporary moral thinking on the issue of immigration. On the one hand, Wellman argues that legitimate states (by which he refers to states that protect the human rights of its citizens and respect those of others) have a unilateral right to self-determination, resulting in a right of freedom of association, which permits them to determine who they choose to admit. Cole, on the other hand, counter-argues from a liberal egalitarian standpoint that if, as liberal theory suggests, all persons are morally equal, the prevalent order is ethically insupportable and he calls for open borders. He proposes that historical and current global power imbalances are responsible for creating and maintaining global inequality that will be at least partially alleviated through a more ethical immigration regime that permits freedom of movement under multilateral global regulation.

Drawing upon a growing body of literature in this field and using analogy to support their own and contest each other’s arguments, the book is accessible and provocative, providing both a useful introduction to the issues for undergraduates, but also of interest to those with a more profound expertise in this topical area. One consequence of adopting a philosophical approach to the debate is that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support each side of the argument. Moreover, the book could be criticised for ignoring the increasingly transnational, cyclical and temporary nature of recent migration patterns as well as changes in their geographical focus. In concentrating upon the issue of migrant admission to states, it does not address other ethical considerations relating to immigration such as its causes and the process of incorporation into host societies. Furthermore, while Cole argues eloquently for open borders, he fails to explain how a multilateral regime to regulate his proposition would operate. However, both authors put forward cogent arguments in support of their respective standpoints which will make a valuable contribution to the debate and encourage a critical evaluation of the assumptions underpinning current state policies in this, at times, controversial area.

Caryl Thompson
(University of Nottingham)

Britain and Ireland


This book makes a correlation between the security of the self or ontological security and the process of securitisation, citing Britain and the ‘9/11’ and ‘7/7’ terrorist attacks. Stuart Croft brings to the fore the centrality of identity as a subject that is being securitised, not just by the government but by a range of social agents and, more importantly, he connects this securitisation process with a reconstruction of national identity as a source of ontological security, biographical information to which citizens refer in order to answer what it means to be a citizen of a certain nation.
The first chapter of the book discusses the meaning of ontological security. Drawing on Anthony Giddens’ works, Croft defines an ontologically secure person as one who is able to acquire the sources of certainty for critical issues regarding one’s space, time, continuity and identity. In chapter 2, Croft reinvents securitisation theory as post-Copenhagen securitisation theory which stands on four innovations: (1) the wider involvement of social agents in the securitisation process, comprising elites in society; (2) the use of public texts, images and silences as the medium of ‘speech acts’ as well as parameters of intertextuality; (3) the redefinition of successful securitisation; and (4) emphasising the role of identity as securitisation creates re-dividing lines in society between those who comply with parameters of national identity, those who need guidance in order to comply better (Orientalised Other) and those who are not willing to comply (Radical Other). Chapter 3 discusses the sources of meaning of Britishness for British people in different times. In chapter 4, Croft considers the reconstruction of a new Britishness through the securitisation of Islam after ‘7/7’. The ‘British Muslim community’ became a single monolithic category which contained the ‘home-grown’ Radical Other as well as the Orientalised Other.

There seems to be a small gap in Croft’s analysis. Throughout his explanation, the securitisation of Islam in Britain emerges from the declining identification of Britishness as the primary identity or source of ontological security for individual Britons, with local identities as well as Islamic radicalism being prioritised identities. However, towards the very end Croft concludes that the securitisation of Islam and the resulting reconstruction of Britishness materialise as a response to an enemy – al-Qa’eda – which builds a discourse of the West and Britain as supporting structures of despotic governments in the Arab world, a discourse that is taken up by those who justify suicide terrorism against the West. While both explanations are correct, the author might have done better to remain consistent in explaining the connection between national identity and securitisation of the Other’s identity, rather than relating the role of identity to the enemy’s actual intent.

Ali Wibisono
(University of Nottingham)


Tony Blair and Gordon Brown would be presumed to be among the most Euroophile of chancellors and prime ministers in recent British political history, and this would further presume a measure of success in their dealings with Europe over their time in office from 1997 to 2010.

However, Oliver Daddow has written an interesting, timely and innovative analysis of the nuances of the ‘New Labour’ approach towards what they had hoped would be a ‘new Europe’. His basic premise is that Blair’s and Brown’s approach towards Europe actually failed over the course of their premierships during 1997–2010. He is convincing in his argument that this happened because both governments gave the issue ‘neither the time nor the attention it deserved’ despite their best efforts, and that neither government was able to convince the electorate that partnership with Europe was an important factor in securing Britain’s economic future.

The author adopts an ‘electoral considerations’ approach in his interpretation of Britain’s relationship with Europe after 1997 and in particular places great emphasis on intra-government quarrels over the appropriate course for the UK’s European policy. This follows his rejection of two other approaches in the interpretation of Labour’s European policy: either that Labour was ‘blown off course’ by the terrorist events of September 2001 in the United States; or the ‘no strategy’ approach, that is, that none of those in Downing Street had anything like a coherent strategy towards Europe.

The electoral considerations approach is based on the real political considerations that affected, and indeed implicated, Blair, Brown and both sets of Downing Street and Treasury officials. Such considerations include the issue of whether to hold a referendum on a single currency, the economic test of convergence that Brown produced in October 1997 and the ongoing fraught relationship between the Prime Minister and his Chancellor which characterised almost the whole of Blair’s premiership.

In order to promote his arguments, Daddow divides the book into a series of contexts. These include an analysis of how ‘New Labour’ presented itself for public
consumption; how ‘norm entrepreneurship’ can be used to help readers think through Labour’s approach to Europe; an empirical context on the UK national interest at stake in terms of economic, security and influence terms; ‘New Labour’s’ encounter with Euroscepticism through a detailed study of Blair and Brown’s speeches over the period in question; and a conclusion based on how far forward we can take further research into British foreign policy discourses.

William Stallard
(Independent Scholar)


Rarely has a British government’s foreign policy been so scrutinised as that of the Blair government. Inevitably much of the focus has been on the outcomes of foreign policy making – the response to 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, aid to the developing world and the future of Britain’s nuclear weapons. However, the competing forces that influence decision making are also incredibly important and have taken up many columns in academic journals. This edited collection by Oliver Daddow and Jamie Gaskarth aims to bring these issues together in one book, focusing on the impact of identity, ethics and power on the practical elements of policy making.

The book is very sensibly divided into three parts covering those three areas. Each section contains between three and five chapters on various aspects of the chosen topic by a wide range of academics. The first section focuses predominantly on the party leadership, with Blair inevitably featuring prominently. Stephen Dyson has produced an excellent chapter on the psychological factors behind Blair’s decision-making process, while Gaskarth, McCourt and Schnapper have also produced very good chapters on other aspects of foreign policy thinking and the change in Britain’s world status. Part II, focusing on ethics, contains three chapters on the impact of the ‘ethical dimension’ to New Labour’s thinking, and again these three chapters (by McCormack, Ralph and Allen) are first class. The last section, on power, focuses on key international relationships and the response to the war on terror in defence policy and these chapters (by Holden, Brown, Phythian and Taylor) are also very good. Daddow concludes by drawing the whole collection together.

The content of this book is really excellent. The authors have all written eloquently on their subjects and the editors have positioned each individual chapter carefully, placing each within a wider context. The standard of all of the chapters is very high and the content is extremely relevant to British foreign policy experts. By expanding their horizons beyond the mechanics of foreign policy and focusing instead on the impact of ethics, ideology and principles (as well as style and decision-making processes) upon the practicalities of policy making in this field, the authors and editors have produced an excellent collection of work. I would expect this book to become a staple for any academic interested in British foreign policy.

Victoria Honeyman
(University of Leeds)


Stephen Driver has somehow found time away from his arduous administrative load as Head of Department in Social Sciences at the University of Roehampton to pen an interesting new textbook entitled Understanding British Party Politics. The book has two central (and related) themes: the fragmentation of the party system and political disengagement.

We learn from Driver that the effective number of parties (ENP) in Britain has crept up since the 1970s, accelerated by New Labour’s introduction of proportional electoral systems outside Westminster. In an effort to highlight the extent of party fragmentation, Driver devotes separate chapters to the far right parties, the left-wing parties and the Greens (somewhat uneasily thrown together), and the rise of territorial parties in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

However, Driver spends most of his time assessing the anti-political mood in Britain, claiming: ‘There is a real sense that political parties have lost the capacity to engage with the electorate and to act as the principal agent of political participation’ (p. 210). As party membership has declined, so less formal, issue-based pressure groups have emerged with a high turnover of membership. Ironically, these pressure groups have become
highly organised, deploying many of the centralised, professional methods of political parties.

Driver seems to be arguing that the people have unrealistic expectations of the political class. The MPs’ expenses scandal of 2009 showed that the public demand a higher standard of behaviour from their politicians than they expect of themselves. The ordinary voter does not appear to appreciate that politics is a messy business, requiring compromises and imperfect deals. Nor do all citizens want to become heavily involved in the political process. It has always been an activity generally reserved for the better educated and wealthier classes, and largely shunned by the unskilled working class. Despite their present woes, Driver passionately makes the case for the continuation of political parties. Nothing better exists for aggregating interests, Driver concludes optimistically: ‘Political parties may need reform, but if they didn’t exist we’d have to invent them’ (p. 215).

Understanding British Party Politics is not only an excellent introductory textbook for undergraduate students of British party politics, it is also a timely reminder of why formal political parties still matter, despite all the enormous pressures currently being placed upon them.

Mark Stuart
(University of Nottingham)


This book provides an interesting discussion of how the Political Studies Association (PSA) has developed since its inception in the 1950s. It provides a useful narrative of how the discipline has evolved to reflect the needs of academics, society and politicians.

The Association today acts as a solid base for analytical discourse in the political sciences, spanning such diverse subtopics as party ideologies, rhetoric and identities, among many others. It can justly be regarded as an excellent example of enabling colleague collaboration, a networking hub and a mechanism for political researchers to interact with each other. It has become the instrument through which political scientists can communicate and showcase their research.

However, this conception was far from the reality in the earlier years of the Association, which is the subject of this book. It provides an interesting narrative of development, starting from the arguably ‘elitist’ origins of the Association in the 1950s, the impact of the opening up of higher education, the so called ‘Oxford coup’ in 1975 and the apparent setbacks in the 1980s. By doing so, it enables the reader to appreciate fully how the Association developed in recent years. Following on from the history, this book explores the professionalisation of the Association. It describes its role as a force for analytical change, as well as the inclusive approach it has taken towards membership, such as offering a wide range of services exclusively to members. As a history of the PSA and its impact on political scientists, this book provides a valuable discussion and should be of significant interest to those interested in how political science has evolved as a discipline.

The scope of this book makes the target audience firmly individualised. Simply put, there is no clear mass market beyond political scientists. However, some academics in other fields may find this book of interest. If a single audience had to be identified, I would say this book is mostly aimed at those who analyse the analysts.

Andrew Scott Crines
(University of Leeds)


As part of Oneworld’s ‘Beginner’s Guide’ series, Richard Grayson, a university professor and former Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate, tries to explore ‘why, for so many people, British politics is so mystifying, frustrating and often just downright annoying’ (p. 2). In this task, he largely succeeds.

By far the best chapter is ‘Events, Dear Boy’, not least because it addresses a key weakness among undergraduate students: a lack of knowledge of British political history. Grayson rightly explains that the post-war period is ‘central to the intellectual hinterland of most of those (journalists and academics) who comment on politics today’ (p. 6).

If Grayson’s book has a failing, it is that Liberal Democrat ideas and anecdotes seep out of every pore.
In many respects, this is a good thing: for too long, a whole generation of British political scientists from Robert McKenzie to David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh penned post-war British history as the exclusive domain of the two main parties. However, sometimes the Liberal Democrat in Grayson surges uncontrollably to the surface, such as when he explores the alleged injustices of first-past-the-post (FPTP) at Westminster elections (pp. 52–3), or expresses his vociferous support for an elected House of Lords (p. 68).

There is also a touchingly old-fashioned (and typically Liberal Democrat) passion for policy, on what Grayson calls ‘the big issues’. Such concentration on policy is balanced by a later chapter on the tangled two-way relationship between politicians and the media, written before the recent phone-hacking scandal. Grayson’s deep understanding of this area is shown when he explains how ‘exclusives’ are placed in certain newspapers and not others, and how discredited practices such as ‘spin’ are actually indispensable to the smooth running of the political system.

Structurally, the book is a bit of a mess. The chapters are written in distinct blocks, and are not always related logically to one another. The book closes with a wayward conclusion, covering the coalition, devolution and health. Other pedants will spot that for the last half-decade at least, ‘standing committees’ (p. 69) have been called public bill committees. But pedantry aside, Grayson’s redeeming quality is his ability to write in beautiful prose; so much so that even an average student will be able to read this book at a handful of sittings, something that could never be said of more weighty tomes such as *Politics UK*.

Mark Stuart
(University of Nottingham)


The authors of *The Politics of Coalition* claim that the prospect of coalition government in Britain has usually been viewed as ‘particularly undesirable: [producing] unstable, short lived, quarrelsome ... weak and ineffective government’ (p. 191). Following the 2010 general election, such a view continues to feature strongly in what is described as a ‘mostly hostile Tory media looking for evidence of “splits” ’ (p. 11). This book puts forward a rather different perspective on the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition, suggesting that in its first eighteen months in power it ‘set a model of harmonious and unified government which may prove hard to follow’ (p. 212). This is supported through a detailed assessment of a number of aspects of the coalition’s day-to-day operations, including its relationship with the civil service, parliament, parties and the media, alongside more detailed assessments of the decision-making process involved in some of the coalition’s most contentious legislative outputs.

Research on coalitions in British politics is unsurprisingly scant, given their rarity and perceived undesirability, and has usually focused on how they are formed and disbanded. This book looks at the space in between, drawing on the early experiences of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition to offer broader ‘lessons for the future’ on how coalition government can be made to work in the British national context. The book’s lessons and conclusions are drawn from interviews with almost 150 individuals involved with the coalition, including those from Whitehall, parliament and extra-parliamentary bodies such as parties, interest groups and the media. It employs an ‘action research approach’, meaning that the coalition was studied in real time over 2011. This approach does have its disadvantages: some of the concluding remarks on, for example, the effects of now-abandoned boundary changes or the prospect of a Conservative leadership challenge already appear outdated. However, such minor disadvantages are far outweighed by the capacity of this approach to fulfil the central goal of the research, exploring how initial strategies might influence the coalition’s prospects. Thus the book provides a useful and highly practical guide to making coalition politics work for parties, government and parliamentary actors, and civil servants.

The book is accessible and should not intimidate readers approaching the topic without a deep prior knowledge of the coalition. However, it also contains a wealth of original insights, and is recommended as both a guide for policy makers exploring the possibilities of coalition government in Britain, and to those whose interest is more academic.

Libby McEnhill
(University of Huddersfield)

Last updated in 2006, the ninth edition of Developments in British Politics seamlessly surmounts the decision of Patrick Dunleavy to step down from the editorial team. There is a glittering, all-star cast of academic contributors (including the usual crisp, direct writing style of David Denver on elections and voting) as well as some rising stars (notably an expert analysis of party fragmentation by Philip Cowley and a fine chapter from Rosie Campbell on the politics of diversity).

Developments gets off to a strong start with Meg Russell’s excellent chapter on constitutional politics. Students learn early on the importance of the concept of inheritance: although Tony Blair lacked enthusiasm for constitutional reform, given his inheritance from John Smith, he could not easily resile from it. New Labour’s approach to constitutional reform was pragmatic rather than pluralistic. Russell’s punchline, however, is that all these constitutional changes have not led to growing public trust, rather suggesting that further coalition proposals in this area will solve the problem of voter disengagement, a theme picked up in a later chapter by Gerry Stoker, who rightly points out that disengagement is not a recent phenomenon but rather ‘an embedded feature of British political culture’ (p. 155). What has changed since the 1950s is the decline in the number of voters who feel that they can make a difference to political decision making, and the dramatic fall-off in participation in formal party politics.

David Richards’ chapter entitled ‘Changing Patterns of Executive Dominance’ highlights one of the volume’s greatest strengths: it is primarily a measured assessment of the Blair and Brown premierships rather than a systematic attempt to explain the new politics of the coalition. This decision is wise. The dust has not had time to settle for meaningful analysis. Richards presents the old Westminster model of governance as under challenge, and yet explores Blair and Brown’s obsession with ‘top down command and control’ (p. 43). Cameron’s Big Society with its emphasis on community is largely explained as a Tory response to New Labour’s top-down approach.

Nearly all the contributors to Developments in British Politics 9 construct a fine series of arguments based around a couple of central themes rather than subjecting the reader to a clutter of facts. If there is one golden lesson here for students, it is that there is no substitute for a good argument.

Mark Stuart (University of Nottingham)


This study assesses how far gender equality is supported by the contemporary welfare state and policies in the UK. Gillian Pascall argues that the Beveridge Report (1942) ‘wrote gender difference into the social security system’ by basing much of welfare provision on a male breadwinner/female carer model. While demographic change has rendered the model increasingly irrelevant, Pascall suggests that policy has been slow to adapt, arguing that the response has largely been to try to make women ‘equal to men’: for example, in enhancing their access to paid employment. The problem with this approach is that ‘only one side of the male breadwinner/female caregiver model is being dismantled’ (p. 158). Consequently, she argues for ‘an idea of equality in which women’s lives are enabled to become more like men’s, and men’s lives to become more like women’s’ (p. 4), advocating a ‘universal caregiver approach’. In this approach, care is understood as a social responsibility of both genders in the same way that paid employment arguably now is.

The book explores how effectively the UK’s welfare policies support such an approach, through thematic chapters on ‘power’, ‘employment’, ‘care’, ‘income’ and ‘time’. ‘Power’, ‘employment’ and ‘income’ offer comprehensive arguments and statistics on equality in these areas. Given the book’s overarching argument, the chapter on ‘care’ offers perhaps the greatest insight. This highlights deficiencies in the UK’s support for caregivers, and explores the implementation of an ethic of care. The chapter on ‘time’ is also interesting, as time is an aspect often neglected by mainstream analyses despite being a crucial, albeit non-material, resource. In all chapters, comparative analysis is used to good effect to explore alternative approaches, focusing on the Scandinavian countries.

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This book makes a timely contribution to the study of the UK welfare state, considering gender issues within the context of austerity, which is seen to impact more heavily on women. In addition to nuanced analysis of the gendered impact of welfare policies, it also provides an illustration of some basic concepts in feminist theory, such as the relationship between the private and public spheres. Pascall offers a clearly reasoned and well-supported argument for re-imagining the models on which the UK welfare state is based. As such, the book would be of use not only to academics interested in gender or welfare policy, but also to those wishing to become involved in campaigning or activism.

Libby McEnhill
(University of Huddersfield)


This book documents how the British government turned to violent and illegal measures in its fight against Irish republicanism (mainly the IRA and Sinn Féin) during the era of the Troubles (1968–98). The Northern Ireland conflict between the British state and the Irish nationalist movement was a low-intensity war which witnessed many horrible acts committed by both sides. Punch’s main contention is that the British state, by adopting illegal measures to defeat the IRA, became embroiled in a conflict that undermined its legitimacy among the nationalist/Catholic population of Northern Ireland.

He writes: ‘The democratic state is an abstraction that is expressed in a set of principles and values that articulate the high-ground within which society should function and the politics of government is to be conducted ...The democratic state will stay out of the ring, will adjudicate impartially in the game played by the diverse stakeholders within the ring’ (p. 193). In Northern Ireland, the British state did not stay outside the ring but aligned itself with the Protestant majority. It adopted such tactics as shoot to kill, collusion between sections of the state apparatus and loyalist paramilitary organisations, and the illegal utilisation of informers to defeat the IRA.

Punch’s main contention is that the recourse to these tactics, which were increased exponentially after 1984 by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s government, disregarded not only domestic but also international law. He argues that the British state had one overriding objective, which was to defeat the nationalist insurgency, and that ‘there was one clearly defined and overriding enemy, the IRA; and by association anyone with republican/nationalist views, sympathies or connections, who could be linked to it, however tenuously, was suspect’ (p. 118). This fuelled a pattern of Irish revolt against British rule which historically began in Elizabethan times with the introduction of Protestantism and the consequent marginalisation of the Catholic religion and its adherents and the colonisation of Ireland.

In the final chapter the book broadens the analysis with a comparative framework that considers the British case in relation to other state actions against insurgent movements in Spain and South Africa. All the major events such as the Finucane case, the Stevens Inquiries and the Brian Nelson UDA/RUC collusion case are presented with extensive details to underscore the author’s main contention. All of the available evidence is marshalled in a coherent argument regarding how democratic states can, under certain historical circumstances, deviate from the rule of law.

Paolo Morisi
(Independent Scholar)


The history and current practice of the British House of Commons would suggest that the selection and behaviour of the Speakership, as well as the instrument of parliamentary questions as a focus for ensuring ministerial responsibility, will continue to be controversial in respect of their status, operation and importance in a parliamentary democracy.

The paucity of academic literature on the Speakership is resolved in this collection of essays. With the
most recent scholarly work being the 1964 study of the history and functions of the office by Philip Laundy – *The Office of Speaker* (Cassell, 1964) – Paul Seaward updates this and other studies of the purely representative role of the Speaker to focus on its modern administrative function and places this in a comparative perspective, including studies from Scotland, Ireland and the United States of America.

The author recognises that the office of Speaker has now become the equivalent of a small government department in spending terms, managing budgets for individual Members of Parliament and becoming more important in respect of how Speakers are perceived in the modern media. This argument further examines the complicated history of the independence and impartiality of the Speaker, a theme constantly underlined by successive Speakers of the UK House of Commons. The chapter on the US House of Representatives provides us with a study of the historical development of the Speakership there, and reminds us of the way in which that office has emerged as a specifically partisan figure.

In his chapter on the UK Speaker in the age of party, covering the period 1672–1715, Seaward shows that while Speakers had tended to be significant political leaders with their own followers and supporters, the revolution of 1688 paved the way for successive Speakers to develop their own brand of impartial Speakership, particularly during the time of Arthur Onslow (1728–61).

The study concludes with a highly personal account from Baroness Boothroyd (1992–2000) of her experience in holding this historic office. Boothroyd comments on the apparently slow progress made at question time and her efforts to speed up the use of this limited instrument, to allow more members to participate.

Shane Martin and Olivier Rozenberg bring together a number of distinguished political scientists to demonstrate how the traditional view of parliamentary questions (PQs) across Europe – as well as Canada – can be translated into a theoretical and empirical discussion of how PQs can be used as a measure of the behaviour of individual legislators as well as a measure of the focus of their concerns. The authors contend that the many existing country studies on PQs have, first, focused on the issue of accountability and control and, second, have concluded that such questions do not have much in the way of application to the cultivation by MPs of relationships with their constituents.

The authors succeed in presenting a new and convincing argument, which is that the very existence of dependable data in the form of parliamentary questions provides a deep well of recorded activity from which reasonable inferences about legislators’ behaviour can be drawn.

The study suggests that an analysis of PQs, the nature and consequences of which remain relatively obscure, can provide a unique opportunity to identify the behaviour of individual parliamentarians as well as the function of modern legislatures. The central analysis of the UK part of this research is carried out by means of an ambitious empirical analysis of over 16,000 PQs tabled by 50 backbench MPs in the 2005–2010 parliament. Going beyond existing scholarship, the research focuses on the extent to which British black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) MPs – using a control group of non-minority MPs – can be found to be particularly responsive to minority-related as well as to district-related concerns. They argue that it is an empirical question whether or not BAME MPs highlight ethnic issues in PQs. They conclude that BAME MPs do indeed ask more questions about the status of immigrants and ethnic minorities in British society and, further, that all MPs in the sample were responsive to the demographic composition of their constituents.

The chapter on questioning in European parliaments suggests that spontaneous interaction between government and opposition is at the core of PQ activity, but at the same time this interaction can be different in each legislature due to existing variations in formal procedures.

They suggest that their own research could usefully be extended to a comparative cross-national approach across UK and other European democracies, especially with the increasing presence of minority MPs across such democracies, allowing researchers to compare across time as well as space.

Both of these books contribute much to our understanding of the history and current practice of the Speakership, and to the way in which well-documented parliamentary questions in the UK as well as across Europe can provide a ready source of scholarly investigation.

William Stallard
(Independent Scholar)

The book focuses on the role of former Northern Ireland republican and loyalist prisoners in conflict transformation and the significance of the repudiation or maintenance of the prisoners’ previously held views. They argue that without the support of ‘combatants’, the peace process compromises would have been unsustainable. The book assesses the extent to which republican and loyalist former prisoners have changed their view of each other, arguing that prisoners have made significant contributions to the development and maintenance of peace without forfeiting all of their views or ideological dispositions. For republicans, the change is driven by tactical reasoning in so far as their goals can be achieved in time, whereas loyalists view the republican cessation of violence as a success, therefore vindicating their use of violence. The final chapter explores the positive roles played by former prisoners within their communities. The outcome is different for loyalist prisoners because a lack of social capital in the loyalist community means it is difficult for them to maintain inter-community bonds. Nevertheless, former prisoners have set up fora for education and welfare and have acted to defuse violent tensions. Community activism can provide a means to avoid returning to violence. However, the limited change in inter-community relations makes the long-term gains unclear.

The book states that the literature on demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) ‘has tended to overlook the centrality of prisoner releases to a successful peace process’. This seems to be the fundamental claim to originality, yet the book overlooks the disengagement and de-radicalisation literature in terrorism studies which looks at many of the same issues as this book does. Shirlow et al.’s findings greatly complement the work in terrorism studies in so far as they advance the debate. Disengagement and de-radicalisation debates revolve around the salience of ideological change in predicting variant degrees of recidivism. Shirlow et al. convincingly show that ideological considerations are virtually irrelevant in disengagement. However, the book could have expanded on the distinction between ideology, goals and attitudes as the terrorism literature has sought to do. The terrorism literature would benefit greatly from exploring the role of ex-prisoners in changing societal attitudes, which this book does excellently. Nevertheless, the fact that conflict transformation has only been tactical does suggest the possibility of a return to violence. Therefore ideological change (from prisoners and society) may be far more crucial for conflict transformation.

Gordon Clubb
(University of Leeds)


The politics of irrelevance is a precarious position for any party, especially for one of the largest and historically most successful in UK politics. Prior to the 1997 general election, the Conservative Party was well known for its opposition to devolution, fearing it represented the first step towards an independent Scotland. Prior to this point, it was broadly accepted that Scotland was an ethnic nation. This has been the subject of largely undisputed research since the nineteenth century, giving it the character of a ‘stateless nation’ and enhancing calls for more civil autonomy. Given Scotland’s distinctive national quality, its civic emergence may be seen by some as an inevitable development. However, this was strongly opposed by the Conservative elite, who preferred a centralised Westminster style of governance.

Following on from their electoral wipe-out in Scotland in 1997, and the subsequent introduction of devolved governance, the Tories found themselves in a situation that most considered untenable. Without an MP in Westminster, Scottish Conservatives came to see the newly created parliament as an opportunity, yet one for which they were little prepared. Faced with these realities of devolution and working with the new institutional realities, the Scottish Conservative Party had to begin a long fightback at local level in order to regain some degree of influence and prevent its political opponents dominating the Scottish agenda. This was compounded by the dominance of New Labour at Westminster and the issues concerning the internal
struggles faced by the Conservatives. Consequently, this left the Conservatives with little option but to engage with devolution, despite their prior objections.

This book contributes an academic assessment of this political situation through convincing ethnographic scholarship, drawing from the author’s PhD research in social anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. It presents a convincing contribution to the debates surrounding Scottish Conservatism, and the experiences of local activists during their return to relevance. It will be of particular interest to scholars and students of Conservative politics, especially those seeking an evaluation of Conservatism within Scottish politics. It is worth noting that the book is non-introductory. As such it should be of greatest benefit to advanced students of these subjects. This excellent book will also be of significance for students of citizenship, nationhood and how constructed identities sit alongside the political processes of parties and activists.

Andrew Scott Crines
(University of Leeds)


This is the second edition of British Government and Politics which has been updated to include content on the 2010 general election. The book opens with an introduction on British society and the British people. This is followed by a series of chapters on the constitution, legislature, executive and judiciary. Further sections explore devolution, local government and the European Union, political parties, pressure groups, voting and elections. The final chapter considers democracy in theory and in practice. An unusual feature for a British politics textbook is the inclusion of a comparative dimension. Many chapters feature international examples from European liberal democracies as well as the United States and South Africa. Although some readers may find these interesting, the comparisons are fortunately very concise and do not encroach upon the primary purpose of the book.

The book is clearly organised with a thematic structure which addresses a wide range of highly relevant themes. The content is very detailed yet accessibly written and clearly explained throughout. An extensive series of tables and figures convey a wide range of useful data. For example, the outcomes of all general elections from 1945 to 2010 are presented as well as more specialist information such as the levels of party spending. Furthermore, each chapter closes with a glossary of key terms and contains references to more advanced further reading including website resources.

This is a text with an emphasis on British government rather than British politics. The book is more concerned with constitutional arrangements, institutions and the processes of government than with political debates and ideologies. It communicates the content using key terminology, bullet points and summary boxes and does not extensively consider broader debates involving concepts and theories. Moreover, some ideas which are contested and disputed within the literature are presented in quite a simplified way. The content is therefore rather packaged and processed as opposed to being presented in its ‘raw academic form’. For this reason, it is more suitable for advanced-level syllabuses, making it ideal for further education students. It is perhaps less suitable for first-year undergraduates for whom there is a large range of other texts aimed at the higher education market which are more tailored to their needs. However, each chapter contains an extensive range of factual information, making it a good supporting guide for a wide variety of readers across many disciplines and at all levels.

Andrew Steven Gunn
(University of Leeds)


Benjamin Weinstein’s account of Liberalism and Local Government in Early Victorian London seeks to correct three omissions he identifies in the historiography of Victorian politics. These are chronological, political and geographical: the importance of the early Victorian period, of the continuing influence of the Whigs, and of London. He challenges the established view that both Whiggism and London politics were stagnant in the years following the Reform Act, especially in comparison with the advanced radicalism of ‘shock towns’ such as Manchester and Birmingham.

Instead, Weinstein shows that debates within the capital were a crucial factor in the formation of the
popular liberalism of the mid-Victorian period, even suggesting that by the 1840s ‘London was actually in the vanguard of “popular liberalism” ’ (p. 8). This argument revolves around the twin theses that – far from being an outdated, rural creed – Whiggism was a crucial aspect of metropolitan political culture, and that it was the need to rally against its centralising tendencies that forced London’s radicals to take up the mantra of retrenchment and local self-government which formed the basis of their later programme.

By focusing on the interplay between these two strands of liberal politics, Weinstein is able to paint a nuanced picture of a vibrant political scene in which identities were forged via contestation and social interaction. He employs a number of specific cases to demonstrate his argument. These include radical opposition to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, to church rates reform and to the window tax, and culminate in the radical campaign for local self-government, resulting in the Metropolitan Board of Works. He also usefully highlights the way in which the supposedly bipartisan social reform movement, seen in organisations like the Health of Towns Association, can be better understood as an alliance of the paternalist centre, extending neither to radical liberals nor Peelite conservatives. By the end of his period, London is a radical stronghold, with the survival of the remaining Whigs – such as Ebrington in Marylebone – dependent on their accommodation of radical ideas of local self-government.

Weinstein’s detailed narrative and convincing argument make a significant contribution to our understanding of liberal political culture, early Victorian politics and the development of London government. It will be of interest to scholars in all of these areas.

Emily Robinson
(University of Nottingham)

Europe


This book analyses the relationships between political parties and interest groups in Norway. While the connections between party systems and structures of interest intermediation have been the focus of a number of classical studies, notably by Rokkan or Lehmbruch, Allern’s thorough study is innovative in so far as it seeks to understand why individual parties – as opposed to the party system as a whole – opt for a specific kind of relationship with interest groups. The study combines a number of methods including qualitative analysis, a survey of party elites and social network analysis to compare the relationships that the main Norwegian political parties maintain with interest groups while they elaborate their party manifestos.

If the empirical analysis only focuses on the Norwegian case, the theoretical framework is explicitly designed to be used in a comparative context. The author reviews a number of theoretical approaches, and opts for a rational choice analytical framework which emphasises the costs and benefits associated with different relationships to interest groups in terms of closeness and range. For instance, close relationships with a small number of groups may ensure trust and access to expertise and information, while they may also alienate some segments of the electorate.

The main finding of the study is that Norwegian political parties have relatively distant but wide-ranging relationships with interest groups. While the Labour Party still maintains close connections with the trade union movement, other parties tend to have weak links with a wide number of organisations. Another interesting finding is that fringe parties do not differ significantly from mainstream parties. Hence, the national-populist Progress Party and the Socialist Left, despite their anti-establishment discourse, have also established a wide-ranging network of contacts with organised interests.

As a whole, Political Parties and Interest Groups in Norway is a valuable contribution which will be of interest to political party and interest group scholars. The greatest interest of the study for scholars in comparative politics is probably its encompassing discussion of the factors shaping party strategies towards interest groups. The book, however, aims perhaps excessively at exhaustiveness and could have been greatly streamlined. The research hypotheses used in the empirical analysis are somewhat convoluted, and could have been more specific regarding expectations for each party. Finally, the focus on the manifesto-making process within political parties, even if it is justified for methodological and conceptual reasons,
was not totally convincing. One can wonder whether
manifestos are really of relevance for interest groups
themselves, which may be more interested in policy
and legislative outputs than in often purely declama-
tory documents.

Alexandre Afonso
(King’s College London)

The Impact of European Integration on Political
Parties: Beyond the Permissive Consensus by
200pp, £80.00. ISBN 978 0 415 69374 5

The hypothesis that political parties are rational choice
actors which are multi-goal orientated but institution-
ally constrained by the ideological political cleavage
they operate within is examined by Dimitri Almeida in
his book looking at party responses to European inte-
gration in the post-Maastricht era of European Union
politics. Almeida tests this hypothesis by looking at the
institutional constraints imposed upon individual politi-
cal party behaviour in the 27 member states of the EU
by the ideological cleavage of five party families: Chris-
tian democrats, social democrats, liberals, the far right
and the far left. The omission of four more party
families (conservatives, greens, regionalist and agrarian)
is a limitation to Almeida’s attempts to test his hypoth-
thesis thoroughly through comparative analysis, but it is
deliberate, Almeida wanting to concentrate only on
those party families that have ‘shaped the European
integration process’ or ‘brought about the end of the
permissive consensus’ (p. 159).

Having established his theoretical pretext and clear
parameters in terms of qualitative and quantitative
analysis in his research, Almeida then tests his cleavage-
based hypothesis. He examines the story of develop-
ments towards European integration within the EU
and the party behaviour of political parties in response
to such developments within each party family, and
how their ideological location politically affected their
decision making, both domestically and at transnational
level, particularly in coalition building within the EU.

Almeida’s book, due to its theoretical approach and
detailed historical examination of European politics
from the post-war period onwards, will be of interest to
students studying European politics, European integra-
tion, comparative politics and political parties. One of
the main limitations of the book is acknowledged by
the author himself: the omitted four party families.
More worryingly is Almeida’s further admission that he
has excluded from the parameters of his book political
parties from both Central and Eastern Europe, mainly
due to the political volatility of the region, but also (of
far more concern) because of the difficulty of export-
ing his theoretical model of party behaviour to this part
of the world (p. 159). Such an admission does not,
however, detract from the progress made by the book
in its quest to bring greater knowledge into political
parties’ attitudes towards European integration, both at
domestic and EU level, in the post-Maastricht era.

Thomas McMeeking
(University of Leeds)

Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmo-
politanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture
674 05787 6

Most readings of Soviet history see Soviet culture in the
1930s as increasingly insular and conservative. Stalinism
and socialist realism extinguished the great artistic experi-
ments that had accompanied the revolution. Katerina
Clark’s new history of Soviet culture in the 1930s chal-
enges this image of isolation and repression. Clark
reinterprets the familiar story of the USSR’s turn away
from revolutionary experimentation to argue that the
Stalinist cultural turn was not simply about repression, but
was an effort to create something new that would make
the USSR the pinnacle of cultural achievement, a new
Rome. Hence the title of the book: Moscow, in a Russian
tradition, was to become the centre of a civilisation, a
third Rome, after the fall of the second Rome (Constan-
tinople) in 1453. Soviet cultural development in the
1930s, Clark argues, took up this traditional messianic idea
and sought to forge a new international culture. This
fourth Rome would be based on a fusion of Marxism-
Leninism, pre-revolutionary Russian culture and Western
culture. The intellectuals involved in this cultural project
were thus forging a new cosmopolitan culture that would
let Russia take its place at the head of cultural life globally.
There were therefore debates about how this should
occur and on what basis, uncertainty about the extent to
which Russian and Soviet culture were at the level of the
West, as well as grandiose projects to reconstruct Russia,
and Moscow in particular, as a cultural centre.
Clark discusses these issues through an examination of the life and work of four men – Sergei Eisenstein, Ilya Ehrenburg, Mikhail Kolsov (Fridliand) and Sergei Tretyakov – who served as ‘intermediaries’ between Western and an emergent Soviet culture. These four ‘cosmopolitan patriots’ as she labels them travelled abroad and tried to marry Russian themes to international ones. Clark calls this the ‘Great Appropriation’ as Soviet intellectuals tried to forge a new cultural internationalism with Russia at its centre based on socialist, traditional Russian and Western themes. The Soviet cosmopolitan project collapsed in the late 1930s and died out in the 1940s as nationalism and the Cold War led to cultural retrenchment and a more dogmatic conservatism. Clark beautifully draws out the aspirations of her four intellectuals and their struggles to create something international and aesthetically novel from within socialist realism. In doing so, she adds to scholarship from other areas that shows how Stalinism was a dynamic and evolving set of practices rather than a totalitarian monolith.

Neil Robinson
(University of Limerick)


After the Third Way, one of the latest offerings from progressive think tank Policy Network, brings together an impressive array of esteemed academics and commentators to ponder the rejuvenation of the intellectual underpinnings of European social democracy. This theme of ideological rejuvenation, as opposed to ideological revisionism or nostalgia, is a clear and conscious aim, with many a contributor keen to highlight how, for instance, the moribund distinction between ‘states and markets’ that underpinned the progressive politics of yesteryear should not be resurrected.

Patrick Diamond sets the tone in his opening chapter by encouraging social democrats to acknowledge the challenging conditions to which progressives must adapt. ‘The assumption that the goal of social democracy is to win power over the central state’, Diamond claims, ‘is untenable’ (p. 25). Instead, the purpose should be ‘aligning renewed electoral success with credible strategies for governing in the name of a fairer, more equal society’ (p. 27). The following chapters seek to meet this call, with authors such as Luke Martell and Financial Times journalist John Lloyd on the challenges of a globalising world, and Michael Kenny and Liam Byrne on domestic socio-cultural shifts.

It is not just changes in the conditions of the electorate and governing the state that pose both problems and opportunities for social democrats, however. Bo Rothstein, for instance, implores us to consider how the design of institutions can impact upon social equality. Meanwhile, Andrew Gamble, in his chapter on ‘debts and deficits’, admits that progressive narratives, which often rely on structural explanations and abstractions, can ‘seem too clever by half’ (p. 53) and thus lack the resonance of the simpler narratives of the right.

Publications such as this are to be expected in the current climate. Many believed that the global financial crisis would leave neo-liberalism discredited. However, it has become increasingly obvious that the left lacks the ideas to take advantage of this moment. Does this book, then, create a new intellectual underpinning for a new European social democracy? That aim was perhaps always too ambitious. However, one can only move forward ideologically by admitting the need for renewal. Only then can the space for new debates be carved out. In this sense, this book, aimed at both the academic world and beyond, is a move in the right direction – and as such, is relevant to those interested in the electoral rejuvenation of social democratic parties in Europe.

Liam Stanley
(University of Birmingham)


This first book of the two-volume European Economic Governance and Policies contains a comprehensive anthology of the key documents on European economic and monetary integration. The volume is divided into two distinctive parts: (1) the historical narrative or the ‘road’ to economic and monetary integration; (2) the institutional set-up of Euroland. In its turn, each part is divided into separate subsections, corresponding to well-established chronological and substantive criteria. While the volume is imposing in its length, the task of the reader is much facilitated by the
fact that each of the subsections is preceded by what amounts to a brief essay, which plays the double role of (1) providing a framework of interpretation of the ensuing documents and (2) placing the whole subsection in the context of the overall development of European economic and monetary integration.

While a good many of the documents have become easily available in recent years (through the cvce.eu, the Publication Service of the EU, and the Commission itself), the present volume not only provides an astute selection (saving the reader the pain of digging into occasionally long texts), but is further completed by hard-to-find texts, translations undertaken by the authors and even documents that were not made public before. The lexicographical essay contained in the conclusions is surely another ‘bonus’ to the reader, who perhaps only misses a wider resort to the ‘memories’ of some European leaders, such as Spinelli’s formidable diaries, especially since some of those are not available in English.

The existential crisis that has hit the European Union since 2007 increases the salience of a book such as this one, informed by a historical perspective that is equipped to help readers find their own answers to the many questions on the plight of the European Union. As the conclusions of the book highlight, the crisis has revealed the paradoxical ways in which the kind of problems that were at the centre of the debate in the pre-EMU years (especially before 1970) have come back with a vengeance. This is why it may be justified to say that the reader is not only provided with a detailed view of how the Euro was born (and who was responsible for its eventual birth defects) but also with a perspective of the different possible ways of understanding the role and place of monetary union in European integration, something to which the first historical subsection contributes brilliantly.

Agustin Jose Menendez
(University of León)


This volume presents an insightful and comprehensive analysis of the current state of democracy in the European Union and its prospects. It draws on the findings of the RECON project (Reconstituting Democracy in Europe) which brought together tools and frameworks of analysis stemming from a wide range of scholarly fields of interest. A deep democratic deficit coupled with a crisis of legitimacy are seen throughout the volume as the main shortcomings of the EU’s democracy. Conversely, the book evaluates the extent to which three theoretical models can solve the Union’s democratic malaise and the possibility of applying them transnationally.

The first model contends that the EU is only an audit democracy which controls and backs up representative democracy at the national level. Legitimacy is granted indirectly to the EU by the representative systems of the member states and the outcomes of its policies. The second model views the Union as a federation based on a constitution grounded on shared understandings of European identity and enacted through constitutional patriotism. Legitimacy is granted via elected representatives in both a federal transnational government and a federal European Parliament, which would function similarly to national institutions. The cosmopolitan or regional model presupposes a type of democracy where legitimacy is located in the ability of citizens to influence both political agendas and decision-making processes. Decisions also have to embrace the all-affected principle, taking into account the interest and preferences of citizens in third party states which are more or less directly subject to the EU’s policies.

Even though the volume comprehensively analyses the three proposed models from a plethora of perspectives, it avoids pinpointing the most suitable candidate for providing a cure for the EU’s democratic malaise. Rather, it identifies different areas where each model could spur on processes of democratic legitimation or foster transparency, accountability and individual autonomy. On the other hand, a move in the last twenty years from intergovernmentalism is signalled by most contributors as evidence that the EU is already governed by a higher degree of integration than the audit model would entail. At the other end of the spectrum, the cosmopolitan model seems to resemble more a normative ideal than a project that could engulf the whole of the European project in the near future. Finally, the middle ground is held by the federal model, where the editors agree that ‘dense transnational networks and administrative systems of coordination have been intrinsic to the legitimacy of the EU, and some
see these as amounting to a form of transnational constitutionalism’ (p. 5).

Cristian Nitoiu
(University of Loughborough)


Europeanisation is a relatively recent research topic, but it is a very active area and has already provided several published articles and books. Research Design in European Studies: Establishing Causality in Europeanization is another such contribution, being the final result of two workshops bringing together different researchers whose common denominator is the study of different aspects of Europeanisation.

Essentially, the book addresses concrete problems in the causal analysis of Europeanisation effects, based on different research designs and epistemological foundations and perspectives, such as critical realism, discourse analysis and neo‐positivism.

The volume has fourteen assorted chapters, both theoretical and/or empirical, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches, which provide several proposals for the analysis of causality. The contributors explore and discuss the difficulties in establishing causality in Europeanisation and show the extensive variety of methodological challenges faced when working on this subject. But they also offer comprehensive case studies regarding, for instance, foreign policy, health care and party politics, which provide very useful research material for both graduate and undergraduate students and scholars.

By dealing with how the European Union causes changes in member states, institutions and citizens, the book succeeds in scrutinising different notions of causality, relating them to different methods and techniques. By focusing on a key question, which is the veracity of methodology on Europeanisation, the volume is an accomplished attempt to understand how Europeanisation forces adaptation and/or resistance at the domestic level.

While explaining and assessing a wide variety of tools for causal analysis and providing meaningful examples, the volume also provides an innovative approach to the study of Europeanisation, but like most edited volumes it lacks some consistency and significant theoretical improvements.

Overall, the book has been tailored to meet the demands of a growing interest in the effects of Europeanisation and also to provide different insights into how causality can be established when studying any aspect of Europeanisation. As a whole, it does not contain any revolutionary contribution to the literature on Europeanisation, but it is in itself another worthy starting point for future in-depth analysis and research improvements.

Alice Cunha
(Universidade Nova de Lisboa)


This is a volume dedicated to the chain of events known as the 1998 default in Russia. Martin Gilman argues that the August 1998 default of the Russian government on its domestic financial obligations, also known as GKOs, and the economic collapse that followed the default, could have been avoided. A series of missteps eventually made the crisis unavoidable, but its aftermath helped the Russian economy to adjust and become better prepared for the global financial meltdown that started in 2008. The author chooses a chronological approach to the event and considers actions, figures and events that preceded the 1998 default, occurred during the default and followed it. The structure of the book is designed accordingly. Despite the reference to the 1998 default in the title of the book and the fact that this is its major focus, Gilman also examines the 2000s in his analysis and makes reference to the events of 2010.

Gilman says that an economy oriented to the export of oil may not be sustainable, especially in the long run, and suggests cutting budgetary spending in order to avoid a possible new debt crisis. The choice of development model may be crucial for Russia when it comes to sustaining a steady and relatively high rate of growth. So far, the extraction of natural resources remains a very capital-intensive sector of the Russian economy. The author concludes that investment should be channelled to sectors of the national economy with higher productivity and higher value-added output.
Overall, the book, largely descriptive and slightly analytical, relies more on historical facts and personal accounts by the author than on any theoretical frame or methodology. It is obviously written by someone who is an insider with both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Russia’s world of finance. There is no doubt that Gilman, who has served as an IMF official and professor in Moscow over the last two decades, knows the inside story of Russian politics and economic reforms. The book is a mixture of journalistic accounts, a memoir and a scholarly discussion, which nevertheless helps the reader to see a true picture of the 1998 default and its aftermath and to avoid some of the major misperceptions that are so damaging for Russia’s international reputation.

Ararat L. Osipian
(Vanderbilt University, Nashville)


This work is a comprehensive approach to party strategies in a multi-level system framed by European integration. The author has developed a comparative analysis focused on the issue of territorial interests and party strategies in three West European regions – Scotland, Bavaria and Sardinia – over a period of 30 years.

Two research questions are addressed in this book: how parties compete in a multi-level political system, and how they articulate their territorial projects and demands at different levels. As explanatory variables, the author points out the territorial mobilisation in Europe and party competition at the regional level (p. 24). Over recent decades there have been many studies that have considered the regional dimension of politics (works by Liesbet Hooghe, Lieven De Winter, Peter Lynch and Michael Keating, among others), or which have focused on the ‘Europeanisation’ issue, especially as a consequence of the emergence of a sub-national tier of electoral competition.

European integration provided the opportunity structures for regional political actors to take positions on European policies in order to accomplish their own territorial interests. For each case analysis, Eve Hepburn identifies a number of factors that have affected parties’ territorial strategies in Europe: access to European institutions and organisations; local party competition; economic resources and the constraints of state structures (p. 206). She identifies three different strategies followed by parties in order to enhance their regional power: in Scotland the regional government focuses on trading off autonomy for influence at the centre; in Bavaria there was a need to obtain greater protection from the centre; and in Sardinia the main question was whether or not to sacrifice autonomy in order to obtain more resources from the centre (p. 211).

The analysis of territorial mobilisation confirms the instrumental nature of European integration. As the author adduces, ‘European integration can be understood as a strategy by parties to manipulate the dimensions of a given issue – be it autonomy [Scotland], economic resources [Sardinia] or protectionism [Bavaria] – at regional, state or European level’ (p. 222), and the degree of regional parties’ mobilisation depends on the public benefits expected.

In a broader sense, the book offers a good theoretical framework which should be extended to other cases, with different institutional arrangements. Hepburn presents an accurate analytical argument by ‘modelling’ the diverse ways in which regional parties have responded and used European integration to strengthen their interests.

Teresa Ruel
(University of Lisbon)


The extreme right is a crucial phenomenon that has long engulfed and still affects politics in Europe and elsewhere. It is a topic extensively discussed in the literature and this edited volume aims to bring a new dimension to the study of the extreme right. The book offers two genuine contributions. First, its extensive scope may attract a wide audience. Second, it successfully brings together distinct articles to prove that, methodologically, the extreme right is not confined to political science but could also be the theme of other disciplines such as anthropology (Shoshan) and history (Mares and Stojar). However, the book has remarkably weak
editorial control. First, there is no theoretical framework to guide the contributors. This has resulted in a sporadic selection of unrelated articles. Although it is stated that a second volume will deal with theory, a short yet relevant framework would make this volume much more worthwhile. Second, the editors aim to offer a volume different from previous publications but do not actually explain in detail how original it is in comparison to the extant literature. Third, they make a controversial claim that the extreme right is a European phenomenon (p. 3), yet they do not offer any justification for their claim. Finally, the book does not have a conclusion.

However, it does a successful job of highlighting the transnational character of the extreme right in Europe. It could have been even better if the entire volume had been devoted to this theme. Although some pieces are excessively descriptive (Arikan, Ellinas, Stojarova), some articles offer good insights. For instance, while depicting the extreme right attachments of East Berliners as a reaction to Turkish immigrants, Shoshan explains that their objection to Turkey’s EU accession mainly stems from their negative experiences with Turks in daily life, although they justify their opposition by citing ‘public deliberations far broader and more articulate than the crude rhetoric of extreme-right fringes’ (p. 57). Moreover, Jamin successfully explains how differently the extreme right engulfs the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking parts of Belgium. Finally, Peunova offers a fascinating paper scrutinising the European roots of new Eurasianism in Russia.

Despite its editorial weakness, the volume nevertheless offers a good compilation of articles which at times provide thought-provoking analyses of the development of the extreme right in Europe and beyond. Therefore, it is recommended to researchers who are interested in studying extreme right political formations across Europe with interdisciplinary lenses.

Seckin Baris Gulmez
(Royal Holloway, University of London)


The issue of Europe’s ability to accommodate growing diversity in an age of multiple and conflicting identities has largely been ignored in favour of a discourse on Islam that questions whether Muslims can adapt to secular European society. Luca Mavelli seeks to problematise this entrenched narrative and suggests that it is time for Europe to reinterpret its secular tradition and to re-imagine the rigid separation between secular and religious. By following a genealogy of European secularity, the author demonstrates that the progressive disavowal of the religious has also resulted in isolation for the secular European subject and a demonisation of Islam in Europe. He argues: ‘The construction of Muslims as the ultimate others of European secular modernity is an integral part of the reproduction of a secular life’ (p. 87).

Mavelli suggests that the path towards integration lies in the ‘embracing of a dimension of a transcendent Otherness as the epistemic framework and common medium of identification’ (p. 138). The incorporation of a Buberian notion of religiosity would allow Europe to transcend this seemingly impenetrable boundary. The key for modern Europe, Mavelli argues, is to conceptualise life as an ‘encounter with the other’ (p. 144) and to embrace the notion that truth may be beyond the self.

Mavelli’s problematisation of the question of Islam in Europe is a timely and rather novel approach to the broader issue of immigration and growing cultural diversity in European society. The book’s thorough account of the philosophical development of Western secularity, from Aquinas to Weber, gives the reader an in-depth understanding of the ideological landscape in which European Muslims find themselves. It also gives some insight into the sense of isolation concomitant with secularity.

This book is rooted in the philosophical and aimed at theorists. However, it remains an accessible and informative read for anyone interested in the history of European secularity or in understanding the contemporary position of Islam in Europe. Nevertheless, it can be argued that perhaps the key to realising the post-secular lies far beyond the philosophical with policymakers and civil society. Integration of the other certainly does carry immense promise for European development and Mavelli is not asking Europeans to abandon the secular altogether. However, the willingness of society to transcend the self and encounter the other remains, perhaps, the greatest obstacle to imaging the post-secular.

Desiree Bryan
(Aberystwyth University)

This book provides a highly topical exploration of recent developments in the political economy of European integration, basing the analysis on the wider questions of what this means for the global political economy and the implications of the post-2007 global economic crisis. As an edited collection, the book is remarkable in that it has a consistent focus, and analyses are drawn from similar (although obviously not identical) perspectives throughout. The core focus of analysis is the question of how the process of European integration relates to developments in the global political economy (especially ‘neo-liberalism’ and/or ‘globalisation’), how these processes have been affected by the post-2007 global economic crisis, and the trajectories that we are likely to witness in the future. The authors include a range of leading scholars from the field of critical (international) political economy.

The basic argument developed in each chapter is that the process of European integration has contributed to, and consolidated, the shift from the post-war Keynesian consensus mode of capital accumulation to the post-1970s neo-liberal mode of accumulation, thereby achieving a (partial) resolution of this crisis of accumulation through the internationalisation of production, wage repression, welfare austerity and market liberalisation. In the case of the European Union, a combination of efforts by (especially) the British government, certain actors within the European Commission, and the European Roundtable of Industrialists, oversaw the liberalisation of European markets and trade, the eradication of a number of forms of intra-European protectionism, a competition policy that sought to privilege European capital, and subsequent sovereign debt crises have been met with austerity measures and welfare retrenchment.

The book provides an excellent overview of these debates and arguments – providing rich empirical analysis, and insightful and nuanced theoretical elaboration and description – and will rightly become a major and lasting contribution to the field. If I have one objection to make, it is that regardless of the high level of scholarship that has gone into the writing of this book, I would have preferred to have seen greater problematisation of capital’s attempt to dominate labour. Rather than grieving the victory (yet again) of capital over labour, is not the role of critical scholars instead to posit and celebrate the contestation and disruption of such attempts at domination?

David J. Bailey
(University of Birmingham)


This book is one of a series dedicated to non-governmental or small parties in Western Europe. Jae-Jae Spoon has taken a fairly neutral approach to this category, which permits the author a great degree of freedom in engaging with the argument. Spoon defines small parties not merely in terms of size and scope (p. 5), but also in terms of their ability to survive.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the author focuses on small party behaviour in balancing competing goals such as policy, electoral and communication strategies. Spoon asserts that small parties, despite the novelty they bring mainly in terms of their decentralised structure, have changed over time, shifting from open to vertical centralisation and adapting to the political environment. The author uses a research design based on triangulation, considering both quantitative and qualitative data in order to explain small party survival in Europe (p. 18). Spoon takes into consideration two ‘extreme’ cases of party survival, namely that of the Green Party of England and Wales, and ‘Les Vertes’ (The Greens) in France. Both are presented specifically as ‘extremes’ in the environment of party competition. ‘Les Vertes’ has benefited from pre-electoral coalition schemes with the Socialist Party.
(p. 77), while the English and Welsh Green Party has targeted particular electoral districts both in national and local elections in order to succeed (p. 137).

The second level of analysis is presented in terms of media exposure. In both cases, the parties have benefited from the tolerance or cooperation of major parties. The French Greens have tried to develop extra-parliamentary events such as debates to sustain their visibility, while the English and Welsh Greens try to focus on policy matters.

The book is clearly an advance in terms of party competition, but one cannot refrain from noticing a certain lack of diversity in terms of the cases presented. Furthermore, it contains some limitations regarding the definition of small parties in terms of size or scope. While ethno-regionalist parties are limited in their existence by cultural or geographical boundaries, green and extreme right parties are not. Their set of issues might attract fewer voters but it does not mean that their aim is not to represent a larger part of the electorate. The second limitation regards the definition of the ‘spiritual families’ to which these parties belong. In both case studies, ‘Les Vertes’ and the Greens in England and Wales belong to the same party family. The research could have been enriched by extending consideration to other more ‘difficult’ environments, taking into account different small party typologies.

Klejd Këlliçi
(European University of Tirana)


This book by Jeffrey Stacey provides a new and interesting way to approach the study of European integration and its institutional development. Through the proposition of a new interpretative model based on the tools offered by rational choice institutionalism, the author tries to explain how and why member states can accept the delegation of more power to supranational institutions. After an accurate presentation of the theories of European integration, Stacey presents the theoretical framework of his analysis: the main idea is that through the enforcement of informal accords, supranational institutions are able to gain power from member states and that this kind of informal interaction guarantees the deepening and strengthening of the integration process. The author subsequently describes the nature of informal accords and presents a valuable classification for them, followed by an explanation of the possible strategies applied by the institutional actors during the informal accords and analysing how these strategies influence the negotiation’s outcomes. Following a description of the theoretical background, Stacey then presents the empirical section of the book, in order to illuminate the way in which institutional changes take place through informal accords.

In this book the author deals with a central problem concerning the European Union’s development, the topic of institutional change and the way in which it can occur. What makes it extremely interesting for scholars of European integration is the point of view from which the author has decided to look at this matter: the nature of informal accords and how they can influence formal institutional reforms and the entire integration process. Far from being a formal study of institutional evolution, the text exposes how informal accords are vital for the EU because they allow the correct institutional functioning through their ability to fill some of the vacuum created by the formal accords. Furthermore Stacey sheds light on the institutional players’ ability, especially the weaker one of the three – the European Parliament – to increase a sort of ‘constituent process’. This represents the only opportunity for a supranational institution to reform the institutional architecture of the Union beyond the formal treaties and power exerted by member states. In conclusion, this book is warmly recommended to those scholars who want to investigate how supranational institutions relate to one another in a ‘bargaining arena’ and how they can influence the integration process independently of their formal powers.

Eugenio Salvati
(University of Pavia)


Since the Nuremberg Trials, Germany has emerged as one of the outspoken supporters of international
criminal courts. Ronen Steinke’s interesting book is a welcome contribution to the historical understanding of this trend via the intersection of the international criminal system and German politics. His book is divided into six chapters. The first addresses the legal issues and challenges facing the international criminal justice system, including the need for a clearer gravity threshold for triggering an investigation. The remaining five chapters analyse the different contexts of German politics vis-à-vis the international criminal justice system, including Germany’s role in shaping the design of the Rome Statute and the political connotations of the UN Security Council. Here Steinke suggests, among other things, that accountability requires stronger democratic procedure to check the power of the prosecutor(s). His point is that stronger accountability should also entail ‘a fair selection policy ... representative of the historical truth’ (p. 26). However, he fails to specify the precise procedures needed to promote such accountability, or consider more fully the issue of whether Germany’s legal system (civil law) may have something further to offer in this respect.

Indeed, one might ask whether Germany, a supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – albeit not a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (at least yet) – detracts from the more pressing political power issues facing the ICC’s selective process, including the threat of US opposition. Steinke addresses some of these issues in his chapter on the UN Security Council, but by and large skirts the more relevant issue of how Germany has used its rising influence as the chief political and economic power within the EU to leverage more support for the ICC. This lack also points to a contradictory flaw of the book: its rather thin political analysis, or rather its tendency to lean too heavily on the political connotations of vague substantive legal procedure without adequately explicating the political dynamics of the international courts’ operations and actions, particularly in the context of the peace versus justice debate, that is, in the seven situations referred to the ICC, such as Uganda.

Despite this weakness, I found this book to be a very worthy and stimulating contribution to an overlooked subject: the dual and intersecting politics of Germany and international criminal justice, a subject that is sure to appeal to graduate and undergraduate students of the politics of law, and to gain more attention in the coming years as the UN considers expanding its permanent membership to include Germany.

Steven C. Roach
(University of South Florida)


In her book Gamze Tanil tries to explain the relationship between Norway and the European Union through the lenses of both selected national (ministerial elites) and transnational civil servants (working in Brussels at the Norwegian Delegation to the EU) who belong to five selected policy areas where both Norway and the EU have had strong interests for some time, namely foreign and security policy (FSP), justice and home affairs (JHA), energy policy, agricultural policy and fisheries policy.

In the introduction, the author presents the main research questions, the aim of the study, the theoretical framework and methodology of the book. In the second chapter, she explains the social constructivist fusion perspective in detail. I felt she should have also discussed Europeisation theories in more depth in this chapter, but unfortunately they are mentioned only briefly and the author instead largely focuses on the social constructivist fusion perspective.

In the following five chapters, Tanil analyses the five most important policy areas for the past, current and future relationship between Norway and the EU. After giving a short historical background for each area, she analyses the national and transnational Norwegian elites’ answers to the questions she asked. According to these empirical findings, while in the FSP and JHA areas civil servants see that Norwegian and EU policy objectives and methods are mostly similar and that there is no need for ideational learning, in the energy, agricultural and fisheries policy areas Norwegian and EU policy objectives and methods are seen to be mostly different, so both sides should learn from each other. In the conclusion, the author gathers all the empirical findings of each policy area together and highlights several factors for the future membership of Norway in the EU.

To sum up, I think this book should be read by students and scholars of European studies due to its
interesting topic, but I also think that it has some limitations in its methodology. For example, the author bases the book mainly on the answers of national and transnational civil servants, but I think that the sample is really too small to share their empirical findings at the end of the book or to draw a numerical conclusion from the answers. Apart from these methodological problems, this carefully written book is worth reading in order to look at Norwegian–EU relations from the Norwegian elites’ point of view.

Nihan Akincilar
(Marmara University, Istanbul)


This book is an interesting investigation into the question of how and under which circumstances the EU member states rise above their contradictory preferences and achieve an agreement on foreign policy issues. The EU foreign policy-making process is analysed by using the normative institutionalist approach whose explanatory power is evaluated in diverse case studies.

In the introduction to this volume the editor presents the assumptions of normative institutionalism and its two key hypotheses: normative entrapment and cooperative bargaining, and counterposes them to the main hypotheses derived from intergovernmentalism and constructivism. The methodological approach is tested in fourteen case studies which cover both the long-established field of foreign and security policy issues, such as the dilemma of European support for democratic reforms in Ukraine or EU actions in the Iraq War, and the new areas of external policies such as trade or European policy on climate change. The review of the empirical findings regarding the explanatory power of the underlying theory suggests that normative institutionalism is a ‘robust theory’ (p. 178) of the EU foreign policy-making process. The conclusions are complemented with contributions from three prominent academics who discuss the further conceptual and methodological challenges of EU foreign policy analyses.

The editor develops – to a great extent – the innovative analytical framework with a precisely phrased hypothesis and bolsters it with a broad range of empirical contributions from six well-recognised scholars. He succeeds in the correlation of both parts so the book is successfully unified. But the main merit of this book arises from a focus on tracing the process of achieving agreement between EU member states on common foreign policy issues. The conditions of policy agreement have previously been neglected by the majority of scholars. Thus the set of conditions, defined by the author, under which entrapment and cooperative bargaining are likely to happen provides an added value to the analysis of the EU’s foreign policy.

To sum up, this is a well-written book which would be interesting for graduate students and scholars dealing with EU foreign policy and European governance. However, in order to cross-reference the power of normative institutionalism in explaining the decision-making process within EU foreign policy with other main theories of international relations, more empirical research would be necessary. Particularly interesting could be the question on whether and how the newly established post-Lisbon institutional framework influences the process of reaching an agreement between member states.

Monika Sus
(University of Wroclaw)


Ed Turner’s excellent book has, at its heart, the old question of whether political parties actually matter with regard to public policy development. In addressing this subject, his research looks to fill two significant gaps in the existing literature. First, there is the dearth of qualitative research into the influence of parties on public policy. The majority of analyses are quantitative and focus only on expenditure, yet Turner’s analysis identifies significant qualitative differences between the preferences of political partisans unrelated to levels of state expenditure which such approaches would miss. Second, such analyses tend to focus only on the nation-state level. Turner’s research, with its titular focus upon Political Parties and Public Policy in the German Länder, is thus a welcome consideration of the sub-national level in the assessment of partisan influence.

The analysis itself focuses upon such influence with regard to three policy areas – education, family and childcare, and labour market policies – viewed com-
paratively across three German Länder – Hesse, Saarland and Saxony-Anhalt – each of which demonstrated swings to the right during the period of the national Red/Green coalition government, thereby providing the opportunity for sub-national policy differentiation from the centre. The author’s conclusion, based on these nine case studies, is that parties do indeed demonstrably matter at a Land level, albeit with significant variations in the extent to which this is the case: other factors including the character of the Land-level party (Landesverband), the socio-economic character of the Land and the history of policies pursued all temper the impact of a change in government on public policy.

Although specifically focused on the German case, the demonstration that the partisan composition of governments influences pursued policies suggests that more widely researched ‘accounts of public policy which neglect partisan influences ... risk failing to capture an important point’ (p. 227). It also, obviously, confirms the view that federalism can enable diversity in policy choices – not simply in terms of technocratic policy practice, but also partisan, political ideology whereby sub-national legislatures act as ‘laboratories of social democracy’ and ‘laboratories of conservatism’, etc. (p. 14).

This book will be of genuine value to those interested in the study of federalism, the role of (multi-level) parties in policy making, multi-level politics in general and German studies specifically. It is a shame that the price is so high – a cheaper paperback version could find a key place as recommended reading on a number of diverse courses.

David S. Moon
(University of Liverpool)


Stephen Woolcock’s book is aimed as a contribution to the debate in European Union studies on the EU’s role as an international actor. At a more elementary level it covers the mechanics of EU foreign economic policy making. This serves to inform a discussion of two substantive questions: (a) the EU’s role in economic diplomacy; and (b) the factors determining its effectiveness. To provide answers to this latter question, chapter 2 sets out a ‘framework for analysis’ by listing a number of factors seen to have an impact on EU economic diplomacy. The chapter also sets out a number of hypotheses regarding the determinants of EU foreign economic policy effectiveness (most importantly, the degree to which the EU exercises de facto competence as well as its relative market power). The subsequent chapters then apply this framework to study and compare different areas of economic diplomacy: external trade and investment; international financial regulation; environmental policy; and development cooperation.

The book provides an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of the mechanisms and evolution of EU foreign economic policy making (the first two sections of each substantive chapter are dedicated to these issues and take into consideration the impact of the Lisbon Treaty). The book’s original contribution to scholarship is perhaps slightly more modest; despite adding a novel comparative angle and fine-tuning some of the literature’s insights (pp. 42–4) the author is largely synthesising existing research on the EU’s role in international affairs (which in itself is still an important exercise in an otherwise understudied field). Symptomatic of this is the fact that the author’s ‘framework for analysis’ includes a list of not entirely commensurate factors (e.g. the insights of the literature on ‘normative power’ Europe sit side by side with those stressing principal–agent dynamics) without any explicit attempt to resolve underlying theoretical tensions. Woolcock does raise some very interesting issues regarding the EU’s waning relative economic influence. But this begs the largely unaddressed question of the impact of such a development on the broader configuration of power within the global political economy, although, to be fair, this is an issue to which the wider literature on EU foreign economic relations has not really spoken. In sum, this book is likely to be an extremely useful resource for those scholars, students and practitioners with an interest in the foreign economic relations of the EU.

Gabriel Siles-Brügge
(University of Manchester)


Andrej Zaslove’s monograph is an interesting and important addition to both the burgeoning literature...
on radical right populist parties and the already large body of existing literature analysing the Italian Lega Nord. The first chapter provides a useful review and discussion of the existing literature on the radical right populist party family. Zaslove tries to make sense of the surge in research and writing on the subject by dividing existing studies into four broad schools: populism, extremism, the radical right and radical right populism. The author believes that of these different categories ‘radical right populism most appropriately identifies the organizational and ideological characteristics of the dominant parties within the third wave’ (pp. 19–20). The author then goes on to deconstruct the different elements of radical right populism – nationalism and an ‘authentic’ civil society, exclusion and nativist nationalism as well as populist political economy. Zaslove points out the different and often contradictory origins of these parties before inevitably shifting to the Lega Nord, the focus of the remaining chapters of the book.

The second part of the book deals with the ideology of the Lega Nord, and the more nuanced message it developed going into the 1990s. The fifth chapter, which deals with nationalist nativism, successfully captures the essence of the radical right populist message, which in the case of the Lega Nord was directed both at southerners – accused of economically exploiting the hard-working north – and latterly against the rising tide of immigration that began in the 1980s, with immigrants being charged with endangering local identities and security as well as posing an economic threat to the native population (p. 121). The final part of the book considers how the Lega Nord negotiated the difficult political tightrope of governing while maintaining its core populist rhetoric. Zaslove argues that the nature of the government coalition allowed the Lega to present itself as a sort of combative internal opposition while still influencing government policy, most successfully when cooperating with other coalition partner parties, particularly on federalist and immigration policies.

The book is an excellent case study of the Lega Nord. While the first chapter provides a neat overview of events in Western Europe, it is a pity that the author has neglected Central and Eastern Europe (after all the title of the volume is the European Radical Right, although, confusingly, in the text the author tends to refer to Western Europe). Central and Eastern Europe has also seen a surge of political parties fitting the model described, but continues to be excluded from comparative studies.

Daunis Auers
(University of Latvia)

The Americas


This book is a compact and focused descriptive analysis of US presidents over a period spanning more than 200 years. The basic argument of the study is that the power and limitations of a president are gauged from his response to political situations, the economic system and international relations. Philip Abbott begins his study by presenting the Machiavellian statecraft which rests on the premise that for a leader to be successful he or she should conceal his or her true intentions, not only from the people at large but from their close advisers too. Progressing further, the book traces the invention of the presidential office in the US.

Abbott deftly deals with an expansive subject concerning the most coveted political office in the world. He divides the study into six parts (excluding the introduction) and organises them around the different phases of the presidency as founding, partisan, eclipsed, modern, Cold War and post-modern. This second edition, the author states, lays emphasis on the post-9/11 administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. This emphasis is justified in view of the serious challenges both presidents have faced from global terrorist networks coupled with the controversial US overseas military engagement in Iraq, an unrelenting war in Afghanistan–Pakistan and a receding economy.

The book leaves an impression on the reader due to its objective analysis. It traverses centuries examining the role of the highest executive authority in the US, the overall American leadership during rough times and tough actions. Abbott analyses 43 incumbents’ responses to varying circumstances through two world wars and an extended Cold War era culminating in the post-Cold War order.

The book is a source of ready reference and could satisfy the requirements of a wide range of readers. For
beginners, it gives necessary background information on American government and politics. For accomplished scholars, it could serve as a compendium of structured information and analysis on American presidents. The book caters to a wider domain of political scientists, historians and those with an interest in international relations. The new edition gives updated information and makes a valuable addition in terms of the bibliographic essays given towards the end of each chapter. The reading list is exhaustive and could be useful for those engaging in further research on a similar theme.

Priyanka Singh
(Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi)


This work examines Colombian and Venezuelan democracy during the late twentieth century and asks: what accounts for the divergent trajectories of democratic development that emerged in each case? This is an intriguing question. Colombia and Venezuela have similar political regimes; however, in three ways democracy in Venezuela has been more successful than in Colombia.

First, Colombia’s government exercises little power over military and defence policy, whereas Venezuela’s military has had little influence in security and defence policy. Second, Venezuela incorporated radical left-wing groups into its political system; Colombia continues to face an insurgency from armed groups operating on the fringe of the political system. Finally, Venezuela’s government structure is competitive and inclusive, while Colombian politics has, since the nineteenth century, been characterised by oligarchic dominance.

Precarious Democracies explains that economic factors do not account for this puzzle: Venezuela’s democracy coexists with an oil-based economy, in defiance of the predictions of the resource curse literature which associates oil with autocracy. Furthermore, contrary to the literature on democracy in Latin America, Colombia’s agrarian sector of small plantations did not produce a consolidated democracy.

Bejarano’s thesis is that historical legacies of state formation and party development explain democratic development in these cases. A weak state and an oligarchic party system have undermined Colombian democracy and, in Venezuela, a strong state and inclusive party system have led to stable democracy. In this respect, the book examines how each political system has confronted the problems of civil–military relations, armed groups and political competition.

Precarious Democracies makes an important theoretical contribution to the study of political development in Latin America. As Miguel Centeno has pointed out, scholarship on Latin American political development has ignored the role of the state in the study of political regimes. Bejarano’s work carefully explores the interaction between state formation and democracy to explain how the political systems in each country evolved comparatively, and over time. She finds that despite the implementation of a new constitution in the 1990s, Colombia actually became less democratic, as the new constitution served to fragment the political party system, which had previously been a source of stability in the country. Similarly, Venezuela’s democracy was ultimately undermined by its dependence on resource wealth, when declining oil prices in the late 1980s weakened the state and its party system.

Overall, this book will interest both students and researchers for its innovative approach to Colombian and Venezuelan political history and to the study of democracy and political order.

Alex McDougall
(University of Calgary)


Poverty, Welfare and Public Policy brings together a selection of articles on US welfare policy and reform from the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. The articles are chosen on the basis of their contribution to reflecting, informing and shaping the debate on welfare policy in the United States. The editors intend that these articles will ‘illustrate the collective learning process that has occurred’ (p. 2) in welfare policy analysis, with contributions covering a period from 1989 until the late 2000s. The book is arranged in four sections: ‘American Poverty’, which covers the measurement of poverty and demographics; ‘The Road to Welfare Reform’, leading up to the implementation of...
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); ‘The Post-TANF world’, considering the impact of welfare reform; and ‘How Much does Research Matter?’, which looks at the relationship between academic research and policy making.

Reflecting the standard in American social science research, almost all of the articles utilise quantitative methodology. They represent an attempt to approach welfare policy in an objective fashion, grounded in statistical analysis of the effects of various welfare initiatives. However, it is noted that welfare reform as a research topic is ‘rife with normative and political controversies’ (p. 17). These are sometimes implied in the articles, such as those by Bane and Mead, which highlight a controversy regarding what constitutes a ‘success’ in welfare-to-work programmes. The focus on quantitative methods also offers some unexpected conclusions. For example, Garfinkel, Rainwater and Smeeding offer a reinterpretation of the data on income inequality in America, suggesting that when value derived from public services and indirect taxes is assessed alongside cash income, the US actually fares far better comparatively than when looking at income alone. The allusion to wider normative debates and suggestions regarding the methodological limitations of some current research give this volume relevance beyond its US-focused primary subject matter.

The volume is not intended as an introductory text, and would be most useful to those who already have a working knowledge of the basic structures and programmes of US welfare. It provides a wealth of data on a wide range of topics, which will enhance the knowledge and understanding of students, academics and researchers in this area. Owing to the final section on the relationship between research and policy making, it also provides a collection of useful resources for those hoping to learn how better to focus and communicate accurately their own research.

Libby McEnhill
(University of Huddersfield)


It is a party election strategist’s worst nightmare. Russell Dalton’s analysis of the American electorate shows that the typical American voter is now an educated, informed individual capable of making decisions based on political issues and candidates’ stances. They no longer depend upon the ‘Democrat’ or ‘Republican’ label to tell them how to vote. Politicians now need more than tribalism to win elections.

In 1964, 47 per cent of Americans were ‘ritual partisans’; almost half of the electorate were loyal Republicans or Democrats, and would vote for their party even if Hannibal Lecter were the candidate. By the 2008 presidential election, less than one in four still fitted this description. Thirty-nine per cent of Americans were now ‘cognitive partisans’ – educated and politically interested people who, while maintaining a loyalty to a party, would be likely to give Hannibal a hard time over his culinary habits, and possibly not vote for him. The fact that really gives party strategists a headache, however, is that one in five Americans are now ‘apartisans’: educated and informed people who have no party loyalty, base their behaviour on political issues, and are likely to be active outside the sphere of electoral politics. Hannibal’s party label would mean little to them, and his favourite pastime would be even more of an issue. By 2008, these educated independents constituted a larger proportion of the US electorate than either Democrat or Republican supporters, making them the key target group for any political campaign in contemporary US politics.

Dalton’s evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources, including numerous national election studies, Gallup, the General Social Survey and the European Social Survey. Using this firm empirical base, he presents a thorough analysis of the evolution of the US and European electorate, showing how social modernisation has led to the majority of electors becoming intelligent, educated voters who do not need a party label to interpret the political world.

While avenues of further research remain – such as exploring how this electoral evolution manifests in different political systems and cultures, or seeing how other motivations for political engagement are related to the electoral subgroups – this book makes a phenomenal contribution to the understanding of contemporary Western electorates. Dalton’s theory is capable of explaining the shifting patterns of political behaviour in Western democracies, and will form the baseline for studies of the evolution of Western politics for the foreseeable future.

Stuart Fox
(University of Nottingham)

Relative to its larger and more powerful neighbours, Paraguay receives scant scholarly attention. But its history, politics and even foreign policy have attracted greater interest thanks to the work of Andrew Nickson, Peter Lambert and René Harder Horst, among others. With Land and Dignity, Cheryl Lynn Duckworth promises to add to this growing scholarship. She attempts to do so by analysing how Paraguay’s historically repressed indigenous, Guaraní-speaking populations have more recently articulated their rights through what she calls the ‘dignity frame’. ‘As a basic human need and universal value, framing one’s movement around dignity not only directly addressed the deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in, but it also provides a strategic tool to enable the essential partnerships’ (p. 2). That view is largely drawn from conflict resolution and social movement theories. Based on interviews with rural community organisers and engagement with extant sources, the book does a fine job in highlighting a pervasive problem rooted in Paraguayan history and culture.

But the book ultimately promises more than it can deliver. Written in an overly repetitious and discursive style, the book crowds out the author’s own analysis; virtually every page contains numerous direct quotations from secondary sources or lengthy synopses. Moreover, there is an inherent conceptual fuzziness throughout the pages. Rather than being grounded in the specific historical and cultural context of the book’s subject, the ‘dignity frame’ often takes on a free-floating quality. As the core explanatory schema, it suffers from lack of clarity: ‘Pride and esteem in oneself’ (p. 94) designed to meet ‘basic human needs’ (p. 27). On this basis the author compares efforts by Paraguay’s indigenous communities to gain greater ‘visibility’ akin to similar attempts in other Latin American countries, even the gay rights and immigration reform movements in the United States (pp. 27–8). Elsewhere Duckworth rejects class conflict as a mode of analysis (p. 155) but without adequately demonstrating why access to land, the central issue of Paraguay’s indigenous movements, is better ‘framed’ by aspirations to dignity. Beyond that, the author’s contention that since the end of the Stroessner dictatorship in 1989 Paraguay ‘has recently undergone a major political transition’ towards ‘a new democracy’ and ‘obviously clear political opening’ (p. 31) demonstrates an insufficient grasp of the historical context.

Overall Land and Dignity is a worthwhile effort to bring greater attention to its subject, but without adding significantly to existing scholarship.

Kirk Tyyela
(University of Wisconsin – Washington County)


This edited volume provides a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary challenges ahead for American social policies which emerged as a result of the privatisation of risk – formerly conceptualised as the ‘Great Risk Shift’ by Hacker – in the aftermath of political and economic changes in the 1980s. The main argument of the volume is that the employment-based and private sector-dominated US framework for providing economic security today fails to respond to the diverse set of social risks faced by American citizens. The volume calls for fundamental reform of social policies that would bring the government into the picture as a regulatory body. The target audience of this well-written volume comprises not only scholars of social policies but also all stakeholders, including but not limited to policy makers.

The volume is divided into five sections and starts by introducing the theoretical discussions on sharing risk and responsibility and provides background information on the American framework for economic security. The second section addresses the economic insecurity of workers from the dimensions of employment, job and income security. The third section examines the challenges ahead for the economic security of families including problems in building wealth, homeownership and reconciliation of work and family. The fourth section focuses on the risks that classical social security systems address: health risks and risks associated with ageing. The volume ends with a conclusion stressing the theoretical and empirical rationales behind its
call for the government to be more actively engaged in providing economic security to its citizens.

Contributors to this volume succeed in fulfilling their promise to examine the changing configuration of social risks for American citizens and propose realistic policies that will enable American social policies to handle these risks more effectively. One of the interesting contributions of the volume is its innovative (almost subversive) use of the concept of ‘public–private partnerships’ in discussing the American case. While the concept has been used in the literature to refer to the reconfiguration of social policies transferring formerly public responsibilities to the private sector in the European context, contributors to this volume employ the concept to argue for a larger role for the government in American social policies. One specific issue that could have been addressed more explicitly is that of exploring the difference between two coexisting approaches: one calling for tighter regulation of the private sector and the other urging for the introduction of ‘the public option’.

This edited volume is clearly a valuable contribution to the literature on American social policies and renders an interesting case study to explore the possible problem areas that will emerge in European countries if European social policy continues to follow the American path.

Volkan Yılmaz
(University of Leeds)


In America Identified, Lisa Nelson focuses on the controversial subject of biometric technology, the attitudes of the American public towards it and the surveying of these attitudes in order to construct a cogent public policy for the technology’s acceptance in society. Biometric technology, according to Nelson, is technology that links individuals to their exclusive biometric attributes. These attributes fall under the rubrics of physiological, anatomical and behavioural characteristics and include specifically ‘fingerprints, voice, iris, retina, hand, face, handwriting and keystroke’ (p. 1).

Nelson’s key argument is that the ‘ideological imperatives of privacy, anonymity, trust, and confidence in institutions and the legitimacy of paternalistic interven-
elucidate the religious nature of economics. In this new volume, Nelson extends his notion of ‘secular religion’ to environmentalism and depicts the political wrangling between economics and environmentalism as a ‘new holy war’ in contemporary American politics. In Part I, ‘The False God of Economic Salvation’, Nelson restates his argument that economics encodes Catholic notions of progress and efficiency and employs economic tools to eliminate scarcity and improve life; one wonders how he would characterise the religious optimism of economists now after the disastrous worldwide effects of the 2008 recession. In Part II, ‘Environmental Calvinism’, Nelson argues that the religious aspects of environmentalism are drawn from Calvinist and Puritan beliefs that picture the natural world as an Eden at risk of apocalyptic destruction because of the sinful greed of humans. Part III, ‘Environmental Creationism’ looks at the ‘invasion’ of ‘creationist language’ into mainstream environmental politics when speaking, for instance, of the restoration of ‘wild nature’. Part IV, ‘Environmentalism and Libertarianism’ examines libertarian economists and points towards strategies for dialogue between economics and environmentalism. Nelson concludes with a call for both secular religions to ‘mature’ by realising their need for greater ‘theological rigor and coherence’ (p. 348).

Nelson’s hypothesis began with his work as an economist in the US Department of the Interior, where he came to see competing economic and environmental interests as inherently religious in nature. While Nelson’s broad definition of religion can certainly apply to many secular movements, it is provocative in the highly politicised cases of economics and environmentalism. Although the basic argument that there are religious elements within contemporary secular thought is compelling, the main difficulty of the book is that the tidy genealogies of economics as Catholic and environmentalism as Calvinist are not convincingly established. Nelson could further enlarge his study by tracing the important influence of dispensationalism in American public policy. Further, his summary of Calvinist theology ignores crucial nuances about sin and grace surrounding Calvin’s teaching on the ‘Book of Nature’ and neglects Calvin’s economic ideas on usury and interest. However, Nelson’s overall thesis is intriguing, and his most fascinating chapters deal solely with economic issues, namely value assessments of sacred wilderness (ch. 3), the social costs of progress (ch. 5) and complexities surrounding the creation of vast African nature preserves (ch. 11).

Kelly C. MacPhail
(McGill University, Montreal)


Ground Wars is a book about ‘field’, that part of US political campaigns responsible for getting out the vote. It describes a world where the staff are stressed, the volunteers high maintenance, the offices temporary and the candidates so remote they are unrecognisable when occasionally appearing at their own events.

The primary contribution of Rasmus Kleis Nielsen’s ethnography is to identify the combination of paid staff, part-time workers, volunteers, allied interest groups and civic associations as a ‘campaign assemblage’ which is ‘unevenly professionalized, heterogeneous, and temporary’, neither the romantic image of grassroots democracy nor the ruthlessly professional organisation that dominates popular coverage (p. 33). This book will be of interest to those studying political campaigns and elections and is appropriate for the informed public, students and scholars.

Chapter 2 starts with a brief history of US political campaigns and the choices of Democratic and Republican Party elites regarding whether to invest in field campaigns. Chapter 3 follows Nielsen, part-timers and volunteers in going door to door and making phone calls. Here it becomes clear how personalised political communications are not nearly as scripted as elites (and many political communications scholars) would have you believe. Chapter 4 addresses the constituent elements of the ‘campaign assemblage’, describing how volunteers, part-time workers, allied organisations and campaign staff all operate under different organisational logics of hierarchy, markets and networks. Chapter 5 covers the development of technological innovations that make voter targeting possible.

Usefully, Nielsen includes his research design as an appendix. Most readers should read this early on, because the research design does much to explain both the central innovation and the shortcomings of the book. By splitting time between two different Democratic campaigns for House seats – one each in
Connecticut and New Jersey – Nielsen can write in
generalisable terms about how campaigns are organised.
But with the exception of the experimental research
on campaign efficacy, the wealth of data and descriptive
episodes are not thoroughly developed or connected to
any ongoing theoretical or empirical debates in politi-
cal science. Concepts like institutionalised racism,
organisation, participation or policy influence are
dropped in but do not contribute or relate to the vast
scholarship on institutions, race and ethnicity, organis-
tional studies, science and technology studies, political
participation or representation. The book succeeds in
providing an account of what campaigns are really like,
but most theoretical contributions are not fully formed.

Betsy Super
(American Political Science Association)

FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY:
THE FORD, CARNEGIE, AND ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATIONS IN
THE RISE OF AMERICAN POWER by Inderjeet Parmar.
356pp., £24.00, ISBN 9780231146289

This book on the role of the three most renowned
foundations of American philanthropy is a fascinating
study of a key but hitherto largely ignored aspect of US
global power. Having studied decades of archival mate-
rials of Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie, Inderjeet
Parmar meticulously uncovers how these foundations
have helped to shape the intellectual underpinnings of
American expansionism. Seeking to show how hege-
monic power is constructed through state–private elite
networks, the book consists of several case studies ana-
lysing how the so-called Big 3 have played a critical
role in domestic elite opinion formation in favour of
globalism in the interwar years; in promoting Ameri-
canism after 1945 through cultural diplomacy targeted
at foreign elites; and in direct ‘soft power’ interventions
– through the funding of particular research pro-
grammes creating pro-American knowledge networks
– in Indonesia, Nigeria and Chile. The final chapter is
devoted to how the foundations since the end of the
Cold War have played a role in promoting neo-liberal
globalisation, and includes an illuminating analysis of
the origins of democratic peace theory and of how it
fed into the Bush Doctrine.

Parmar’s finely written book offers a unique insight
into the role played by national and global networks of
intellectuals in constructing US hegemony. As such it is
one of the best examples of a ‘Gramscian’ study showing
how, as Parmar puts it, power ‘works’, in the US as well as
globally. Knowledge and ideas – as selected and promoted
through these domestic and transnational networks – here
are not seen as freely floating but as intimately related to
the interests of America’s corporate power elite. Indeed,
this book will probably turn out to be a landmark con-
tribution to the still underdeveloped literature on the role
of elites in US foreign policy.

It is difficult to find fault with this impressive book.
One minor point is that I sometimes missed an over-
view summarising some of the many facts that are
scattered throughout the rich narrative. It would also
have been useful if some of these data had been put in
a more comparative perspective. For instance, although
Parmar always gives the precise figure for each of the
many grants mentioned, we never learn how much
money this is in relation to the foundation’s total
budget, or how that budget breaks down geographi-
cally. An occasional table or figure would have been
helpful here. Also some more words could have been
spent on the case selection. Arguably the aforemen-
tioned countries upon which much of the analysis
focuses were critical to American imperial hegemony,
but what about other key states: were they also similarly
targeted, and if not, why not? These quibbles, however,
in no way detract from the fact that this book is a great
achievement, one that will probably outlast the Ameri-
can hegemony whose anatomy it so brilliantly reveals.

Bastiaan Van Apeldoorn
(VU University Amsterdam)

THE NORTH AMERICAN IDEA: A VISION OF A CON-
TINENTAL FUTURE by Robert A. Pastor.
978 0 19 978241 3

Robert A. Pastor firmly believes in the potential for a
more collaborative North American community
through trilateral efforts to integrate the economic
policies and transportation infrastructure of Canada, the
United States and Mexico. According to Pastor, this
‘“North American Idea” represents an expansion of
choice for the three countries’ (p. 14). He encourages
the leaders of each country to pursue the continental
management of transnational issues such as trade and
security.
Pastor provides some historical background and anecdotes from his extensive career working with government officials to weave a narrative advocating enhanced trilateral cooperation, which would enable North America to compete with the European Union and China. He calls (US) Americans to recognise that ‘in terms of trade, energy, immigration, travel, and security, there are no two countries that matter more to the United States than its proximate neighbors’ (p. 19). Rejecting incremental changes in favour of a large-scale overhaul of ineffectual systems, Pastor takes government leaders to task for pandering to extremists and challenges (US) Americans to become leaders in an integrated North America (p. 28).

He issues a worthwhile challenge for Mexicans, Americans and Canadians to interrogate their stereotypes about one another and reconsider the machinations of pundits in light of surveys that seem to indicate trends of trust among the variegated populations. I particularly appreciate his argument that ‘the United States takes its neighbors for granted’ despite the role that Mexico and Canada play in continental economic, social and security initiatives (p. 6).

As Pastor demonstrates, politics involves people, not just governments and administrations. However, despite his comprehensive overview of policies and institutions, as well as his discussion of public opinion surveys, I found some of his comments about Canada and Mexico confusing. For example, he notes: ‘Because it encountered the most advanced civilization, Mexicans have been more credible in taking pride in their indigenous heritage’ (p. 67). Furthermore, he states: ‘Canada does not have a problem with illegal migration ... It might be that Canada’s winter is a more effective deterrent than the US Department of Homeland Security’ (p. 92). These rather glib assessments of two fraught national contexts seem to belie his warning against stereotyping one’s neighbours.

Pastor encourages leaders in Mexico, the United States and Canada to realise the potential for economic prosperity through coordination, collaboration and trilateral agreements. His text provides an overview of the economic issues facing the three countries of North America, but more contextualisation regarding each nation state’s history, society and political traditions would have modelled the ideal balance of a truly North American community.

Amanda Murphyao
(Carleton University, Ottawa)


Red State Religion examines the historical developments that have led Kansas to be considered today one of the most conservative and Republican states in the US. Robert Wuthnow’s detailed account of the state’s religious and partisan history over the past 150 years uses a wide range of empirical sources, including official statistics, personal diaries and oral histories. The author draws a ‘tenuous’ image of faith and politics in Kansas, one that is not always staunchly regressive or solidly Republican (p. 22). A ‘free’ state, Kansas was also among the first to allow women to vote and hold office (p. 110). Even Prohibition was promoted as a progressive cause for the protection of women and children (p. 122).

The main argument can be summarised as follows: the way religion and politics were organised in the state was not so much the product of conservative moral activism, but depended on pragmatic concerns that reflected the needs of the local community. Wuthnow’s account of Abraham Lincoln’s 1859 campaign speech at the Methodist church in Atchison, less than two years before the outbreak of the Civil War, is a good example of this type of pragmatic explanation: ‘Had the Baptist Church been ready in time, there is a good chance that its leaders would have in any case been reluctant to host Lincoln. Unlike the Methodist denomination, which had a separate congregation in Atchison to which southern Methodists could go, the Baptist Church drew its members from both the South and North, and may well have discouraged discussions of politics for this reason’ (p. 23).

The key limitation of the book is a methodological one, which weakens generalisability. Unlike many studies of religion and politics in the US or comparatively, Wuthnow argues refreshingly that to understand the relationship between religion and politics in non-simplifying terms, one needs to study how the two forces connect at the local level. He justifies the narrow, in-depth focus on a single case as a representative example of small-town America (p. xi, p. 362): a land of fiscal conservatism, distrust of big government, religious activism and predominantly white Christian. Political scientists and historians with an interest in religion and
politics may find the methodological proposition valuable. However, the substantive conclusion – that all religion and politics are local – does not increase significantly our understanding of how religion and politics organise in other contexts, whether in different US states or elsewhere in the world.

Stratos Patrikios
(University of Strathclyde)

Asia and the Pacific


Governing a country the size of China in times of rapid social and economic change presents a daunting challenge. Rising inequality, environmental pressure, the need to keep growth going and an increasingly vocal civil society all make it necessary to adapt constantly the way the country is administered. However, exactly how to proceed with institutional reform is a tricky question, as the scope, scale and novelty of the country’s governance challenges are unprecedented.

In China Experiments: From Local Innovations to National Reform, three researchers from the US, China and Singapore examine how China selects what reforms to implement on a nationwide scale. In contrast to the shock therapy reforms implemented in Eastern Europe, Chinese reform has long been famous for cautious experimentation in selected provinces, before policies are implemented throughout the country. Looking at a wide array of case studies in the areas of administrative efficiency, political accountability, civil society and government transparency, the book shows how this process of bottom-up experimentation works on a daily basis.

During the 1980s, the Chinese economy suffered from high levels of administrative inefficiency. When the city of Shenzhen introduced a radical cut in approval procedures in the late 1990s, it soon became clear that these reforms had a surprisingly positive impact on economic performance. With economic growth being the single most important criterion of success for Chinese local and regional politicians, other provinces soon imitated the reforms tried out in Shenzhen, without being explicitly ordered to do so by the centre in Beijing.

While in some areas Chinese reform is thus largely decentralised in nature, developments in other fields such as local elections or the organisation of civil society are closely watched by the centre. Although some degree of experimentation is allowed here as well, the nationwide implementation of reforms that might pose a risk to the Party’s monopoly on power still depends on approval by the very top, making it clear that the ultimate objective of reform remains the stability of the country’s current political system.

Yet the authors argue that the widespread presence of institutional experimentation, apart from being at the origin of the country’s economic dynamism, also means that China’s political future is more open than is often assumed. In depicting China as a vast laboratory where different governance solutions are tried out on a daily basis, this very topical book shows just how far the country has already evolved since reform began in the late 1970s.

Michael Rochlitz
(IMT Institute for Advanced Studies, Lucca, Italy)


After years of empirical research, Ian Holliday’s timely book seeks a critical perspective on the strategies of engagement in Myanmar. The first half of the book establishes a context for historical analysis of Myanmar’s political situation, and concludes that ‘many features of the political landscape exhibit clear discontinuity’ (p. 17), which were a consequence of ‘disintegration under colonial rule, dissent under military-backed state socialism and deadlock under martial law’ (p. 81). Holliday highlights that ‘Myanmar’s future course can be set by nobody other than Myanmar citizens’ (p. 3).

To analyse a new approach to engage with Myanmar, the second half of the book discusses ethical norms and external responsibilities for injustice inside the country, and re-examines the current options for outsiders’ engagement in Myanmar. The book advances a middle way between ‘preconditionists’ and ‘universalists’, which brings all rights bearers and duty bearers
within an integrated frame called ‘consensual engagement’. According to this, engagements should be undertaken within the context of domestic politics, and humanitarian assistance might build a platform for long-term transition in Myanmar.

Holliday certainly succeeds in making a profound analysis of many challenges confronting contemporary Myanmar. However, this book does not discuss two emergent challenges – child soldiers and security privatisation – which I feel is an omission. As Holliday argues, ‘to remake Burma it is necessary to develop a new generation of Burmese’ (p. 191), but for the child soldiers in the peripheral parts of Myanmar, violence has been an essential part of their lives. Moreover, security privatisation, as an unintended consequence of global corporations getting involved in Myanmar, will probably bring private military companies or private security companies into the country. There is no lack of precedents in Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia and Laos. Sooner or later, these two challenges will probably add variables in human rights violations in peripheral areas, which are populated chiefly by minority ethnic groups.

Theoretically sophisticated and full of well-grounded insights, this book promises to be a major theoretical departure in Myanmar studies, and will be read for many years to come. In addition, it will surely serve as an essential resource for scholars, students and policy makers concerned with the idea and practice of global justice and international ethics.

Kai Chen
(Zhejiang University, China)


Influenced by the debate on new civilisational fault-lines in post-Cold War world politics, China’s rise is often depicted as the Middle Kingdom’s return to its ancient position of global pre-eminence, or in terms of ruptures in regional and global economic affairs occurring as the result of China’s economic ascent. This comprehensive volume edited by Peter Katzenstein reassesses China’s rise and reveals processes of Sinicisation across cultural, economic and security dimensions. More precisely, it illustrates how social, political and economic practices and inter-civilisational encounters in diplomacy, commerce and cultural exchange have shaped China’s identity. The authors suggest that China’s rise will be a recombination of social and economic practices and processes. This volume contributes to earlier discussions by Katzenstein on civilisations in world politics and a comprehensive study of Anglo-American civilisational identities. Thus, discussion of Sinicisation as part of this trilogy provides the context in which dynamics of globalisation and internationalisation evolve in post-Cold War world politics.

The volume’s eight essays counter dichotomies of ‘East’ and ‘West’, orientalism and occidentalism. Building on Katzenstein’s conceptualisation of civilisational process and practice, Allen Carlson investigates China’s approach to its interior borders, illustrating the evolution of the concept of territorial sovereignty. Xu Xin describes the complex processes of de- and re-Sinicisation between Beijing and Taipei, highlighting the tensions between nationalism and China’s traditions. Tianbiao Zhu discusses the complex processes of economic reform and the combination of state and foreign investment. Investigating China’s integration into the global economy, Takashi Shiraishi illustrates the reflexive dynamics in the making of civilisational identities. Chih-yu Shih and Caroline Hau shift the discussion from the collective towards the individual level, focusing on narratives of individual scholars. Tracing Sinicisation in academic discourse, these studies reveal that China has yet to establish a coherent cultural identity within academic discourse. Adding cases such as that of Japanisation, the concluding chapter by Katzenstein discusses civilisational practice from a comparative perspective.

This volume shows that Sinicisation means more than simply making the world suitable for a rising China; civilisational politics is multi-linear. Katzenstein’s nuanced trilogy has fundamentally advanced our understanding of civilisations in world politics and the trajectory of China’s rise. As such, Sinicization and the Rise of China will be required reading for students of Chinese and international politics. However, this analysis is ‘thick’, and thus a systematic analysis that focuses on the causal mechanisms and pathways by which civilisational identities evolve and which can travel beyond the cases studied by Katzenstein and his collaborators remains to be developed.

Sebastian Maslow
(Tòhoku University)

Emilian Kavalski’s edited book is one of several publications on Central Asia that combine theoretical approaches to statehood with solid empirical evidence from the political practices of Central Asia. Across ten chapters, the authors apply diverse analytical and conceptual frameworks to map the Central Asian political landscape and discover the emerging patterns of internal and external functioning of states. The ten chapters are grouped into two parts: the first offers analytical perspectives on statehood in Central Asia; the second explores state building and localisation through case studies.

The authors examine the intricacies and ‘awkwardness’ of the post-Soviet states of Central Asia through problematising the concepts, images and process of the domestic exercise of sovereignty and external behaviour of these states (p. 15). Kubicek applies the literature on democratisation in an attempt to explain ‘little movement toward democracy’ in Central Asia (p. 37). Gulette calls for a critical evaluation of the clan politics model as a form of everyday politics, and offers a re-examination of the notion of ‘clan’ through the prism of genealogical imagination. Martin and Dina Spechler apply the realist perspective of international political economy to explore the interaction between the global economy and internal arrangements of Central Asian states. Heathershaw brings the discussion to the road less travelled by providing post-colonial comparisons between the Central Asian states and other post-colonial states.

In the second part, five authors discuss the individual experiences of state building in the five Central Asian states. Nourzhanov argues that attempts to internalise liberal democratic values in Kazakhstan result in behavioural implications for the local power elite. Wilkinson continues the discussion of the interplay of external and domestic actors in state making by concentrating on international agencies in Kyrgyzstan. Markowitz explores the cases of peace-building and regional intervention and their effects on local politics in Tajikistan. Sabol focuses on the most closed Central Asian regime, Turkmenistan, under and after its powerful ruler, President Niyazov. Ilkhamov draws the reader’s attention to paradoxes of the longevity of the non-democratic regime in Uzbekistan.

The authors successfully attempt to transform the obsolete descriptive nature of existing debates in the Central Asian studies field into a more critical and vibrant discussion. More importantly, they make Central Asian states the centre of analysis through interpreting existing analytical approaches to explain local political cultures, instead of tailoring (i.e. distorting or ignoring certain aspects of) empirical evidence from the region to fit into conventional analytical frameworks.

Aijan Sharshenova
(University of Leeds)

Other Areas


Non-compliance is arguably one of the thorniest policy issues surrounding international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Kwame Akonor’s qualitative single case study of Ghana’s political handling of IMF conditionality over almost two decades (1983–2000) seeks to engage with the highly delicate balance between national sovereignty and sovereignty delegated to the international level. Akonor is more interested in the four brief phases of Ghana’s non-compliance than in its compliance during most of that period. The book offers an intuitive but familiar rational choice reading of domestic political actors’ cost–benefit analyses: because ‘political costs are high when the political survival of a regime is at stake’ (p. 9), a government is increasingly likely to choose non-compliance before elections and in times of ‘elite instability’. In chapter 4, the author illustrates Ghana’s violation of IMF conditionality with one case of fiscal profligacy induced by elite instability (in 1986) and three cases of pre-election fiscal profligacy (1992, 1996 and 2000).

The intuitive appeal of the explanation, however, is severely tarnished by analytical shortcomings. Despite some final general insights (such as into the contradiction between ‘conditionality’ and ‘ownership’, p. 116), the storyline in what amounts to an overly descriptive account falls short of providing ample empirical evidence for the occurrence of non-compliance with IMF
conditionality. True to a domestic variant of rational choice theory (with some poorly specified principal-agent base), the book does not consider the IMF’s role in formulating conditionality and shaping social expectations of compliance as an alternative or complementary explanation. Instead, all of the blame – or praise – for Ghana’s compliance record rests with the domestic authorities. This narrow focus could be more easily excused if the book were a quantitative large-N study of many (African, as the title misleadingly suggests) countries’ records. But a single case study needs to shed far more light on the political processes that lead to non-compliance and compliance alike.

Finally, the book displays reprehensibly little care for formal standards. Not only does the reader encounter badly structured chapters and paragraphs, frequent language faults and too much quoting, but attention is also diverted by inaccurate and inconsistent quoting and referencing, incomplete lists of references and abbreviations, as well as inconsistent formatting of both the text and the bibliography. These formal deficiencies are all the more disconcerting given that the book is a paperback reissue of a 2006 hardcover with the same publisher.

Matthias Kranke
(Warwick University)


This book explores the theory of civil–military relations and especially the intrusion of the armed forces in African politics, in that, despite the frenzied round of regime transformations that were caused by the thaw of the Cold War, and despite significant progress moving towards democracy in some African countries in the past decade, all too many African militaries have yet to accept core democratic principles regulating civilian authority over the military. Apparently, two decades later, democratisation in Africa has arrived at something of a crossroads. The military, having concentrated on internal order and having been deeply involved in political life, has influenced, dominated or participated in politics to varying degrees and, though supposed to serve as a special government agency charged with implementing policies, has, rather, formulated policy, frequently preying on society rather than protecting it.

As long as distrust between soldiers and civilians remains a preoccupying concern for many African countries, democracy’s birth and longevity will be problematic. The military regimes have repeatedly stepped into the polity, sometimes saving the situation amid civilian dictatorships or at best providing a milder form of authoritarianism. Research has shown that peaceful democratic transition occurs only in countries where the military has consented to democratisation. Hence, Juvenal’s question of two millennia, ‘Who will guard the guardians?’ , remains unanswered and the hope for a professional army devoid of political motivations under civilian oversight is mere wishful thinking. Military intervention into African politics makes matters worse because it leads to ‘armed authoritarianism’ which takes away or violates fundamental rights. Hence, with all the excitement about political renewal on the continent, for African democracy to succeed not only must the relationship between civil society and the armed forces be transformed, but the whole security apparatus should also be reformed.

The book’s contributors analyse civil–military relations in Africa and thus it is relevant to historians, economists, sociologists, political scientists and students of military affairs as well as those interested in Africa at large. The contributors succeed in their goals, for the book makes it clear that military intervention in Africa under whatever guise is an anti-democratic move.

Moses Kibe Kihiko
(Independent Scholar)


The International Politics of the Persian Gulf depicts securitisation as being the most striking feature of the region because of numerous security threats, particularly since the Iraq War. The volume is divided into eleven chapters, including an introduction, but without a clear conclusion. The contributors examine sovereignty and boundary, the security dilemma, the foreign policy of Iran, the states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the US in the region, and the regional states’ converging interests in China and India with regard to the legacy of trade.

Within this boundary the major focus of the volume concerns the GCC states and Iraq, where numerous
security risks and threats endanger the region far into the future. According to the contributors, what is certain is that the 2003 Iraq War has changed the Persian Gulf’s strategic balance and the prevailing security system. Hence, they concentrate on security at state level and the high politics of the region while skipping the social dimension. Keeping the caveat in mind that the security of the Persian Gulf region is a complex issue and that threats are raised from diverse sectors, further examination of factors is required by exploring other areas of impact, such as the societal sector of security. The threat of military force is unlikely in the region, even though the US has left military involvement against Iran on the table.

However, complexity occurs with the revival of the Shia–Sunni conflict, in which the ideology of the neighbouring states threatens the ideology of other states. In keeping with this line of analysis, the Shia–Sunni ideological rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia exemplifies the way in which the societal threat has plagued the region. In itself, this deficiency does not reduce the value of the volume. Undoubtedly this study is informative for scholars and researchers who are interested in the international politics of the Persian Gulf region.

Fatemeh Shayan
(University of Tampere, Finland)


In 1992, the formation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was optimistically regarded as the beginning of a new era of political and economic stability for this troubled region. However, the anticipated era of stability never materialised, and SADC has been riven by tension and chronic instability ever since, characterised by ‘war, intrigue and mistrust’ (p. 1). In Community of Insecurity, Laurie Nathan sets about charting SADC’s various initiatives aimed at enhancing regional peace and security through the ‘Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation’, evaluating the impact of its activities and offering perceptive insights into its failings.

Nathan’s key assertion is that a lack of common values among SADC member states has contributed to ineffectual attempts at regional peace-keeping initiatives (p. 99). Community of Insecurity sets about exploring the rationale behind the formation of a collective security mechanism in Southern Africa and delves into the political tensions that have arisen between states. Nathan attributes these tensions to what has been termed the ‘two SADCs’ (p. 45) in which the organisation is split between polar opposite positions on security: non-intervention and militarism. With two such divergent positions, Nathan demonstrates the enormous difficulties Southern African governments face in reaching a common consensus. The outcome has been unsatisfactory compromises and regional inaction on matters of security. Using four case studies – Zimbabwe, Lesotho, DRC and Madagascar – Nathan examines SADC’s very different responses to these various crises. The section on Zimbabwe is particularly strong, as it aptly illustrates the regional tensions, intrigues and power plays.

The book is meticulously researched and the argument is clear and succinct. The narrative is enhanced by Nathan’s previous work for SADC institutions, as his extensive behind-the-scenes knowledge provides an extra dimension to the overall analysis. The book understandably centres on the activities and ideological stances of South Africa and Zimbabwe, which dominate SADC. However, it would have been good to have had more analysis of the influence and roles of other member states, especially the increasingly powerful Angola.

Nathan has expertly delved into the inner workings of SADC, while highlighting the important role and influences of notions such as liberation, solidarity and undemocratic practice. It is a fascinating insight into Southern African relations, yet Nathan is pessimistic for the future, arguing that unless trust and shared values can be forged, instability will persist. This is an important contribution to the literature on an issue that is all too frequently overlooked academically.

Matthew Graham
(University of Dundee)


The uglier features of South African politics exploded on to mainstream headlines in August 2012, with the
tragic deaths of the Marikana miners and the subsequent uncomfortable questions about the African National Congress (ANC) and its leaders. Anyone interested in following the political struggles to come would do well to read Plaut and Holden’s *Who Rules South Africa*?

The aim of the book is to answer the title question, which also serves as a guideline for each section which examines a different political indicator. The real success of this work is that it not only succinctly answers that question, but does so with an appreciation of the subtleties of the nature of political power and the intricate web of factors that uphold it. Beginning with a history of the ANC in its underground days, and the party’s alliance with the South African Communist Party and trade unions, it brings the general reader nicely up to date with the current state of post-apartheid politics and the now-strained alliance. It proceeds to examine incidents in the past decade that have tarnished the credibility of the ANC and its democratic status, the effects of money (and those who have it) on government conduct, the relationships between government and the ‘centres of power’ outside it, such as the media and judiciary, and the biggest challenges the country faces.

The book is rigidly structured, and makes a compelling case that will interest both existing and new students of the region. Academic argument is blended well with a more descriptive narrative, and when an anecdote is described in depth it makes for fascinating reading. The recounting of the mysterious deaths of businessmen and activists, or the wilder outbursts from the blustery former ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, make the academic grounding of this work more vivid; it is perhaps a pity the authors did not use this more intimate narrative to a greater extent.

Although they are careful about making too distinct a prediction, their all-encompassing analysis makes it hard to dispute that, while the ANC is still the major power in modern South Africa, it is no longer the same idealistic organisation that saved the country from apartheid. Plaut and Holden’s book lays out what went wrong, and what to watch, if not expect, in following South African politics. This is a timely and accessible work, unique in scope and structure, whose lessons about how to study power go beyond South Africa.

Eleanor Beevor
(University College London)

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**Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire and Iran** by Nader Sohrabi.


This work addresses the constitutional revolutions in the Ottoman Empire in 1876 and 1908, and in Iran in 1906, which brought restrictions to monarchical power. Sohrabi provides a comparative, in-depth analysis of a constitutional period (1876–1908) in two Muslim societies focusing on legal, institutional, intellectual and political discussions in order to demonstrate how these two different trajectories of constitutional revolution in the Ottoman Empire and Iran emerged from a similar historical background.

Sohrabi challenges local (isolated) understandings of revolutions, calling attention to the global diffusion of institutions and ideas in the larger picture. Central to this argument is the author’s claim that ‘the Ottoman and Iranian constitutional structures were products of negotiation with the global models’ (p. 18), ranging from Japanese and German legislatures to the centralised French and laissez-faire British ones. However, fine distinctions between political (top-down) and social (bottom-up) revolutions do not seem to be clear throughout the book. The reader wonders whether or not Ottoman and Iranian revolutions can be compared to the French Revolution.

The author tries to answer why the Ottomans and the successor Turkish Republic did better than Iran in preserving the new secular constitutional system. Sohrabi shows how the institutional structure of the Ottoman Empire, especially the unique position of the middle class within the army and administration, allowed Ottoman constitutionalism to face local and international challenges more easily than Iran. By using the methodologies of social science, history and area studies, Sohrabi evaluates a plethora of sources, including Ottoman, Iranian and British diplomatic archival documents, local newspapers, eyewitness accounts, memoirs, contemporary accounts and even letters. The book is aimed at advanced-level researchers and the heavy use of primary sources and thorough footnotes indicates the extent of the empirical work that the author has done.

Although the development of modernisation and secularisation in Turkey is well documented by previous scholars such as Niyazi Berkes and Bernard Lewis, there
has been no comparative study of what led to these transformations in the two societies. Sohrabi’s study fills this gap by providing the context of constitutional revolution prior to the rise of modern states. However, the author does not explain why, despite the striking similarities between them, the Ottoman Empire and Iran experienced opposite fates, especially in light of the Islamic Revolution (Enghelābe Eslāmi) in Iran in 1979. This question awaits a further comparative study.

Mehmet Karabela
(Altın Koza University, Ankara)


In the aftermath of the series of Arab uprisings that spread across the Middle East in late 2010 and the early part of 2011, swathes of literature have emerged, discussing the roots and processes of the uprisings. Much of the focus of analysts and commentators has been upon the role played by the media and technology, in both spreading ideas and facilitating protest movements.

In this edited volume, Mahjoob Zwieri and Emma Murphy offer a more nuanced approach in questioning the role of new media within the Arab world. Zwieri and Murphy’s work suggests that the emergence of new media in the Arab world is Janus-like, with the two faces ‘reflecting developments within the region as well as its function in projecting the Arab world outside of the Middle East’ (p. xv). Across nine chapters the book explores topics as diverse as Al Jazeera, the internet and radiotelegraphy, media and power, the impact of media upon religious diasporas, Arab satellite channels and local radio. The volume attempts to offer an explanation of how new media is exposing ‘the vulnerabilities of the Arab world, its political immobilism, economic stagnation and ideological insecurities’ (p. xiv).

Zwieri and Murphy’s work considers the notion of new media, comprising satellite TV, the internet and radio, but also focuses upon the interaction of these three aspects. The book challenges the notion of ‘media’ as a singular entity, unpacking the idea to explore how the concept of new media can include both state apparatus and the work of an individual, giving credence to the legacy of agency.

The work gives scope to consider and analyse the changing nature of Arab politics, stemming from a different perspective from other works in the area. Several chapters focus upon the emergence of a ‘public sphere’ and it is during this discourse that the book is at its best. The strength of the work is an approach that fosters multidisciplinary outcomes, adding to understandings of Arab politics.

In light of the changing nature of Arab politics this is a timely book. However, it would benefit from a theoretical chapter underpinning the work, setting out a series of research questions to provide more coherence between chapters. In addition, a chapter on Iran would have been welcome. Aside from this, the book makes an important contribution to contemporary debates in Arab politics.

Simon Mabon
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