Book Reviews

Political Theory


‘There is no end to history’ (p. 188). This sharp statement, which opens the last chapter of Michael Albert’s *Realizing Hope: Life beyond Capitalism*, sums up the spirit of the entire book. In this sense, the question Albert is facing is not ‘is there an alternative to capitalism?’, which seems to be taken for granted. Rather, the author sets out to answer, both at once, how concretely to build a better society and overcome the vast inequalities of wealth and power that capitalism creates, and what consequences a new socio-political system might have. Offering arguments in defence of his radical egalitarian and democratic project, Albert furthers his idea of ‘Participatory Economics’ (‘Parecon’), which he has already presented in previous works. This edition of *Realizing Hope*, which is targeted at a wide audience of activists beyond academia, is mainly aimed at showing the positive implications that Parecon may bring to other human spheres, in a broadly conceived manner. In this regard, it is not only economics and politics that would be transformed by the implementation of an alternative system to capitalism. If the fundamental aim of the establishment of participatory economics and politics is the fulfilment of basic anti-capitalistic values such as solidarity, diversity, equity and self-management, then – argues Albert – other areas, such as gender and work relationships, cultural and race interactions, international relations, and environmental and educational issues, among others, are important horizons that would be remodelled by Parecon.

All these facets of social interaction are taken deeply into account in Albert’s engaging work. Through his challenging style, the author does not fear the possibility of facing inconsistencies in his arguments or criticisms from other contemporary leftist streams such as Marxism and Anarchism. Underlying the difference between these two traditions and his project, Albert tries to place Parecon between these radical visions of thought and ordinary parliamentary democracy. This place – which does not want to be a utopia according to the author – is claimed as the true democratic polity, basically rooted in institutions like worker and consumer councils and participatory planning. Despite the lack of empirical proofs in support of the Pareconian society, Albert’s work has the merit of opening a new path for social imagination in political theory, which is too often discouraged. In his own words: ‘[T]he right response to the difficulty of social revolution is not doubt that it can happen, but persistence in making it happen’ (p. 144).

Paolo Cossarini  
(Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)


This is a short book intended to be an introduction to two major concerns of feminism: the relationship between women’s movements and political movements, and the connection between class and gender. The book shifts between the discussion of actual political movements and theoretical understandings of gender and class. The major concerns of the author are, first, to bring together into one political movement women’s organisations and leftist political ones. In this respect a political movement has to be guided by theory. This leads to the second component of the book: an attempt to bridge the gap between feminist ideas and Marxist ones. The author sets out the views of Marxists and feminists on the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. In doing so she reviews the development of the women’s movements in Europe;
and she outlines developments in revolutionary situations such as Russia in 1917, during the Spanish Civil War, and in China. In the more theoretical chapters, Arruzza outlines the views of the main feminist theorists concerning the link between gender oppression and exploitation. The book is intended for the general reader interested in women’s issues and would be useful as an introduction in politics courses considering gender as well as on Marxism and feminism. The book is well written and accessible to students.

A major focus of discussion is the interrelationship between capitalism, class and gender which the author embeds in a Marxist analysis. She is sceptical both about ‘submerging gender into class’ as well as removing class from feminist positions (p. 21). Her call is to combine class and gender in such a way as to understand the processes developing under current capitalism. There is a tendency to contrast the views of different feminist theorists without resolving the tensions between them. The book is written from a theoretical point of view and would have been improved if recent developments in capitalism leading to the globalisation of the labour process, in which women prominently figure, could have been dealt with in a little more detail. A paragraph on how neoliberalism has positively and negatively affected the position of women in the division of labour, for example, would have been useful to critique developments in the feminist movement. But the book successfully brings out the variety of feminist positions. There is a detailed bibliography listing the major works on the women’s movement and theoretical issues as well as brief biographies of leading figures mentioned in the text.

David Lane
(University of Cambridge)


What is the relationship between freedom and equality, between individuality and community, and between citizenship and emancipatory justice? These are dialectical relationships which Étienne Balibar’s Equaliberty explicates, here now accessible to English-speaking audiences. ‘Equaliberty’ is a conceptual mélange that embodies the exploratory universality of the answers to these questions. The answers Balibar offers include co-constitutive struggle, transindividuality and social citizenship. Although each chapter in this collection touches on a unique topic or approaches political-theoretical concerns in a different way, as the title indicates, they are all tied together around Balibar’s most original contribution to political theory: equaliberty.

The central claim that pervades this volume is that regardless of the specificity of a particular political issue or event, the struggle of equaliberty has been at the core of all politics, especially radical politics since the French Revolution. Equaliberty represents the universal axiom that freedom and equality are dialectically related in such a way that anything that undermines or threatens freedom is something that undermines or threatens equality and vice versa. An important side argument that is emphasised in both the introduction and conclusion but felt throughout is the Gordian relationship between citizenship and insurrection, between constitutionalisation and emancipatory struggle coalescing into a nuanced version of dialectical agonism.

As should be clear by this point, Balibar’s methodological approach is ubiquitously and complicatedly dialectical. That is to say, his approach explores and emphasises the inherent tensions and manifold contradictions within and between political-theoretical concepts and practices. Balibar’s work here contains both high theory and praxeological applications to real world examples. This characteristic allows this collection of essays to achieve both immense depth and authenticity without comprehensively sacrificing intelligibility. The essays engage with a multitude of contemporary and modern thinkers, ranging from Rousseau to Marx, from Arendt to Habermas and up through Negri and Rancière. The expansiveness and erudition of the debates with which Equaliberty engages certainly pose challenges for the uninitiated, but thanks to Balibar’s continual reference back to core arguments around equaliberty, citizenship and resistance, that expansive background knowledge is not required in order to get something substantial from each essay in this volume.

The result is a well-written, if still extremely dense, collection of theoretical investigations that lead towards more than just mere armchair philosophising; rather, to a motivated call for sophisticated and impas-
sioned activism through normative research agendas for graduate students and academic professionals, specifically focusing on the future of cosmopolitics and trans-/de-nationalised notions of citizenship.

Bryant William Sculos
(Florida International University)


Randy Barnett’s book (this is the first edition with a 26-page afterword; not a major revision) remains of interest for his forthright argument that the principles that make up the ‘liberal conception of justice can be viewed as natural and inalienable rights which are retained by the people when they form governments’ (p. 25). Barnett’s argument has three elements: the problem(s) of knowledge; interest; and power.

He begins by noting that problems of knowledge scarcity can be dealt with by centrally coordinated actions, or through decentralised self-ordering. The question of how the principles of justice might be conveyed throughout a given society is, for Barnett, largely through the norm of the rule of law, which (although he does not use my term) depends for its articulation on the epistemic community of law(yers). Barnett then moves on to discuss how interest can be mitigated via the rule of law, while incentivising behaviour that is compatible with a (liberal) justice where modes of compliance (including force) are used at the margins to reduce the gap between justice and interest. Finally, Barnett deploys a very thin analysis of power (which would not pass muster for political economists) to set out how the rule of law can be utilised to limit unjust results from the deployment of (resource-based) power.

In the original conclusion Barnett then sets out some predicted objections to his argument (not least of which is the question of whether a defensible depiction of the rule of law can accommodate justice – the thick versus thin rule of law problem). The afterword to this ‘new’ edition focuses on criticisms of the first edition to further develop his libertarian approach which stresses (as one would expect) the means of society and not its ends (even if we might regard liberty as an end itself).

Next to Robert Nozick’s Anarchy, State and Utopia, this work represents an interesting defence of a position that only succeeds because of its inability to see a third (structural) dimension of power and by doing so is ill-equipped to deal with post-austerity neoliberalism. Certainly there are very interesting arguments here, but I would have liked to have seen how these arguments would have fared with a much more developed treatment of power (hardly a major project given the range of excellent literature on ‘the question of power’). Thus, while an interesting period piece, the new edition might be regarded as a missed opportunity.

Christopher May
(Lancaster University)


Christopher Berry begins this book by exploring the political background of eighteenth-century Scotland. The junior partners in a Union with England born more of necessity than affection, many of the Scots elite set themselves on an improving project to enrich their poor country. Within this framework, a select number of Scots thinkers – Berry focuses on Smith, Hume, Millar, Ferguson, Kames and Robertson – began to theorise the idea of a commercial society. They began with a proto-sociological genre of ‘natural history’ that conceived of societies progressing towards a distinctive and generally superior commercial society. This commercial society was characterised by softened manners, an extensive division of labour, a great reduction in poverty and an increase in widespread opulence. Functioning markets required uniformity and predictability; hence the extension of a commercial society required and forwarded the rule of law, the stable possession of private property, the equable exercise of justice and a polity that constrained the arbitrary exercise of power. In this new commercial society, ancient liberty – the participation of the citizen – was replaced by private liberty under a justly administered state. This new liberty was associated with a constellation of virtues: justice more than benevolence; industry, frugality and prudence; humanity and self-command. At the same time, the Scots acknowledged
that commercial society did not foster the martial virtues, that it lent itself to political apathy rather than public-spiritedness, and that opulence could decay into idle luxury: there were trade-offs involved in the establishment of this commercial society. In sum, the Scots took this distinctive commercial society to be, on balance, superior to the alternatives and saw it as a means which allowed for cautious optimism that mankind in general could and would improve itself.

Berry lucidly narrates a complex topic. Among the book’s virtues is that it notes, but does not wander into, the intersections of this topic with the rest of the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment; it makes clear where the several members of the Scottish Enlightenment overlapped in their ideas with one another, and where they differed; and it likewise makes clear Berry’s own position, and that of the scholars with whom he disagrees, in the various historiographic debates concerning this field. These three achievements render the book an excellent summary of the subject and the state of the field, making it useful both as an introduction to students and scholars and as a concise exposition for specialists.

David Randall
(New York Studio School)


In their introduction to this timely collection, editors Campbell and Sitze ask readers to look over the various chapters with an eye for the opacities of the now rather fashionable concept of ‘biopolitics’. They hope that readers might take in the biopolitical periphery as well as the principal texts that make up its core. In this sense, their Reader does as much to extend the palettes of those already familiar with biopolitics, as it does to offer a solid foundation for those who have yet to read anything on the topic.

The collection begins, predictably yet necessarily, with Michel Foucault’s first foray into ‘bio-political’ thinking (the term started with a hyphen, perhaps to delineate it from its bedfellow ‘anatomo-politics’). It is a crucial read for all students of the biopolitical turn. The next excerpt, from Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, throws further illumination on power’s nineteenth-century seizure of both the man-as-body and man-as-species. The passage also brings into relief some of Foucault’s thoughts on modern racism. Often lost in the biopolitical quagmire, the inclusion of this discussion highlights questions about the very real implications of the measurement, quantification and limit-setting of populations.

Campbell and Sitze use the remainder of the Reader to include a broad array of authors. Some sit temporally before biopolitics (Hannah Arendt’s discussions on the limits of human rights, for example) and within biopolitics (Giorgio Agamben’s writing on thanatopolitics and Achille Mbembe’s work on necropolitics). The Reader ends by stretching itself beyond biopolitics. Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek make the cut, even though these are names that theorists of biopolitics might never consider as being part of the canon. These latter inclusions might be less useful for those who are making their first steps into biopolitics. Perhaps more useful for the beginner are contributions from Donna Haraway, Peter Sloterdijk and Roberto Esposito, who have – from different disciplinary entry points – made incredibly fascinating headway into the extension of biopolitics into discussions of ‘immunity’.

Biopolitics: A Reader, then, is a comprehensive resource for newcomers, as well as those already familiar with biopolitics. Some of the inclusions might be less useful for students coming to the subject for the first time. However, for those more familiar with biopolitical work, the eclectic selections demonstrate how the ‘biopolitical latticework’, as contributors Hardt and Negri (p. 231) term it, can be extended beyond Foucault’s initial conceptual work.

Rosalind G. Williams
(University of York)


Since ancient times, human equality has been one of the key issues in political philosophy. There is a widely held view in current Western ethical thinking that believes ‘human equality is substantive rather than formal’ and, as Ronald Dworkin has said, modern
political philosophy inhabits an ‘egalitarian plateau’ (p. 1). But how could we justify this and does it carry any limitations? This book’s main aim, as John Charvert asserts, is ‘to explore the very serious problems that arise from the way in which this sense of equality has been standardly justified and to propose a reversion of that justification which will resolve these problems’ (p. 1). The theory that is developed in this book is a liberal communitarian one, and it tries to provide a ‘better grounding for liberal values than is available in the individualistic literature’ (p. 9). In order to do so, Charvert makes a comparison between ancient (Plato and Aristotle) inegalitarianism and John Locke’s egalitarianism. The most distinctive point is that from the Lockean point of view, everyone can understand ‘the laws of nature that apply to him and his relations with others’ (p. 44) by the exercise of his own intellect. Charvert then goes on to examine recent conceptions of equality in the writings of Rawls, Dworkin and Nagel. The problem of the standard justification of equality (Rawls and Dworkin) is that ‘it bestows objective value on an individual’s valuating activity independently of the limitations on choice that are required by the shift to the impersonal standpoint’ (p. 71). The author then tries to provide a liberal communitarian account which justifies liberal aims, without at the same time exhibiting the weaknesses of liberal accounts. He distinguishes his new liberal-communitarian account from the early communitarianism of the 1980s. In the last two chapters, Charvert formulates the problems and finally his answer, which is part of his liberal-communitarian account for a multi-state world.

The book is well structured and Charvert usually presents the arguments and claims in an orderly and tidy way that can be easily read and understood. However, I do not recommend the book for undergraduate students or those lacking any background in recent trends in political philosophy – especially Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* and communitarian literature – because the book is written by a scholar and also a philosopher in his own right who has exercised an argumentative method in order to answer his questions.

Aref Ebadi
(University of Nottingham)

G. A. Cohen: Lectures on the History of Moral and Political Philosophy by Jonathan Wolff (ed.).

*Lectures on the History of Moral and Political Philosophy* – the last of three collected volumes published posthumously by Princeton University Press – concludes with a memoir by Jonathan Wolff, the volume’s editor, commemorating the life and works of Jerry Cohen. Wolff tells us Cohen regarded himself as a ‘reactive philosopher’ who thought of ‘philosophy as an activity that takes place against an opponent’ (p. 337). This side of Cohen is at work throughout *Lectures* as he engages various philosophers and philosophical problems, new and old, with characteristically incisive wit and analytic rigour.

*Lectures* is split into two main parts, only the first of which features Cohen’s transcribed remarks on the history of moral and political philosophy. (In this sense, the volume’s title is somewhat misleading.) The lectures cover Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel and (perhaps most surprisingly) Nietzsche, *seriatim*. Although they tend to pursue topics of particular interest to Cohen, the critical insights developed within often bear on central aspects of each philosopher’s thought, giving the lectures a more general appeal and significance. One only wishes that Cohen had had the time to complete his preparation of these texts; the chapter on Kant, in particular, is unfinished, trailing off into an ordered assemblage of semi-developed notes.

The second part of *Lectures* includes previously published (although sometimes hard-to-find) articles spanning nearly 30 years of Cohen’s career. Discussion of Marx and Marxian theory, conspicuously absent from Part I, figures prominently here. In Part II we get an ever clearer picture of Cohen *qua* philosophical pugilist as he squares off against contemporary thinkers and (sometimes) critics, including Jon Elster, Christine Korsgaard and Allen Wood.

Although several currents run through *Lectures*, Cohen’s interest in moral and political obligation is especially salient. Indeed, one finds discussion of the subject in the lectures on Hobbes, Locke, Hume and Kant, as well as in the final chapter of Part II entitled ‘Reason, Humanity and the Moral Law’. While not systematically developed, Cohen’s reflections on obli-
gation prove valuable in how they incorporate many of his quite catholic theoretical interests.

Overall, Lectures is a welcome addition to Cohen’s already impressive corpus. Regardless of whether or not readers are familiar with that larger body of work, they will no doubt benefit from reckoning with the adroit observations of one of the greatest philosophical minds in recent history.

Ross A. Mittiga
(University of Virginia)


Theories of Multiculturalism is a welcome study concerning what has proven to be a contentious set of debates. Written for both scholar and student, George Crowder deftly balances the concerns of each as he clarifies the controversies concerning multiculturalism while delineating his own interests. As he indicates at the outset, one of the main issues is the threat of relativism that an affirmation of diversity is taken to provoke, a problem that challenges both liberalism and its rivals. Consequently, Crowder begins with a clearly defined conceptualisation of multiculturalism that highlights how the recognition of diversity is frequently tied to stronger claims of affirmation (rather than mere toleration) for the goal of shaping policy. He then launches into a discussion that differentiates relativism from pluralism (which proves significant for one of his broader purposes), and contrasts both with universalism. Crowder next provides a succession of critical reviews of major contributors to studies of multiculturalism, arranging them topically. Along the way he investigates the work of liberals and their critics (such as Kymlicka, Barry, Taylor, Tully, Parekh, Benhabib and Young), and gives an even-handed discussion of their arguments. Strengths are noted and weaknesses appraised, as Crowder surveys the advent and development of the debates about multiculturalism from a variety of perspectives (including liberal egalitarianism, nationalism, communitarianism, deliberative democracy and cosmopolitanism). It is a study that is excellently done.

Yet Crowder not only provides a critical survey of the literature; he also provides his own argument from the perspective of a liberal pluralist (in the fashion of Galston and Raz). Building on the insights of Nussbaum and Sen regarding universal human capabilities, Crowder explores the possibility of defending multiculturalism from a pluralist perspective in a manner that is compatible with liberalism. It is a suggestive discussion that warrants consideration, for as Crowder notes, there seems to be a natural affinity between value pluralism and multiculturalism. That said, Crowder’s discussion needs some development, as he lacks the room to elaborate his argument fully. The indication that a capability-based approach allows one to claim that certain values take precedence over others, while simultaneously claiming that all values remain on a par, requires greater investigation than Crowder provides. Allowance can be made for this given that the book remains an introductory work, albeit one that is exceptionally good. Crowder successfully provides an astute introduction to one of contemporary theory’s more controversial concepts.

Jason Ferrell
(Concordia University)


Everyday conversation depends in large part on listening skills. Does politics? Oddly not, says Andrew Dobson – at least not in its dominant guises. Thus, ‘good listening has been almost completely ignored in political conversation, and particularly the form we know as democracy’ (p. 2). It’s a striking claim. This book fleshes it out, and presses the case for putting listening at the core of democratic theory and practice. Viewed thus, democratic conversation becomes definitively dialogic: ‘a relationship in which listening and speaking are accorded equal weight and in which the effort put into each is carefully organized and regulated’ (p. 5).

The project covers a generous array of angles and issues. Some emerge from political theory on deliberation, participation and inclusion: Dewey, Habermas, Rancière, Bickford, Fraser, Goodin, Young. But part of Dobson’s point is that treatments of listening there are bitty and underplayed. So he samples other literatures where communication looms large – sociology, cultural studies, counselling – and different takes on epistemic and ontological questions arising when locating listening
in politics. He considers the nature of listening itself, and the constitutive role of the senses in political conversation. He addresses what makes for good listening, commending the ‘apophatic’ model in which the listener temporarily suspends her own categories in order to ‘make room for the speaker’s voice’ (p. 68) and so uncover difference. He relates listening to representation, struggles for recognition, non-human animals, and the orientation of political institutions.

Listening, we are often reminded, is politically risky. Done right, the listener is vulnerable and undirected by ulterior motives, amid an unsettling, open-ended process without guarantees. For Dobson, its value is procedural rather than outcomes-based; a way of allowing for new, unexpected forms of contestation. Practical examples abound in the book – acutely located, as we might expect from a green political theorist of Dobson’s stature, in the new social movements, and especially environmental campaigns. Voices there are optimistic, inclusive, emancipatory. Maybe this skews the soundtrack. Politics listening better would also pick up other frequencies: older people, people with cognitive disabilities, those who struggle with the dominant language, those without political confidence or impact, ‘loose cannons’ ejected from UKIP. We hear less of those; their implications beg questions.

This is an arresting, fertile and agenda-setting book. It deserves sequels, whether by Dobson or others: further explorations of how listening might be given what is, as he convincingly shows, crucial and overdue for attention.

Gideon Calder
(University of South Wales)

Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights

Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka contend that injustices towards animals have increased significantly. The objective of Zoopolis is to provide a theory of justice that can be a moral framework for the fair treatment of animals. Inspired by existing animal rights theories, they argue that by virtue of their selfhood, conscious sentient animals have inviolable negative rights, such as not being tortured or killed. However, according to Zoopolis, focusing only on negative rights ignores the ways in which human action affects the lives of liminal animals. To complement existing animal rights theories, Donaldson and Kymlicka suggest an extension of the citizenship theory that includes animals’ positive rights. The basis of this theory is a tripartite typology of animals that divides them into domesticated, liminal and wild animals.

According to Zoopolis, domesticated animals should be granted citizenship within existing human communities because they have the capacities to be citizens such as expressing a subjective good, and being able to cooperate and participate socially. Donaldson and Kymlicka state that they exercise these capacities in a similar way to the mentally disabled and children.

Liminal animals, those that live among humans but are not domesticated (e.g. squirrels), are akin to denizens and are entitled to rights of residence, anti-stigma safeguards, and reciprocal rights and duties of denizenship. They cannot be granted citizenship because they lack the necessary capacities for this. Wild animals like lions should be seen as sovereign communities whose autonomy should be protected. Consequently, humans are not entitled to expand their settlements over such animals’ territories. Humans also have a duty to assist wild animals to recover autonomy over their territory if this autonomy is undermined by, for example, a natural disaster.

This book is brilliantly argued and offers an innovative approach to the animal cause. The innovative aspect of it is not so much its political approach; rather, the book’s novelty resides on connecting citizenship theory with animal rights. Nevertheless, it is not clear how the theory presented here can be made compatible with Kymlicka’s previous work on multiculturalism. He previously argued that indigenous communities have the right to hunt and fish because this is part of their cultural rights. However, this clashes with the idea that animals have the negative and positive rights mentioned above. Moreover, Kymlicka’s argument that illiberal practices committed by national minorities should be tolerated if they do not involve slavery, genocide or mass torture seems to clash with the idea that humans have positive duties towards liminal and domesticated animals living in human communities.

Luís Carlos Rodrigues
(University of York)

The Meaning of Rights opens with a short essay by Jean-Luc Nancy, in which he considers the wording of a single sentence within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: ‘Human rights should be protected by the rule of law’ (p. 17). Whilst straightforward at first glance, Nancy invokes Hannah Arendt’s famous ‘right to have rights’ in asking the question, ‘do rights [droits] exist that have not been established by law [droit]?’ (p. 18). This question concerns a most troubling theoretical aspect of rights, that of the difficulty – or impossibility – of founding rights. The grounds of human rights are obscured, and with them the meaning of both ‘human’ and ‘right’. It is this apparent aporia that this collection of essays confronts.

The volume is broken into four parts. Part I searches for the transcendental foundations of rights that might be above law. Part II rejects the very notion of foundation, instead appreciating the groundlessness in which both humans and rights must necessarily be enacted through politics. The authors of Part III are concerned with the search for foundations and its relation to the universality of the ‘human’. Finally, contributors within Part IV scrutinise the various forms of biopower and raison d’état at the base of human rights, while examining the manner in which situated agents might confront these regimes.

The disciplinary breadth of the text is most valuable, drawing together renowned critical theorists from across the humanities, each offering creative and compelling perspectives on the familiar subject of human rights. A note of criticism, however, seems necessary, for edited volumes have a habit of panning out in one of two ways: either as a coherent, self-contained ‘book’ in which essays appear to engage in an intriguing dialogue with one another; or as a collection of papers speaking to a theme – thematic unity without an internal dialogue. The Meaning of Rights comes dangerously close to the latter. This is, of course, not to doubt the quality of the individual scholarship. Nevertheless, the structure of the volume unfortunately leaves the possible conversations between these theorists difficult to decipher. While each chapter remains valuable in its own right and on its own terms, the lack of an intentional dialogue across the book holds it back. To this extent, my sense is that this text will be one best dipped into a chapter at a time for a critical perspective on specific aspects of human rights, rather than read in its entirety.

Adam Lindsay
(University of Nottingham)


Women in Political Theory by Jane Duran aims to examine the work of five key philosophical female writers, activists and feminists, covering the life work of Sarah Grimké, Anna Julia Cooper, Jane Addams, Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt. The contribution of women to the field of philosophical or political theory is much overlooked and Duran attempts to rectify this by presenting a comprehensive view of works that deal with different issues such as gender, religion and race. There are also interesting insights and writings included on the topic of slavery, which, given the historical context of the writings, prove to be progressive, diverse and complex. Duran’s own work as a lecturer of black studies at the University of California provides her with a large volume of information on the importance of discussing race within a feminist perspective. Duran allows for the reader to understand the restrictions on women working in political theory, and indeed education in general, during this period where women were expected not to pursue their schooling. In placing the historical background and cultural settings around the work of such female philosophers, the book allows us to gain a sense of the importance and success of what the writers achieved. Within even a modern context it seems the same issues can create a divided discussion among feminists, since race, gender and religion continue to be difficult topics.

Duran offers a range of complex issues discussed by a well-chosen collection of female political writers. This is one of the first works to discuss in a collective sense the works of different female political thinkers from different historical eras and to present them in a comprehensive volume. Duran presents the work and writings of the five women and argues successfully
why each is progressive, political and revolutionary. In her conclusion, Duran also adds a wider scope for political thought by feminists in a modern context and thus explains the importance of understanding and nurturing female philosophical thought and political theory.

Women in Political Theory provides an excellent insight into the state of female political thought and philosophy. It is successful in questioning whether we even have a female political theoretical discourse and how important it is to acknowledge those who have previously produced such complex work. It presents their work in parallel to the modern feminist approach to political thought in order to answer these questions.

Caroline Barry
(University of Nottingham)


Fritzman’s book introduces the reader to Hegel and his thought. Following an introduction (Chapter 1) and a chapter on Hegel’s life and influences (Chapter 2), Fritzman discusses the Phenomenology of Spirit (Chapter 3). Here he adopts the reading of Michael Forster, who argued that the aforesaid work articulates the story of Western civilisation from three perspectives: first, on ‘consciousness’, ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘reason’; second, on ‘spirit’; and third, on ‘reason’ and ‘absolute knowing’ (p. 31). Fritzman goes on to explain some of the basic concepts and points of the Preface and the other sections of the Phenomenology of Spirit. In Chapter 4, Fritzman treats the Encyclopaedia Logic and the Greater Logic together. He then argues that ‘the Phenomenology of Spirit not only introduces the system but is also a part of it’ (p. 79). On page 88 he provides a helpful outline of the Logic, while in the main chapter he explains the text. He suggests that ‘Hegel’s Logic ... is simultaneously a category theory, a metaphysics, an empirical psychology, and normative epistemology’ (p. 84).

In Chapter 5, Fritzman offers two interpretations of Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature (p. 95), and discusses the disadvantage of one of them (p. 98). He also articulates the parallelism between the Logic and the Philosophy of Nature (p. 96). He then explains the transition to the Philosophy of Spirit (p. 101), which is divided into three sections: Subjective Spirit, Objective Spirit and Absolute Spirit (p. 102). Concerning the Philosophy of Right (Chapter 6), Fritzman disputes the claim that Hegel became more conservative as he grew older (p. 109), and offers an overview of the work.

In Chapter 7, Fritzman explains what Hegel means by ‘history’, as well as ‘cunning of reason’ and ‘world historic individuals’ (pp. 121–2). He also considers in what sense history is over (pp. 122–3), and defends Hegel from objections (pp. 123–6). In Chapter 8, he considers Hegel’s Lectures on Philosophy and Religion. Chapter 9 is most interesting. Fritzman considers Hegel’s influence on the Right and Left Hegelians, Schelling, Kierkegaard, Feuerbach, Karl Marx, Nietzsche, so-called ‘American Hegelianism’, John Dewey, British Hegelianism or Idealism, analytic philosophy (the so-called ‘analytic Hegelianism’), Lenin, Lukács, the Frankfurt School, Heidegger, Kojève, Simone de Beauvoir, Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, poststructuralism (these latter mostly influenced negatively by Hegel), Martin Luther King Jr, Francis Fukuyama, Slavoj Žižek and Judith Butler.

The book is comprehensive, well written and aimed at students of Hegel’s philosophy. Overall, the book achieves its aim.

Evangelia Sembou
(Independent Scholar)


Geoffrey Hawthorn is better known for his work in social theory and the interconnection between social thought and historical analysis than in either the classics or IR scholarship, but he has given us a wonderful book on Thucydides’ classic work. The book arose when Hawthorn started to be interested in international politics. Wanting a point of entry into the subject, he was directed to Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War, which he found to be the most profound and engaging book he had ever read about politics. Thus the present volume is the fruit of Geoffrey Hawthorn’s teaching of Thucydides to undergraduates at Cambridge for more than a decade, and it offers the reader an approach to the text that one would more often find in the classroom than in a standard commentary.
This book is more of a guide through Thucydides’ classic than an interpretation of that text, and as such it offers great value to students and instructors engaged in trying to understand the work and what Thucydides has to teach the reader about the nature of man and of politics. This can be seen in the way that Hawthorn constantly brings the reader’s focus back to the text and to what the text has to teach us. Thus the picture of Thucydides that Hawthorn brings out for the reader is one that does not offer simple solutions or quickly adopted formulas about the complex and multidimensional character of human political action that Thucydides is dealing with in his history of the Peloponnesian War. Hawthorn seeks to allow the reader to flush out the various levels of interaction that are present within the text and hence the reasons and motives of the various actions, but also to come to see that the consequences do not always turn out as the actions intended.

Hawthorn is very good at showing the complex character of Thucydides’ understanding of the nature of human politics, which sees the significance of accident and contingency in shaping political outcomes just as much as firmly constructed and rationally shaped plans. The picture he gives of Thucydides’ politics is a rather dynamic one. Hawthorn does not believe that Thucydides has anything specific to teach us today in terms of what to do regarding our current concerns in the international arena. And yet, even if the political world of Thucydides is on one level very much removed from the political forms, structures and institutions that shape the modern world we inhabit, Hawthorn still believes that the nature of politics remains one of contestation and striving for control just as Thucydides portrays it to be in his timeless classic.


The political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906–75) is now being (re)discovered by a new generation of students, thanks in part to the excellent biographic film directed by Margarethe von Trotta in 2012. Furthermore, Arendt’s theoretical writings are still being studied, as in this book, which discusses and organises thirteen key words/phrases such as ‘natality’, ‘labour’, ‘responsibility’, ‘authority’, ‘founding revolutions in history’ or ‘political forgiveness’. In his introduction, editor Patrick Hayden aptly synthesises Arendt’s personality and shows how she perceived herself (solely as a political theorist, not as a philosopher [p. 7]) but also how she saw the academic world from Princeton University, which she dubbed ‘the snobbish university par excellence’ (p. 6).

Arendt’s concept of the ‘banality’ of radical evil is discussed in Chapter 5 on totalitarianism (p. 87). Being herself a stateless person between 1933 and 1951 (because she was Jewish and a destitute German citizen), Arendt was aware of the need to conceptualise statelessness (p. 108). In her chapter entitled ‘Statelessness and the Right to Have Rights’, Ayten Gündoğdu actualises Arendt’s proposition into today’s ‘challenging problems of rightlessness’ in the context of asylum seekers and refugees who are forcing international borders (p. 122). The most interesting outcome of these chapters is to highlight how Arendt’s thoughts and salient intuitions reappear in today’s social theory – for example in the recent works by Alison Lurie (on nonpersons who are the non-celebrities) and Sheldon Wolin (see his 2008 book Democracy Incorporated) (p. 104).

One of the strengths of this collection is to re-inscribe Arendt’s writings into newer schemes that meet current preoccupations in the social sciences, such as the excellent chapter on narratives by Maša Mrčiš in about Arendt’s unstudied storytelling approach: ‘Stories cannot offer a remedy for the perplexities of political action in the sense of providing it with a secure foundation and offsetting its awe-inspiring spontaneity and unpredictability, without thereby also reducing its value’ (p. 84).

Although maybe not the perfect introduction to Hannah Arendt (her own texts should be privileged), this interesting presentation of her key concepts will be useful to graduate students in political science and social theory who are already familiar with her writings. Because of the new focus brought by some contributions (like Chapter 4 on storytelling), this book is timely and relevant in Arendtian studies.

Yves Laberge
(University of Rennes 2)

This book is about a virtue-ethical (p. 23) account of an attitude of ‘unconditional forgiveness’. Margaret Holmgren sets out to establish the moral goodness of this attitude (including towards oneself), after which she establishes in outline the consequences of this approach for public responses to wrongdoing. In the final chapter, the author links this to restorative justice, a response to offences fundamentally in-line with Holmgren’s arguments in favour of forgiveness. The obvious audience for the book is scholars already engaged in debates around forgiveness, retributive justice and the purpose of punishment. It could also be used for undergraduate courses on the same.

Holmgren’s basic claim for the goodness of unconditional forgiveness rests on the idea that the agent is separable from the deed (p. 85) and that forgiveness – rather than retribution – is the response that best respects the moral agency of the offender (p. 84). The victim who forgives does not forget that a harm has been done, but instead combines a continued recognition of the wrong with the ‘awareness of the offender as a sentient being’ as an over-riding fact (pp. 33–4).

From this, Holmgren develops a fundamentally Rawlsian principle of justice as securing the ‘most fundamental benefits in life’ as can be equally distributed (p. 168). This in turn leads to public responses to wrongdoing that focus on restitution (pp. 205ff), including for the secondary harm of causing people to need to take wrong-preventing measures (p. 234). Holmgren takes this secondary harm as licence to use the offender by (proportional) punishment to act as deterrent (p. 238). This use of punishment is difficult to reconcile with Holmgren’s insistence on treating the wrongdoer respectfully.

A more serious problem with the book is Holmgren’s argument that forgiveness is better than retribution at respecting the offender. This ultimately rests on a distinction between respecting the offender as moral agent and respecting them for what they have done (p. 76). It seems ultimately as though this way of seeing the subject of forgiveness strips the agent to their mere capacity to choose (something Holmgren complains the retributivist Metz does [p. 92]).

There is one severe structural oddity: Chapter 5 (‘Philosophical Underpinnings of the Basic Attitudes’) contains much of the material that earlier chapters rely on, including much of the argument for separating the deed and the doer (pp. 134ff). This leaves the earlier chapters feeling untethered, as though we have had to take as assumptions things in need of argument.

Adam George Dunn
( Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton)


Political memoirs are predictably dreary affairs. Often failing to offer any insight into their authors’ motivations and actions, often poorly written (or ghost-written), they easily become exercises in exculpating their subjects from whatever controversies beset them during their political lives; attempts at ‘setting the record straight’. Michael Ignatieff’s Fire and Ashes rises above these tendencies of the genre to offer an admirably lucid and self-aware account of his time in Canadian politics, which he describes as an ‘analytical memoir’ rather than autobiography. This description is apt, if a little misleading: Ignatieff spends a chapter relating much of his family’s international background and political experience (his paternal grandfather served in the last government of Tsar Nicholas II and both his parents were noted Canadian diplomats) as if to signal his bona fides.

Autobiographical reminiscences are soon dispensed with, however, and the force and insight of the book come from Ignatieff relating his journey from Harvard academic to the leader of Canada’s Liberal Party and back again; from his well-drawn sketches of the characters and incidents that coloured his experience; and, perhaps most of all, from his disillusioned but hopeful reflections on the nature of democratic politics. The book’s weak points are few, the most notable of which are the moments when Ignatieff departs from his normally lucid prose, lapsing into what sounds like campaign rhetoric intended to delight and flatter a Canadian audience. Likewise, there are moments when
his usually sympathetic portrayal of his opponents gives way to undoubted animus: Conservative Party leader Stephen Harper is described as ‘a transactional opportunist with no fixed compass other than the pursuit of power’ (p. 106). Whatever the truth of this statement, it reminds the reader that for all Ignatieff’s laudable (and, for the most part, successful) ambitions to produce an analytical memoir, the spirit of partisanship still reveals itself.

However, such diversions are thankfully sporadic. The majority of Ignatieff’s tale is at turns engrossing, thought-provoking and occasionally touching, and is presented in a style that is personal but never chatty. It is a self-portrait of that rare creature: the theorist who is also a practitioner of politics. Ignatieff is aware of this heritage, and gestures towards Cicero, Machiavelli, Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill, all of whom, he reminds us, were political failures of one sort or another. If keeping such exalted company is failure, one wonders if perhaps we should all be so lucky.

James Hodgson
(University of York)


Despite globalisation, various forms of religious revival or another surge of cosmopolitanism, nationalism is here to stay, according to Siniša Malešević. Not because nationalism is part of human nature (which, by definition, cannot be got rid of) but because it is part and parcel of a particular form of social organisation – the nation state – which has unprecedented power. Nation-States and Nationalisms presents this argument with clarity and lucidity, which is intellectually very pleasing.

The strength of the book lies in its solid grounding in sociology, a disciplinary tradition based on the urge to understand the arrival of modernity. Insights into modern society offered by Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Georg Simmel form the basis of the analysis carried out in Nation-States and Nationalisms, and as such it takes a ‘modernist’ approach to nationalism. But the modernity of Malešević’s approach is different from that of Ernst Gellner or Benedict Anderson in that Malešević sees organisational continuity from pre-modern times in the emergence and development of the nation state and its ideological manifestation: nationalism. The nation state and nationalism are only possible in modernity but they were not born out of thin air; they are possible because of organisational and ideological continuity from the city state, empires and composite kingdoms. By focusing on social organisation and its ideological power, Malešević successfully refutes the essentialist, socio-biological and culturalist explanations of nationalism. He also rejects ahistoricism by acknowledging the socio-historical context in which the nation state and nationalism have been shaped. This is sociology par excellence.

With a clear focus on the nation state as an unprecedentedly powerful form of social organisation accompanied by the cumulative bureaucratisation of coercion with centrifugal ideologisation and nationalism as its ideological dimension, Malešević convincingly questions the validity of treating the nation as a social actor, for doing so presupposes a homogenised entity made up of millions of individuals and dismisses the analytical utility of ‘national identity’. He also convinces the reader that nationalism is not intrinsically violent. These are just a few examples of the intellectually thrilling debunking which unfolds in the volume.

It is clear that the nation state and nationalism are conceptualised as a Western development, and perhaps the next step for Malešević is to tackle another question – namely, is nationalism in the non-Western part of the world a product of diffusion? This also leads to an examination of whether modernity is universal across the world, which is a fundamental question in sociology.

Atsuko Ichijo
(Kingston University)


During recent years, a growing number of struggles have erupted in the streets of cities all over the urban world. In The New Urban Question, Andy Merrifield addresses this phenomenon and grounds his explanation firmly within urban theory. This short book explores what the new urban question is and how it differs from the older one in an accessible and readable
manner based on the twin planks of theory and politics. In addressing the key concept of the new urban question, Merrifield focuses his analysis on neo-Haussmannisation, a notion growing from the original Haussmannisation concept that was based on prototypical urban practices in Paris. In this approach, Merrifield signals a significant split from Castells' 1977 work The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach regarding the nature of the urban. Despite the fact that both Merrifield and Castells have employed a Marxist approach in their urban analyses, Merrifield convincingly argues that the urban has become a space of capital plundering or of ‘parasitic capitalism’ (p. 33) that is characterised by a central-peripheral divide, social polarisation and territorial inequality, whereas Castells deemed the urban as a spatial unit of social reproduction first and of collective consumption only thereafter.

Bookended by a preface and afterword, this work consists of ten short chapters, of which three deserve special attention. Chapter 1 addresses urban theory, beginning with the perspective of the critical urban tradition, which was pioneered in the 1970s. Combining the notions of Marxian immanence and Spinozan substance, Merrifield largely considers the urban as the immanent substance of a society, which results in an ontological conceptualisation of the urban. Merrifield analyses urbanisation in relation to a new kind of citizenship struggling for urban rights. Chapter 2 re-examines in detail the older urban questions raised by Castells; Merrifield praises Castells for raising important urban questions but considers Castells’ content to be antiquated. Chapter 6 discusses urban Jacobinism, which is understood as a necessary answer to the new urban question.

This book offers a fascinating and highly insightful overview of critical urban studies but misses an opportunity to extend its analysis. After criticising neo-Haussmannisation as exploitative, Merrifield does not provide a clear and convincing response to the need for urban development in the context of global urbanisation or for an end to capitalist dispossession and exploitation in the urban context. Nonetheless, this book should be of considerable importance to scholars and students interested in critical urban studies.

Chengzhi Yi
(East China University of Political Science and Law)
advanced undergraduate students and graduate students. It will also be of particular interest to scholars new to the subject or curious about some of the latest developments in metaethics.

Simon Wigley
(Bilkent University)


This edited collection started life as an APSA Conference panel in 2007 and then appeared as a special issue of the *Journal of Social Philosophy* in 2009. Further papers were added to complete this survey published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2012. Its focus is the idea of a ‘property-owning democracy’ as developed particularly in the later work of John Rawls. Part I of the book is devoted to detailed consideration of this Rawlsian context and argument. Part II considers some of the wider implications of a property-owning democracy, for example, in relation to work, to gender and care, and to other alternative political economies. Part III turns to some of the practical implications and possibilities of a property-owning democracy, as a possible politics for the here and now.

This is a useful and timely volume. Recent years have seen a reappraisal of Rawls’s views of property ownership and of the choice between capitalism and its (imagined) alternatives. The view that Rawls’s two principles amounted to a defence of welfare state capitalism – a view once common to both admirers and detractors – is now widely rejected, in part because of the qualifications Rawls came to make to his own account in his later re-readings of *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls comes through particularly clearly in the contributions of Simone Chambers and Martin O’Neill. Alan Thomas and Stuart White recommend some sort of rapprochement between Rawls and republicanism. Ben Jackson offer a short history of the idea of property-owning democracy, while other chapters consider what property-owning democracy might (or might not) do for the gendered politics of caregiving and the question of work and workplace relations. The final section returns to the very vexed question of how (and where) to make property-owning democracy a practical politics.

All in all, this is a valuable and unusually coherent collection on an important topic.

Christopher Pierson
(University of Nottingham)


This book contains selections from Michael Oakeshott’s 40 notebooks from 1922 to 1986. As the editor Luke O’Sullivan explains in his introduction, ‘Oakeshott attached considerable importance to his notebooks’ and he ‘mentioned them in his will as amongst the literary remains that his executor was to take charge of’ (p. ix). O’Sullivan has tried to select just those notebooks that mostly reflect Oakeshott’s mind rather than ‘simply reproduce the passages he selected for transcription’ (p. xi). Due to this aim, the editor has omitted several of the earlier notebooks because they ‘are notebooks in the most literal sense’ (p. xi). However, O’Sullivan has provided some information in the first footnote about every notebook for those readers who wish to know what Oakeshott read and when. Oakeshott’s notebooks can be roughly divided into four groups. The first one is general notebooks, which Oakeshott kept during his career. The second group is mostly concerned with the nature of love, friendship and women. The third one provides a close analysis of some of the major writings of Plato, Aristotle and Spinoza. Finally there are ‘a couple of individual notebooks compiled around the end of the war in 1945’ (p. ix).
These notebooks provide a picture of main themes of Oakeshott’s writings such as politics, philosophy, history, aesthetics, morals and religion, but the picture is a twisted one. Although sometimes one can find the exact sentences of a notebook in Oakeshott’s published works, such as mentions of the case of the Masai in the notebooks (p. 420) and the corresponding sentences in On Being Conservative, at other times there is no evidence of other major thinkers in his notebooks who had been occupying his mind for a long time. For example, there is almost nothing in the notebooks on Hobbes, even though ‘Oakeshott published more on him than on any other writer’ (p. xii). This is not the weakness of either the notebooks or the editor, but it reflects how Oakeshott worked. Once he decided to read a philosophical book closely, he preferred to work ‘on loose paper or annotated a personal copy of a book or a pamphlet directly’ (p. xii).

Having said that, I believe this book would be most beneficial for those who have studied Oakeshott’s writings themselves and are familiar with his style and thoughts, especially when one realises that he intentionally connected himself to the European aphoristic tradition in his notebooks (p. x) – and understanding this aphoristic style properly presupposes a background knowledge of Oakeshott’s mind.

Aref Ebadi
(University of Nottingham)


Andrew Perrin has penned a brief yet sweeping overview of democracy in America with this book, which touts ‘a new way’ to consider democracy that is sociological in nature (p. 2). ‘Traditional political science treatments of democracy focus on institutions and behaviors to the exclusion of practices and technologies,’ he contends (p. 8). Taking his cues from Alexis de Tocqueville, who is rightly presented as a pioneer in the sociology of democracy, Perrin emphasises instead ‘the cultural and social dynamics of democratic citizenship’ over its more institutional dimensions (p. 6; emphasis in original). Although its institutions have changed a great deal since the Founding, these other aspects have remained relatively consistent, he argues.

The first of the book’s six chapters gives the theory and ‘a partial history’ of democracy – it spans ancient Athens to the Arab Spring – where the individual and society is the central tension (p. 14). Other chapters examine citizenship and voting, representation and legislation, public opinion and the media. Although Perrin rejects technical tweaks in favour of more substantive reforms that could lead to greater civic engagement, the book concludes with an evaluation of a handful of more popular changes, including abolishing the Electoral College, imposing term limits, filibuster reform and abandoning the secret ballot. Despite their obvious democratic qualities, they all also have potential downsides, he reminds us.

Even so, Perrin is a declared optimist: democracy is in a good place around the world, he asserts. Even American democracy, he writes, ‘isn’t nearly so badly off as it seems’ (p. 3). For all of our polarisation and partisanship, America remains what Tocqueville called a ‘nation of joiners’; it is a phrase Perrin mentions more than once.

Perrin might make too much of his sociological analysis, but he does a rather fine job of bringing together a number of disciplines. The greatest lacuna, curiously enough, is Tocqueville, who, although recurring, remains an underdeveloped voice. (Twitter is also given short shrift.) Reflecting on Tocqueville’s seemingly prescient warnings would have given the book more bite and might have made it more of a contribution to the theory and practice of democracy.

Throughout the book, Perrin adeptly weaves together relevant scholarship and key events, such that readers will find his presentation both considered and highly readable. It should have a wide audience among engaged citizens and undergraduates, who will most certainly prefer Perrin’s approach to most of the other books on the subject.

Steven Michels
(Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT)


Christopher Pierson’s latest book is the first part of a projected two-volume history of the theories of private property rights which have dominated ‘that
[loosely-delineated] western part of Europe which came under the twin influences of the Roman Law and the Christian religion’ (p. 2, n. 2). Together, the two volumes will cover the period from the ancient Greeks until the modern day. This first volume closes at the end of the seventeenth century, with a long discussion of the seminal theory developed by John Locke. To get to this tenth chapter, Pierson takes the reader through the Greeks, the Romans, the early Christian church, the Medieval World, the early sixteenth century, the later sixteenth century, natural law and natural right in the seventeenth century and seventeenth-century radicals. While this list of topics indicates Pierson’s ambition, it does little to convey the impressive scholarship that he demonstrates throughout this magnificent book.

Pierson’s overarching aim is to explain the rise of the current dogma that rights to private property should be honoured even in the face of crippling inequalities both within and between societies. Such a contemporary concern might well worry the historian of ideas, especially when combined with Pierson’s second aspiration, which is to judge the philosophical force of the justifications over the past two thousand years in the Latin West. Indeed, Pierson asks certain recurring questions of each work – not least: ‘how does private property come to exist? does it require consent? (how) is it consistent with living the good life? what are its proper limits?’ (p. 21). Despite the fact that Pierson asks these perennial questions, the intellectual historian’s initial worries should disappear when she turns to Pierson’s history of ancient Greek theories of property. Here, as in the remainder of this book, Pierson buries himself in the detail of the theories and their historical contexts. There is no sense of a predetermined plan or an historical end-point built on inalienable private property rights. Pierson takes each new phase on its own terms and carefully analyses its major works, before asking whether they succeeded by their own criteria. Hence, he treats his leading authors fairly, including Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Justinian, Augustine, Aquinas, Erasmus, More, Calvin, Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Harrington, Winstanley and Locke.

If there is one other book that the first volume of Pierson’s Just Property recalls for its range, clarity and scholarship (although ultimately with slightly different concerns), it is David Boucher’s 2009 work The Limits of Ethics in International Relations. As with Boucher’s book, Pierson’s study is one many of us would have been very pleased to have written ourselves. It is to Pierson’s immense credit that, after reading this long and complicated work, the reader is impatient for the publication of the second volume.

Colin Tyler
(University of Hull)


Direct democracy is one of the great trends of our time, with referendums being used more than ever, not only to found new states and new constitutions, but also to engage the public in political deliberation at all levels of government. Matt Qvortrup sees direct democracy as a symptom of the increasing individualisation of society. It is his contention that people as consumers, with greater technology at their fingertips, are becoming more choosy – a phenomenon that translates to the political sphere where citizens are no longer happy to settle for the top-down party politics of old. Qvortrup has spent much of his career addressing the comparative operation of referendum democracy. In this book his focus is upon the new ways in which citizens are today offered a direct role not only in making major constitutional decisions, but also in initiating referendums and in recalling elected officials. He brings his extensive experience of multiple systems to bear in addressing how voters behave, in the process questioning some of the lazy pejoratives which cast the voter as ignorant and which see referendums as easily manipulable processes by which elites can be assured of the outcomes they want. Qvortrup’s findings offer a more nuanced picture of how voters engage with the new opportunities available to them.

The book opens with a theoretical account of referendums before turning to a wide-ranging empirical account of the role of the citizen in democratic politics, in particular citizen-led exercises in direct democracy, looking at a number of countries including New Zealand, Germany and the Netherlands. The use of direct democracy specifically in EU countries is also addressed, again in broad comparative perspective, as is
the use of recall measures. More detailed coverage is given to the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty and the UK referendum on the alternative voting system in 2011. Although each of these chapters offers interesting insights I was left hoping for a more comprehensive picture of the democratic merits and limits of referendum democracy. Qvortrup has much to say about the comparative application of referendums and I felt that the book would have benefited from further analysis, with the author drawing out his conclusions at greater length. That said, the book provides a great deal of useful empirical information for readers interested in the subject and, in a lucid and entertaining style, adds to what is sure to be a developing area of scholarship for political scientists in the coming decades.

Stephen Tierney
(University of Edinburgh)


This book, a translation of the 2009 French original, is not what I would have expected. The reader might have foreseen an analysis of the financial crisis. For this reason, it is rather odd. It starts with a definition of the word ‘crisis’, which derives from the Greek κρίνω (krino) and means ‘to judge’ (p. x). In fact, the author is concerned with when ‘the new enters by force’ (p. xviii). In Chapter 1, Michel Serres sets out the six events that have transformed the West since the Second World War: agriculture, transportation, health, demography, connections and conflicts. He then says:

[I]t is not enough to talk about the recent financial disaster, whose loudly proclaimed importance derives from the fact that money and the economy have seized all power, the media and governments. It would be better to accept the fact that all our institutions clearly and globally are experiencing a crisis going far beyond the scope of normal history (p. 17; emphasis in original).

For thousands of years, he continues, the ‘triad’ of priests and clerics, warriors and producers has ‘shared power in the Indo-European era’ (p. 18). Yet, institutions remained unchanged (p. 20). Using the names of three Roman gods metaphorically, Serres asks ‘[a]fter Jupiter and Mars, will Quirinius leave the throne?’ (p. 23), where Jupiter refers to the class of priests and clerics, Mars to the military chiefs and Quirinius to producers (p. 21).

In Chapter 2, Serres argues that the game with two players, which was characterised by a game of humans versus humans, changes when a third party intervenes. This third party is the world itself. ‘This is what I call “Biogea”, ... inert and alive, water, air, fire, the earth, the flora and fauna and all the living species’ (p. 31).

Serres concludes with an intimation of solutions to the crisis. In just six pages he contrasts the hardness of Biogea with the softness of the revolutions of writing, printing and the computer. He concludes the book with a promissory note: ‘I promise a long book on the Soft for tomorrow’ (p. 72).

A drawback of the book is that it has an incomplete table of contents. Also, the book’s style, which is aimed at a scholarly audience, is quite idiosyncratic.

Evangelia Sembou
(Independent Scholar)


In 2005, the Danish Newspaper Jyllands-Posten entered into the global collective consciousness when it published twelve cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammad. The cartoons remain a theoretically interesting, if divisive, incident. These events, discussed at length in the final chapter of this book, reveal the very limits of what Lars Tønder sees as an unduly rational approach to the subject of tolerance, which treats the practice of being tolerant as a zero-sum game, caught between neo-Kantian procedures of universal reason

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and self-restraint, and Herbert Marcuse’s identification of tolerance with a ‘repressive benevolence needed to reinforce norms set by the powerful’ (p. 2). Tønder’s concern is that such a bifurcation seems counterproductive, for it fails to explore the chiasma between the cerebral and the visceral.

The argument is, then, twofold. First he offers a robust critique of the ‘somatophobia’ of contemporary theorists of tolerance. The foil here is the neo-Kantian axis of Rawls, Habermas and Forst. The wager of Tønder’s claim moves beyond what has become the platitudinal pitching of agonism against deliberative reason, consensus and dissensus. Instead, he suggests that the very structure of rational tolerance invokes a double-bind: either the tolerator rises above her lived experience, denying the partiality and context of tolerance itself, or she embraces the sensorium, only to undermine the principles of reciprocity and generality (p. 38).

The remainder of the book pursues the other focus of the argument, which is an attempt to conceive of the sensorial elements necessary to an ‘active’ tolerance. Tønder begins unravelling the double-bind by drawing attention to the peculiarity of ‘somatophobia’ to that specific brand of neo-Kantianism seen above. Here he ‘shed[s] light on a countermemory subsisting within the intellectualist tradition’ by producing a sensitive history of the Western canon when locating a sensorial tolerance in Kant, Locke and Descartes (p. 70). Chapters 3 and 4 seek to substantiate this sensorial toleration through Spinoza and Merleau-Ponty. Through explorations of literature, comedy and torture, Tønder draws attention to the importance of the lived experience capable of engendering an unheimlich feeling which may be channelled into a ‘pleasurable-pain that affirms the shared condition of vulnerability and dependency’ that we all experience when tolerance is most urgently required (p. 106).

The argument itself is adept and conclusive while remaining committed to rethinking not only tolerance, but also the very ontology through which we view politics. In doing so, Tønder must be properly recognised within the quickly maturing perspective of New Materialism, to which Tolerance figures as a valuable contribution.

Adam Lindsay
(University of Nottingham)

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On Global Citizenship: James Tully in Dialogue

Bloomsbury’s new Critical Powers series endeavours to foster dialogue by structuring texts in a call-and-reply manner, pitching an extended lead essay by a pre-eminent political theorist against a number of interlocutors, before allowing the lead essayist the opportunity to reply. There seems no better contemporary theorist than James Tully to inaugurate this series, allowing him a space to practise the open-ended, reciprocal dialogue that his work over the last two decades has advocated. Through such exchange, Tully shows how ‘mistakes can be corrected, questions addressed, limits overcome and how we might work together in moving forward’ (p. 271).

The lead essay, a little under 100 pages in length, succinctly restates much of the conceptual framework developed in Tully’s 2008 Public Philosophy in a New Key, through which he contrasts two modalities of citizenship: the first – modern civil citizenship – equates to the decidedly European legal individual, formed through the assemblage of constitutional rights, and spread across the globe through various practices of imperialism; and the second – ‘diverse civic’ citizenship – consists of ‘civic activities’ through which the citizen is engaged in ‘negotiated practices all the way down’ (p. 36). Tully develops these civic practices through readings of Arendt, Foucault and Wittgenstein, suggesting that the relation between citizen and governor is always open to ‘Spielraum’, or space-for-play (pp. 44–5). While much of this is well established in his previous work, On Global Citizenship advances a strong normative preference for non-violence, which is a position left under-developed within his previous studies.

The familiar ideas are welcome, however, given the dialogical structure of the text. The replies are delicate, yet probing efforts to assess, critique and augment Tully’s work, conducted through conceptual analyses of authority, violence, civil disobedience and comparative studies of Geuss, Laclau and Rawls. It is in the closing chapter by Tully that the fruits of this dialogue become clear, much of which is taken up by replies to Honig, Stears and Bell on the subject of non-violence. This is something of an impasse, for Tully seems
unwilling to concede on a point to which he is so ethically committed. There remains plenty of room for development here, and Tully certainly suggests that non-violent civic practices occupy the future trajectory of his work. To this extent, the volume feels like something of an interlude between two larger projects. Nevertheless, *On Global Citizenship* offers both a concise entry into Tully’s work, and a compelling series of debates moving his brand of democratic theory forward.

Adam Lindsay
(University of Nottingham)

**International Relations**

*Rethinking Power, Institutions and Ideas in World Politics: Whose IR?* by Amitav Acharya.

In this book, Amitav Acharya combines many of his published and unpublished works with new theoretical insights as part of a critique of the neglect of non-Western voices, experiences and ideas in the study of International Relations. His ambitious objective is to encourage a reconsideration of what the discipline represents in a changing world, and to identify routes to foster the development of a truly ‘global’ IR.

The introduction at times reads as a personal reflection upon his own experiences as a student and teacher of IR. Acharya clearly feels that the neglect of non-Western perspectives and continued Western dominance is preventing the discipline from realising its potential. In Part I, he identifies four underlying and interrelated features of this problem: Western auto-centricism; the false universalism of Western ideas; a disjunction between IR theory explanations and local experiences; and a lack of acknowledgement of non-Western actor agency in shaping the world order (pp. 25–6). The subsequent sections incorporate a collection of previously published and unpublished works which reveal the presence of these trends in the discipline. Acharya’s focus includes studies of power and sovereignty (Part II), regionalism institutionalism and multilateralism (Part III), and norms, ideas and agency (Part IV).

Acharya’s position is strengthened by its constructiveness and he does not seek to dismantle all IR theory originating from the West. Instead, he highlights the possibilities for a genuinely representative broadening of the discipline. For the author, concrete steps towards achieving this should include a greater emphasis on the genealogy of international systems, the diversity of regionalisms, the integration of area studies and people-centric approaches to core issues of IR, and, perhaps most interestingly, an engagement with Buddhist and Hindu ontologies and epistemologies (pp. 53–66).

Overall, Acharya convincingly demonstrates that mainstream IR theories have been too Western-centric and he offers a clear path for theoretical development. However, the book would have benefited from greater engagement with critical IR theories, and Acharya himself acknowledges this shortcoming (p. 15). While critical theories have benefited IR, they should nonetheless always be interrogated to ensure that they do not reproduce similarly Western-centric alternatives. It would have been interesting to see Acharya more thoroughly develop his critique of a perceived ethnocentricism within the emancipatory claims in critical IR theories that he once outlined elsewhere (see his chapter ‘Ethnocentrism and Emancipatory IR Theory’ in the 2000 work *(Dis)placing Security: Critical Re-Evaluations of the Boundaries of Security Studies*, edited by Samantha Arnold and J. Marshall Beier). Nonetheless, Acharya’s case is powerfully made and deserves to be widely read by those concerned with the discipline.

Xander Kirke
(Newcastle University)

**International Law, New Diplomacy and Counterterrorism: An Interdisciplinary Study of Legitimacy** by Steven J. Barela.
Abingdon: Routledge, 2014. 310pp., £80.00, ISBN 9780415708357

Although the elusive War on Terror ended and its principal belligerent the United States, under the Obama administration, rebranded its remnants as Overseas Contingency Operations, the post-mortem of that war is still ongoing. This book is one such post-mortem, giving a deep insight into the political
morality of responding to international terrorism by means of international law and how legitimate such a response is. The book’s goal is primarily to sniff out defensive strategies in the wake of international terrorism, and methodologically the book employs an interdisciplinary approach by juxtaposing international law and political philosophy (with an underlying tone of security studies) from a counterterrorism perspective.

As the author has crafted his elliptical rendition of some of the known events that surrounded the War on Terror, backed up by various snippets of philosophical views on morality and legitimacy, sometimes the descriptive nature falls short of new discoveries. However, readers are compensated for the author’s treatment of legitimacy in the early discussion of the book. As an academic piece of work, the book is commendable for engaging all (three) disciplines (international law, philosophy and security studies, with this latter being generally hinted at) so that a coherent response can be taken into account if there is an attack by international terrorists on nation states.

Organisationally, the book suffers from a linking chapter that would have contextualised the three phenomena that Steven Barela thoughtfully articulates; thus at the end of the book the reader is left hanging and also pondering the sudden and somewhat brief discussion on drones. A contextual analysis would have legitimised the arguments presented, but the absence of such contextual discussion represents a major weakness of the book. Another weakness is the lack of an integrated discussion on ‘new diplomacy’, which, according to Barela ‘acts as a figurative conduit for the flow of international law to ordinary citizens’ (p. 4). Because of the mixing of the new diplomacy discussion with old (public) diplomacy (political maneuvering by states), the notion of new diplomacy evades the reader. Although the title is rather appealing, from a policy perspective it is quite possible that the three cohorts in international policy making – international lawyers, diplomats (politicians) and international security specialists – will reach for the book to sit down and discuss a proper course of action against international terrorism.

P. Sean Morris
(University of Helsinki)

Obama’s Foreign Policy: Ending the War on Terror by Michelle Bentley and Jack Holland (eds). Abingdon: Routledge, 2013. 224pp., £80.00, ISBN 9780415662604

‘Both in terms of policies ... and narratives constructed ... comparatively little has changed since the days of the Bush Administration’ (p. 192). This is the conclusion Michelle Bentley and Jack Holland reach in their edited volume Obama’s Foreign Policy: Ending the War on Terror. The book assesses the extent of foreign policy change under Obama and, more specifically, explains the continuities in both policies and rhetoric in the change from the Bush to the Obama administration. The book can be divided into two main sections. The first seven contributions provide an interpretation of the continuities between the two administrations, based on different levels of analysis and different methodological approaches. The last three contributions discuss specific policies adopted by the Obama administration: the approach to military interventions, the inclusion of Pakistan as key foreign policy concern and policies towards nuclear weapons.

In Chapter 1, Trevor McCrisken suggests that the rhetoric of change included tough positions on counter-terrorism (p. 23) and that Obama might have shifted the tone, but not the underlying assumptions regarding foreign policy (p. 39). Chapter 2, by Adam Quinn, convincingly argues that structural constraints and a subtle understanding of America’s new place in the world have made Obama a prudent foreign policy maker. From a structural perspective (shared also by Nicholas Kitchen’s chapter on the ‘pivot to Asia’), the book moves to the world of ideas. For Richard Jackson, the ‘War on Terror’ has become a Foucauldian ‘regime of truth’ too entrenched in American society, culture and institutions for change to occur (p. 80). Not dissimilarly, Bentley argues that the ‘war’ discourse has been ‘normalised’ in American society (p. 93). When it comes to policies, Mike Aaronson argues that the drivers of US foreign policy have remained identical, with Obama showing more restraint in matters of intervention, but a hawkish approach to targeting terrorists (p. 130). Chapter 8 makes the convincing argument that Obama has looked with scepticism to the former ally Pakistan (p. 141), and that the relationship has worsened due to
incidents and drone strikes. Chapter 9 shows that in spite of tactical changes, America’s strategic approach to nuclear weapons, and hence to Russia, has remained unaltered.

The book provides an interesting overview of policies and approaches and, as the conclusion makes clear, it provides timely contributions to two key debates in IR and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA): continuity and change (from Bush to Obama) and the ‘Gordian knot’ of structure and agency.

Luca Trenta
(Swansea University)


In Classics of International Relations: Essays in Criticism and Appreciation, the editors (re-)introduce and (re-)organise seminal texts in the field of International Relations. The selection criteria and organisation of particular texts is done by adopting the notion of ‘classic’, which is defined by the editors in terms of five ‘types’. These are: the undisputed classic, the archetypal classic, the classic in the making, the overlooked classic, and the alternative format classic. In this work, the editors provide not only an innovative and interesting principle for organising a collection dedicated to seminal works in IR theory, but also valuable insight and sound scholarship.

This is an extraordinarily challenging book to review given the range of classic texts and ‘alternative formats’ it covers and the conceptual, theoretical and empirical issues considered in each of the volume’s 26 chapters. These individual chapters by various authors provide short snapshots of classic texts rather than a sufficiently detailed treatment of these works. In this sense, the volume would serve as a sort of textbook introduction to the discipline of IR, although organised according to the editors’ own selective take of what the seminal works in the discipline are (or should be).

In the editors’ words, ‘Classics of International Relations aims to contribute to the ongoing debate about the identity of the [IR] discipline’ (p. 1). This aim, however, struggles against the intellectual thrust of the volume, which is based on a constrained and mostly Eurocentric conception of international relations/theory. My view is that the most exciting development in contemporary IR theorising is precisely the growing relevance of post-colonial and non-Western approaches, which have been completely unnoticed by this volume’s editors. The inclusion of a chapter on Edward Said’s Orientalism as a classic text in the post-colonial tradition in IR would have gone some way to filling some of these gaps.

What is interesting about this book is how it highlights an ongoing discursive struggle over the authority to speak in the name of an increasingly fragmented and contested field of knowledge. It makes a strong case (although not explicitly) for reasserting the claim for a more conventional and Western-centric delimitation of the discipline of IR. Notwithstanding the volume’s (unavoidable) omissions and biases, Classics of International Relations provides a useful introduction to key concepts, questions and issues in the study of IR that is well worth reading. I would recommend this book as a useful gateway to the key formative texts in IR theory.

Marco Vieira
(University of Birmingham)


By revising and testing the concept of non-alignment – India’s core diplomatic practice since 1947 – Forged in Crisis provides a comprehensive overview of the country’s negotiating strategies during the course of a series of crises in Indo-US relations. India’s relations with the US, argues Rudra Chaudhuri, ‘is best explained by the interaction between embedded ideas about who we are and material interest’ (p. 4; emphasis in original). Based on this insight, the author compellingly presents an account of the constant tension between India’s independent ideas and interests.

The book is thematically organised into three parts. The first part tests the idea of non-alignment in conjunction with India’s material needs, mainly military and economic assistance. It impressively presents how
non-alignment influenced India’s active participation in international affairs and eventually helped it to garner a neutral role in the Korean crisis. Part II explicitly deals with the 1962 Sino-Indian border war and its consequences on India’s non-aligned standing. Here Chaudhuri rightly notes that, although India’s crushing defeat proved to be a catalyst in bringing about changes in its foreign policy, by and large it ‘withstood the temptation of alliance’ (p. 83) – mainly Washington’s sustained pressure to compromise on Kashmir in return for military assistance against China. Likewise, during the 1971 war the US not only ‘tilted’ towards Pakistan, but also engaged in nuclear saber rattling which further sped up alterations in Indian foreign policy.

The final part demonstrates India’s engagement strategy during two critical junctures: America’s deployment in Iraq in 2003, and the 2008 Indo-US nuclear deal. At both points, India did not give up on its independent foreign policy, rejecting both the Americans’ troop request and demands for wider concessions on its nuclear programme. In Chaudhuri’s view, despite their differences, the nuclear deal was ‘possible because India and the US had long engaged each other in a series of crises that gradually forged a deeper sense for each other’s motivations and aspirations’ (p. 254). Finally, he concludes that ‘India will never be an ally of the US’ (p. 259). The author’s so unequivocal conclusion will remain debatable as the likely changes in the systemic or sub-systemic power structures are always unpredictable.

Forged in Crisis is the first book of its kind to test India’s non-alignment in a practical framework, especially by deliberately choosing a tough case study. The cases of crisis are well chosen and provide a compelling understanding as to why India never lost sight of its ideas during the grave crises of 1962 and 1971, not even when the path-breaking nuclear deal was under intensive negotiation. The book’s accessibility, academic rigour, rich archival sources, in-depth analysis and balanced objectivity make it a highly commendable contribution to understanding India’s foreign policy in practice with a fresh outlook on Indo-US relations.

J. Susanna Lobo
(University of Delhi)

(Re)Imagining Humane Global Governance is not just another book devoted to a radical rethinking of the political, cultural and social practices that inform International Relations, unless the reader is already familiar with non-violent philosophical anarchism. Building on five decades’ worth of literature on world order issues, and drawing on the cases of nuclear weapons and climate change, Richard Falk explores how today’s global governance – which remains structurally trapped in a sovereignty-conscious framework and ideologically subdued to unfettered neoliberalism – can be reimagined so as to protect global and human interests.

Falk argues that his ‘humane global governance’, which emphasises the legitimising role of international law as reinforced by borderless ethical principles, the application of non-violent geopolitics and bottom-up democratisation processes within states, would benefit not only the states themselves, seen as the key actors at the global level, but most crucially humanity as a whole. Instead of relying on agency-less civil society activism for the promotion of democratic values and procedures, Falk rethinks the role of citizenship within an enlarged spatial and temporal frame and in normative terms according to which engaged ‘citizen pilgrims’ (p. 48) will recreate global governance by taking steps such as converting the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinions into binding decisions.

Although he appreciates the explanatory power of globalisation to describe current realities, Falk cautions against a strict economistic understanding of the term. He argues that there are seven globalisations going on: corporate and financial, civic, imperial, apocalyptic, regional, ecological, and normative. A ‘humane global governance’ approach should seek to neutralise apocalyptic and imperial globalisation, while democratising the other forms.

What is noteworthy and in need of further scholarly attention is that in search of a more just, equitable and peaceful world, the author points to instructive and inspirational avenues of research in the literature on non-violent philosophical anarchism, with its focus on non-state actors and soft power as a source of progressive politics.

Overall, Falk’s prose keeps the reader engaged from beginning to end. Even though the book comes across as slightly disjointed, it succeeds in furthering the global governance debate, and certainly provides a thought-provoking and well-documented contribution to the field in terms of both policy and theory. Graduate students and scholars in global politics and IR looking for provocative and out-of-the-box thinking about world order issues and global governance should find this book a passionate and compelling read.

Enrico Fiorentini
(University of Trento)
question domestic state practices of disenfranchising prisoners. Føllesdal considers judicial review by the European Court of Human Rights. Hurd questions whether legitimacy judgements correspond to obedience, using the case of US torture practices under Bush, but his contribution is odd for engaging primarily with sociological legitimacy. 

One difficulty of the book is that there is very little inter-author consensus on the concept of legitimacy. Some of the authors consider that Simmons’ triadic description between political legitimacy, the right to rule and the obligation to obey is the ‘standard’ case, to which revision may or may not be required for international legitimacy. Others though take Raz’s service conception, with its requirement that rules are authoritative on content-independent grounds (see, e.g. Çali). For some, the concept is inevitably linked to democracy, making its international application difficult (Schaffer et al., Bellamy, Føllesdal). Although Dobson emphasises the distinction between justice, justification and legitimacy, other authors use justification and legitimation more or less synonymously, or argue that injustice undermines legitimacy (Hessler). This makes for heavy reading. It would have been helpful for all authors to place their preferred concepts in the frame of alternatives.

That being said, the book is an excellent source and reference for the state of the art on the normative international legitimacy of IHR. Paradoxically, this is perhaps because its authors do not share the same understanding of what normative international legitimacy may entail. A general lack of coherence may be forgiven for the resulting richness.

Tom Theuns  
(Sciences Po, Paris)


In 1997 Robert Jervis published System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life – probably the first text in the study of IR to consider seriously the implications of complexity theory. In his 1997 investigation Jervis outlined the significance of looking at world affairs as interconnected sets of complex adaptive systems that mutually impact on and interact with one another. While considered a classic by the discipline, Friedman and his collaborators are correct to observe that Jervis’ book ended up not ‘having the impact it should have had’ (p. 2). In this respect, the aim underlying the efforts of this edited collection is to recover and illuminate the promise, potential and continuing relevance underpinning Jervis’ endeavour.

In particular, the intention is to consider the role of system effects on policy making and analytical prediction. Most contemporary thinking about the study and practice of IR is framed by the suggestion that its frameworks for explanation and understanding can offer predictable accounts of future trends and developments. After all, this has been the thrust of most of IR’s claim to a scientific status – just like the natural sciences – with its own scientific method. Jervis challenged this by indicating that rather than prediction, IR can only offer a range of possibilities (and perhaps suggest which ones would be more likely than others). While not the first one to make this claim, what distinguished Jervis was that his account actually relied on models and methods used by the natural sciences, which were framed under the label of complexity theory.

In this way, Jervis demonstrated both that IR is pandering to an outdated understanding of the nature of scientific enquiry and that the discipline should get more comfortable with uncertainty. In particular, his emphasis on the unpredictable and random nature of global life outlined the truly complex character of world affairs. Hence, the volume edited by Friedman makes an invaluable contribution to the study of world affairs by emphasising the need to look at the various system effects that frame the patterns of global life. The volume would be appreciated by advanced undergraduate students as well as scholars of IR and foreign policy making.

Emilian Kavalski  
(Australian Catholic University)


James Gow’s work focuses on the concept of war and war crimes and explores their relationship from a...
legal-political point of view. The main premise of this study is that ‘[w]hile the essence of war is unchanging, the character of its conduct changes periodically in relation to social and technical conditions’ (p. 3). Therefore, if the author wants to examine what actions are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in war and in what cases soldiers might face prosecutions for those acts, it is necessary to take into account the changes in the warfare. The book focuses particularly on the use of cluster munitions, on the treatment reserved to prisoners of war, and on artillery bombardment and siege.

This book has several merits. First of all, it provides a clear history of the law of war up to the development of the international criminal justice framework. Second, it studies the impact of a possible war crimes accusation on military strategies. Last but not least, it has the merit that it fills a gap in the study of the law of war because it focuses on the armed forces view, which has not previously been the object of extensive scholarly study. To reach this goal, Gow conducted empirical research, using focus groups and semi-structured interviews with seasoned defence professionals from different national backgrounds.

In the well-written conclusion, the author summarizes his findings. First of all, he clarifies that cluster munitions must be outlawed because they are neither necessary nor proportional according to the existing legal framework. Second, the principles of necessity and proportionality, which are generally used to distinguish what is ‘wrong’ from what is ‘right’, must be interpreted case-by-case in relation to the specific context. Third, the author recommends greater participation by military professionals in the courts called to judge soldiers alleged to have committed war crimes. Fourth, he reaffirms the need to clarify what is lawful in war in order to help military forces plan their strategies and operations according to that standard.

Given that the study contained in the book is aimed at strategists, policy makers and lawyers, inexpert readers might find it difficult to comprehend in some parts.

Rossella Pulvirenti
(University of Nottingham)


Stephen Haigh argues that states – rather than succumbing to the pressures exerted by the numerous forces of globalisation – adapt and remain in the centre of political life. However, the ‘Westphalian state’ is being transformed into an ‘embedded cosmopolitan state’. As a result, the international system is undergoing a structural readjustment that Haigh interprets as the onset of a neo-medieval order. The crucial feature of ‘neo-medievalism’ is a mesh of ‘overlapping, segmented authorities in which the modified state performs a central, irreplaceable role’ (p. 82). ‘Embedded cosmopolitanism’ then serves as ‘the ontological underpinning for the global neo-medieval political structure’ (p. 18).

The book is divided into three parts. The first examines globalisation, the history of the state and the transition from the medieval to the Westphalian order. The second part has a more theoretical focus. Haigh starts with a reconsideration of sovereignty before exploring the ontology of the state and the relationship between state and society. The third part provides an exposition of the book’s central theme. Here Haigh outlines the principles of neo-medieval order, which he sees as ‘the natural structural response to world-historical developments under thick globalization’ (p. 18).

Although Haigh painstakingly argues that neo-medievalism is not only theoretically plausible but also an empirically probable scenario, spotting and interpreting long-term trends can be notoriously difficult. The situation is complicated by the fact that the reconfiguration of the international system is of recent origin compared to the 350-year duration of Westphalia. Traditional Westphalian politics and old-fashioned national sovereignty may yet stage a comeback and reappear with new force. Similarly, there is nothing inevitable about globalisation, which may produce utterly unexpected results and could even be reversed. Other scenarios than Haigh’s version of neo-medievalism are possible, too (e.g. see Philip Cerny’s 2010 book Rethinking World Politics, esp. pp. 302–6). However, things may go awry even within the neo-medieval framework. Instead of arriving at embedded cosmopolitanism, the international system can regress into a (neo-)medieval
disarray and parochialism that lacks any universalising moment.

Nevertheless, Haigh offers a compelling, if perhaps overly optimistic, vision by asserting that ‘given current and probable future conditions, the only sustainable option is a planetary system of multinational constitutional democratic states’ (p. 197). This book is recommended to those interested in the transformation of statehood and the evolution of the international system.

Martin Duchac
(University of Trento)

International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in from the Cold by Peter Hough. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013. 176pp., £75.00, ISBN 9780415669283

While a broad and deep corpus of work exists on the nature of sovereignty at multiple levels, very little has been written which connects sovereignty and indigenous power in the Arctic. Peter Hough’s book is a valuable introduction to the increasingly contested international politics of sovereignty in the polar regions (see e.g. Klaus Dodds’ chapter on Britain and the Falklands Islands in Russell Foster (ed.) The Crisis of the Twenty-First Century, 2014), with a strong focus not only on formal relationships between states, but also on the formal and informal politics of negotiating sovereignty between Arctic states and their indigenous citizens.

The book begins with an overview of the history and role of the Arctic in international relations, followed by a brief introduction to four recurring schools of IR thought through which the Arctic is imagined: Realism, Liberalism, Marxism and Social Constructivism (pp. 14–16). Of particular note is Hough’s unique connection between conceptions of state/citizen sovereignty and the oeuvre of Hans Morgenthau (p. 110). But rather than portraying a struggle between indigenous peoples and states according to Realist, Liberal or Marxist dogma, Hough emphasises local power relations and citizen-state interaction, framing the Arctic as a reflexive and ‘symbiotic relationship between the region’s indigenous NGOs and governments’ (p. 138). The second and third chapters investigate disputed state sovereignty and the economic basis of recent interest in this ‘international political wilderness’ (p. 1), providing a foundation for the fourth chapter on issues of indigenous sovereignty. Such disputes and negotiations form the basis of the fifth and sixth chapters on governmental and non-governmental cooperation, respectively, with the emphasis on formal/informal interethnic governance ensuring that Hough’s analysis stands out from traditional state-centric investigations.

A brief seventh chapter summarises the book, with a substantive bibliography rich in primary sources.

Overall, the content lacks the detailed Realist or Liberal analyses of earlier works on Arctic IR by, e.g., Emmerson, Sale and Potapov, Fairhall, and Howard, but the book’s broad scope of politics, economics, ecology and participatory interaction between indigenous citizens and states makes Hough’s work an excellent introductory analysis. Hough’s structure and style, and his liberal use of information boxes and illustrations, make this a valuable resource for those seeking an introduction to a region where energy-hungry governments are making visible inroads.

Russell Foster
(Newcastle University)


The US government currently provides Afghanistan with the largest amount of aid money for various development and defence projects, but before the Americans, it was the Soviets who played this difficult role. There has been a wealth of scholarship on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its violent consequences, but the economic investment Moscow made in Afghanistan has not yet received much attention. Paul Robinson and Jay Dixon’s Aiding Afghanistan: A History of Soviet Assistance to a Developing Country is the first book-length treatment of the topic in English that investigates this remarkably under-studied issue. Covering both the periods before and after the 1979 invasion, the authors explore the economic and technical assistance the USSR provided to Afghanistan, making it the largest recipient of Soviet aid per capita than any other country except Egypt. Still, Afghanistan remained one of the poorest nations in the world, plagued with political instability and economic dependence. One of the questions Aiding Afghanistan seeks to address is why the Soviet Union’s development programmes in Afghanistan were not successful and
what the current aid providers can learn from their communist counterparts.

The authors argue that the Soviet aid failed primarily for its ideological component: while Afghanistan’s economy was almost entirely based on agriculture, the Soviets’ aid money was mainly invested in projects to boost industrial production – for the transition to socialism, they believed, Afghanistan needed a modern proletariat, not traditional farmers. In addition to this policy failure, there were other challenges on the ground, such as a lack of functioning institutions and qualified personnel, which made it difficult to bring development projects to sustainable fruition. In general, the Soviet aid created some physical infrastructures ‘but not economic growth’ (p. 69).

By drawing on Russian archival sources as well as interviews with some of the people involved in the Soviet Union’s affairs in Afghanistan, this volume brings fresh perspectives on an area of development studies which, at least in the English-speaking world, is buried under Cold War era rhetoric. Those interested in Afghanistan and development issues will find Aiding Afghanistan an insightful read. The authors are focused and detailed in their research, and the text is engaging and very well-written. It provides a convincing argument on how development aid projects, no matter how well-intentioned they might be, are not going to work without taking into account the social and cultural contexts of the aid recipients – a lesson yet to be learned by Afghanistan’s current guests.

Ali Karimi
(McGill University)


Harvey’s Starr’s On Geopolitics is meant as an introduction to IR scholars interested in the intersection of geography and international relations. It is also a synopsis of Starr’s own career working at this intersection, with his specific interest in how geography affects our understanding of conflict. Starr argues that geography was long ignored by IR because it was associated with a deterministic and ideological strand of geopolitics (pp. 3–4). Of late, though, a ‘new geography’ that is more complex and in tune with ‘constructivist’ approaches to social science has emerged.

Starr employs his own notions of ‘opportunity’ and ‘willingness’ as a frame for applying geographical understandings of space and time to IR (p. 5). Avoiding determinism, Starr argues that geography influences human action by creating ‘opportunities’ for interaction or for certain choices – with ‘proximity’ being the key concept. Second, geography affects the ‘willingness’ of humans to perceive certain things or choices as valuable, which Starr summarises as ‘salience’ (p. 42). Starr then applies this opportunity-willingness frame to conflict by looking at alliances and borders, mostly through the tools offered by a geographic information system, or GIS. One of his key conclusions is that using GIS can make terms like ‘border’, which is read simplistically in much of IR, more complex. This makes us think about borders, for example, as dynamic and multifaceted, and to think about the kinds of borders that affect the likelihood of cooperation or conflict (p. 108).

Although this book promises an overview of geography and IR, its literature is limited to that which surrounds Starr’s own interests. For instance, Starr throws out the baby of the agentic possibilities of non-humans with the bathwater of ‘environmental determinism’, and therefore misses some of the most vibrant and interesting work coming out of the geography-IR intersection. This would include work from feminist geographers, as well as that on ‘vibrant’ or ‘new’ materialism (see the 2013 Millennium Journal of International Studies special issue on ‘Materialism and World Politics’) which aims to subvert anthropocentric thinking, acknowledging the extent to which our world is riven by non-humans who have some agentic potential. Including this literature would not necessarily overturn Starr’s work or his conclusions, but would instead further complicate them, as well as provoke some more unexpected and novel questions from the perspective of IR research.

Cara Daggett
(Johns Hopkins University)


Maritime Piracy and the Construction of Global Governance makes a valuable contribution to bridging the gap between the international community’s slow responses
and the increasing piratical attacks around the world. From a constructivist perspective, the editors and contributors to this collection reach a consensus that global governance of piracy should be socially constructed, while the international community’s responses are not fully effective.

This collection has nine chapters. Chapter 1, which comprises the introduction to this collection of essays, gives a good outline for the research purpose and framework. Chapters 2–4 examine the extent to which international treaty provisions have been implemented by domestic anti-piracy practices, demonstrating that international law plays an essential role in constructing the identification of piracy (i.e. *hostis humani generis*), and stressing the feasibility of strengthening self-reporting mechanisms within the UN system. In Chapters 5–7, the editors and contributors focus on how international regimes such as the UN Security Council, the International Maritime Organisation and the International Maritime Bureau should construct security governance in response to maritime piracy. For example, as Christian Bueger and Jan Stockbruegger suggest, it might be ‘an interest based, temporary “alliance” as forming a “security community” of cosmopolitan or regional scale, or as a messier merger between the two’ (p. 121). In addition, they highlight the need for legitimacy and framing in international anti-piracy operations. Based on the conception of international society advocated by the English School, the ensuing pages (Chapter 8) evaluate pirates’ status in global politics. The final chapter comments on the findings of this collection with insightful remarks.

Maritime Piracy and the Construction of Global Governance succeeds in improving readers’ understanding of the myths about piracy and anti-piracy, conceptualising the challenges facing all stakeholders in the security governance of piracy, analysing the context-sensitive ways in which the stakeholders respond to these challenges, and providing insights into the elaboration of global governance of maritime piracy. This collection might well serve as an important reference for further and deeper study of maritime piracy and anti-piracy in the future. Moreover, those studying security governance of maritime piracy will find this collection a useful starting point.

Kai Chen
(Zhejiang University, China)


‘Why are allies so unpredictable?’ (p. 1) With her opening sentence, Stéfanie von Hlatky sets the underlying concept of her book as an update to the established theory of alliances. In her very well-written and widely researched study she puts under strenuous tests the underlying principles of the existing approaches to alliance theory and offers her own perspective regarding the effect of domestic constraints against alliance demands. She postulates that ‘while the unipolar distribution of power compels secondary states to either participate or become marginalized, their ability to respond in kind is mitigated by domestic-level factors, such as political and military feasibility’ (p. 3).

The analysis is based on the interactions between the US and its allied countries the UK, Canada and Australia, regarding their support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The author proposes a new theoretical framework in order to analyse the interaction between the great and the lesser powers inside an alliance regarding the level of military cooperation.

The framework is divided into three stages that refer to each of the interacting countries and the outcome. The first stage relates to the threat perception of the dominant power and its response to a perceived threat. The second relates to the lesser power and the variation in its ability to support. This variation, according to the framework, is dependent upon the level of political autonomy and the military capabilities of the lesser power. The third stage is the outcome of the level of military cooperation between the lesser and the greater power.

Despite the novelty of the theoretical framework, the overall argument of the book is not innovative. However, the author counter-balances that with analysis of the evidence for each individual case study that is impeccable and the structure of the chapters provides a deep understanding of the decision-making process of the case studies regarding their military contribution.

This book is highly recommended for anyone who has an interest in modern approaches to alliance theory based on contemporary issues.

Nikolaos Lampas
(University of Reading)

By applying a clearly constructivist perspective to the puzzle of humanitarian intervention, this multi-case study builds theory to explain how UNSC [United Nations Security Council] humanitarian intervention becomes possible in some cases of mass atrocity but not others, given a permissive normative environment (p. 16). Across a period of two decades (1991–2011), Carrie Booth Walling analyses five cases of intervention (Iraqi/South Kurdistan 1991, Somalia 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992–5, Sierra Leone 1995–2000 and Libya 2011), as well as three cases of non-intervention (Rwanda 1993–4, Kosovo 1998–9 and Darfur 2004–6). By examining UNSC documents and comparing them to actual Security Council actions, the study advances the argument that the discourses of Security Council members about the nature of conflict and government authority in target countries generate and preclude opportunities for humanitarian intervention. Through a content analysis method that cautiously analyses UNSC discourse, the author develops ‘a typology of causal stories that explains how council members struggle to control interpretations of conflict and how the narratives they advance open and foreclose the possibility of using military force in defence of human rights’ (pp. 21–2). The author asserts that: ‘The arguments of council members and their justifications for humanitarian intervention provide clues about the normative context in which decisions about humanitarian intervention are made in addition to illustrating how practice is discursively constructed as legitimate’ (p. 21).

The study’s outstanding theoretical scope (which pays particular attention to the interplay of norms, interests and power) and its well-researched empirical investigation demonstrate the mutual constitution of sovereignty norms and human rights norms. This allows the reader to understand better in what ways ideational factors (international norms) that are strategically employed/presented by UNSC members have shaped UN decisions about military-humanitarian intervention since the early 1990s. However, the study’s excessive focus on the UNSC decision-making environment and its members’ discursive strategies/power does partly isolate some of its analyses from material power structures dominant within and outside the Security Council that, many assume, have been able to determine the members’ course of action in the anarchic world politics. Nevertheless, the author’s novel use of content analysis and systematically selected cases help the students and scholars of IR to grasp some overlooked institutional dynamics behind the growing legitimacy of human rights norms and the changing role of state sovereignty in the UN system. By doing so, Walling develops a viewpoint beyond conventional constructivist accounts in the study of humanitarian intervention and international organisations.

Ismail Erdem
(Royal Holloway, University of London)

Comparative Politics


The current book under review is to my mind one of the best written on the relationship between democracy, dictatorship and term limits. Alexander Baturo tries to answer some of the most interesting questions in relation to the ‘maximum length of tenure that a president can serve in office’ (p. 17). Appealing not only to scholars who study processes of democratisation, but also to political theorists, historians looking at the past in a comparative perspective, constitutionalists and scholars of electoral behaviour, the book is divided into three main parts. The first part (Chapters 2 and 3) looks at the historical perspective on term limits; Part II (Chapters 4 to 7) analyses term limits alongside the individuals and their career options, rent-seeking, political constraints and general compliance with term limits; and Part III looks at the various and quite numerous effects of the relation between individuals and term limits.

Baturo begins by looking at the history of term limits, starting with the beginning of the idea from Ancient Athens and Republican Rome up to contemporary times. Chapter 3 highlights the tenure extension
a leader ... remains the effective national leader even after the expiration of tenure as prescribed by the text of the constitution’ (p. 53) – and how this extension is possible by focusing on ten major actions (pp. 54–69). Following this, Baturo presents the advantages and disadvantages of leaving presidential office, concluding that a leader will remain in office if, after his departure, he will not succeed financially as a private citizen, given that there is an important value of the political office. Thus, the ability of a president to extend his term has numerous effects, and Baturo argues that ‘the term limits represent an institutional demarcation line that separates democratic rulers ... from tyrants’ (p. 250).

Clearly this is a significant book, given the fact that it tackles a more than pertinent aspect of the possibility of usurping power. The numerous examples pin-pointed prove that from Ancient Rome to modern-day Russia or Romania (a case which is not highlighted in this book, but where the author’s arguments fit perfectly) the mode of infringing the term limits and the provisions of the constitution are the same and, when breached, democracy breaks down (p. 260).

Ligia Niculae
(University of Bucharest)


The BRICs and Emerging Economies in Comparative Perspective is a volume prepared by a diverse group of scholars and edited by Uwe Becker. It balances between economic development and political economy, while favouring neither one. It examines Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRICs), as well as Turkey and South Africa. The authors analyse these building blocks, or ‘bricks’, of the newly emerging architecture of the world economy through the lenses of institutional development and continuity and change and underline their differences. It is of no surprise then that some key terms throughout the book are ‘capitalism’, ‘liberalisation’, ‘institutional reform’ and, to a lesser extent, ‘etatism’, ‘patrimonialism’, ‘globalisation’, ‘corruption’ and ‘the rule of law’. Traditional terms, such as ‘privatisation’, ‘unemployment’ and ‘inflation’, also receive their fair share.

Most of the contributing authors represent the different countries on which they report. The major focus of the book is on the state-economy and labour-capital relationships and their trajectories of development. The authors use the varieties of capitalism (VoC) framework, which includes the liberal type, statist type, patrimonial type, corporatist type and meso-communitarian type (p. 36). The book is more about each country individually and not so much about comparisons, despite the claim of the title.

The authors generally succeed in their goals, although it is hard to call them particularly challenging. Becker offers an introduction and the overarching Chapter 2 on institutional change in the BRICs, Eastern Europe, South Africa and Turkey – both of which contain a good deal of data and data analysis. Thus, Chapter 2 appears to be a major contribution to this volume. The book concludes with a set of open questions. It is very well written, but this perfection of language and accessibility does not compensate for a lack of novelty. Indeed, the authors are so focused on presenting a lot of dense information about each of the selected countries that they lose their chance to offer any real originality.

If readers want a comprehensive, analytically charged overview of major developing economies, then there is no need to turn to separate books on each country because instead they can turn to this book. Thus, The BRICs and Emerging Economies in Comparative Perspective would be of interest not only to researchers, college faculty and students, but also to those who want to learn more about the developing world, or to invest in one of the countries in focus.

Ararat L. Osipian
(Vanderbilt University)


The major question raised in this book is why some democratization processes yield conflict and violence whereas others are followed by accommodation and compromise. The major findings of this path-breaking work are that ‘democratization does not necessarily...
yield substantive equality for ethnic minorities’ (p. 1) and it highlights the mediated effects of regime change on ethnic group relations. Through different case studies, the book traces the mechanisms introduced by democratic regimes to accommodate and integrate sizeable ethnic minorities in their respective countries. Bertrand and Haklai have reviewed the works of many political scientists and their findings show that transitions to democracy in multiethnic societies are characterised as procedural democracy, having majority dominance and ethnocentric leadership. Violence, stability or meaningful accommodations are the outcomes of ethnic conflicts.

Simon Toubeau in Chapter 4 shows that in democratising divided societies, the imperative of reconciliation means a requirement to manage considerable differences. The constitutional settlements are required to pacify the tussle between nationalist claims for symbolic recognition and territorial autonomy. The founding election is the ‘critical juncture’ – a time between the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. Agenda-setting and partisan bargaining are significant steps for constitutional settlements in ethnically diverse societies. Lynch and Anderson (Chapter 5) present the case of shifting identities from single-party to multiparty systems based on ethnic mobilisation. ‘Land and ethnic identities have become tools in the hands of political elites’ (p. 84) in the Kenyan experience. Bertrand and Jeram explicate a broad range of case studies of armed militancy in several countries such as Spain, Ireland, Indonesia, Senegal and the Philippines, and they show that a reduction in violence happens only because of an increasing acceptance of moderate alternatives in ethnically diverse societies.

Laliberte deals with the Taiwanese experience in Chapter 7, which shows how institutional factors led to the peaceful democratic transition through the strategies evolved by the Kuomintang (KMT), which reduced inter-ethnic cleavages. In Chapter 8, Brian Shoup examines the impact of ethnically based redistributive (EBR) policies in ethnically plural states. Shoup explains the ‘ethnic bipolarisation’ in which ‘few ethnic groups and at least one of these groups possess the ability to monopolize political power’ (p. 147). Chapter 9 deals with the Kurdish accommodation in Turkey, and how elections and international pressures (the EU factor) have played a role in the democratic transition, liberalisation and reform in deepening democracy in Turkey. In the conclusion, Bertrand and Haklai see no clear relationship between violence and democratisation.

Parvez Alam
(Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi)


The argument commonly made by proponents of electoral reform is that it will improve and renew citizens’ engagement with politics. Opponents suggest that electoral reform will improve little except certain partisan electoral interests. This book examines a variety of electoral reforms, predominantly from the American perspective, but also from the UK, New Zealand and Australia, to try and see who is right.

The book is much more empirical than other work in the area, such as Alan Renwick’s 2010 work The Politics of Electoral Reform. As such, it presents an immediate difficulty. Examples of major changes in electoral systems are few and far between, and examples of smaller changes, such as party finance reforms, will often go unnoticed by voters. Even where there has been major change, reforms should be given time to bed in and become the norm before being definitively judged one way or another.

The authors have sought to resolve this problem by collecting an impressive wealth of data on electoral reform and its subsequent effect (or lack of) on public attitudes and behaviour. For those advocating electoral reform, the results are disappointing. In most cases, there is little evidence to suggest that voters’ attitudes have been impacted by reform. Bowler and Donovan offer two main reasons for this: the effects of new electoral rules and systems are often exaggerated by reformers, and there is a hard limit to the effect of electoral reform compared with the wider political system of which voters are part. As they note, ‘electoral reforms that are aimed at increasing efficacy, participation, and trust may be running against much more powerful political, economic, and social tides’ (p. 139).

It would have been useful for the book to move away from such a strong focus on North American politics. In particular, more discussion of New
Zealand’s move from FPTP (first-past-the-post) to MMP (mixed-member proportional representation) in 1993 would have been interesting. The authors note that there is ‘little evidence’ (p. 78) that the new system lived up to expectations, yet voters opted to retain the system in 2011. However, these are minor criticisms, and overall this book is an impressive account of electoral reform and its limits, and is highly recommended to students of electoral politics and politicians looking to advocate reform in the future.

Craig Johnson
(Newcastle University)


The Myth of the Strong Leader makes an argument that needs making: archetypal ‘strong leaders’ are not all they are cracked up to be. Taking an overview of global politics, almost entirely in the northern hemisphere and covering the past century, Archie Brown argues that political leadership is best when it is collective, and worst when individual leaders dominate to the exclusion of others. The myth in question is the widely held view that leaders who stamp their personal authority on policy across the piece, coming to dominate government according to their personal convictions and preferences, are particularly admirable and to be sought after. Brown’s aim is by no means to call for weak political leadership, but rather to expose the ‘facile weak-strong dichotomy [as] a very limited and unhelpful way of assessing individual leaders’ (p. 1).

Setting out brief accounts of the lives, and accompanying events, of a wide range of national leaders, Archie Brown considers system-transforming leaders, such as Mikhail Gorbachev and Charles de Gaulle; leaders like Franklin D. Roosevelt and Margaret Thatcher who redefine the terms of political debate; revolutionaries, from early twentieth-century Mexico through to the Arab Spring; and dictators both communist and fascist. In this way, The Myth of the Strong Leader provides an original approach to the international political history of the last century, offering largely narrative accounts focused on the leaders themselves.

The focus of, and enjoyably spikey edge to, Brown’s analysis comes in relation to the role of leaders in democracies. In particular, Tony Blair turns up repeatedly as an object lesson in how not to do things. Quoting disapprovingly Jonathan Powell’s assertion that it is ‘weak prime ministers … that invariably announce they are re-introducing Cabinet government’ (p. 10), Brown critiques Blair’s preference for diminishing the role of his party and his cabinet colleagues. He carefully dissects the assertion, on the second page of Blair’s memoirs, that ‘I won three general elections’, arguing instead that the personal electoral value of Tony Blair was never the decisive factor (p. 72). He is dismissive of Blair’s ‘sense of entitlement to take decisions on behalf of the government’ (p. 351). And he takes apart the decision to go to war against Iraq – a notable example of the book’s central premise, that ‘successful outcomes … are rarely associated with the kind of leadership in which one person tries to dominate the entire policy-making process’ (p. 102).

Edwin Bacon
(Birkbeck College, University of London)


Women’s invisibility at the apex of the executive level in national and local political arenas remains a serious concern worldwide. This is fuelled by ingrained unconscious biases which encumber women’s effectual participation in decision-making positions. This work is an impressive, crisp and terse account of the historical, constitutional and cultural context within which women have struggled to achieve engagement and inclusion in the public space and power structures. Further, this book unveils the local dynamics at play in Commonwealth countries.

The authors describe the barriers to women’s political participation and explain why the contribution of women is so crucial to democracy. Additionally, they advance the argument that women’s participation in decision making is directly proportional to the quality of democracy and development. Low participation by women has led to a fall in the quality of democracy and development and vice versa.
This volume documents some established strategies—electoral reform (New Zealand), party voluntary quotas (South Africa) and legislative quotas (Bangladesh and India)—that have helped these Commonwealth countries to meet the global target of 30 per cent women in leadership roles. The book’s strength lies in its diversity and wide coverage. It incorporates successful case studies of different countries encompassing three regions—namely, the Pacific Region (New Zealand), Africa (South Africa) and Asia (Bangladesh and India). These case studies cogently portray the positive impact of women’s participation in these countries.

The authors highlight that the introduction of quotas—reserved seats and affirmative action policies, through constitutional, legislative, electoral and party reforms—have resulted in an incremental rise in the participation of women in decision-making roles (p. 86). In other words, this measure has made women more visible in the field of decision making at all three levels of national, state and local governance structures. Moreover, these strategies help to change the political environment in terms of language and user-friendly attitudes, engendering a culture of cooperation and collaboration and an increased awareness of social, cultural and traditional practices that are offensive to women and girls, among others. The book will appeal to students, scholars and practitioners interested in issue(s) of women’s participation in power structures across different regions. The authors’ scholarship and the quality of this succinct work make it very lucid and informative.

Vijender Singh Beniwal
(Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi)

Breaking Male Dominance in Old Democracies
by Drude Dahlerup and Monique Leyenaar (eds).

This important volume from Drude Dahlerup and Monique Leyenaar is composed of eight state/country case studies that examine the historical development of women’s political representation in ‘old democracies’—that is, democracies where women’s enfranchisement occurred before and around the First World War. Male dominance is conceptualised by form and degree. There are six forms of male dominance: (descriptive) representation, politics as a workplace, vertical sex segregation, horizontal sex segregation, discourses and framing, and public policy. The degree of male dominance is categorised into four stages: male monopoly, small minority, large minority, and gender balance. It would be interesting to see how the degrees of male dominance at elected assembly levels depreciate in multiple parliamentary environments. For example, attendance is not whipped in UK Select Committees and therefore a ‘small minority’ composition in a legislature can readily transform into a ‘male monopoly’ composition in a committee.

Dahlerup and Leyenaar’s multilevel design has paid off. The chapters encapsulate a range of units of analysis such as countries, party systems and the anticipation of voters’ reactions (p. 243) and actors such as political parties (p. 117) and women’s organisations (p. 147). To build a vivid illustration of ‘male dominance in old democracies’ beyond elected officials, further numerical analysis could be conducted on staff in elected assemblies who are a source of expertise and counsel to elected members and whose relationships with outside bodies may be instrumental in witness selection on committees where female representation is lower.

A range of theoretical frameworks are employed throughout the eight country analyses, such as Feminist Discursive Institutionalism, social movement theory and demand-supply theory. The collection concludes with four cross-national thematic chapters, and Lenita Freidenvall and Marian Sawer’s chapter on the framing of women representatives is particularly compelling. However, a refocus on how roles in elected assemblies are framed as masculine may have avoided the impression of gender as something that women bring to elected assemblies. Nevertheless, this is an encompassing and meticulous collection. I would highly recommend it for comparative scholars of gender and democracies who are interested in descriptive representation as the leading conceptualisation of male dominance.

Cherry M. Miller
(University of Birmingham)


Crane Brinton’s The Anatomy of Revolution was published in 1938 to rapturous academic acclaim. Accen-
tuating the life-cycle ‘patterns’ of four classical revolutions in England, France, the US and Russia between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries, the book nevertheless suffered from two main pitfalls. In his book, *Understanding Tahrir Square*, Stephen Grand indirectly avoids these two pitfalls and manages to produce a similar ‘must-read’ on this phenomenon called ‘revolting’.

Grand avoids Brinton’s deterministic approach towards historical pathways or generalisations. He plays it safe by seeking ‘lessons’ from the trajectory of history rather than predicting how it should be. The scope of enquiry also goes more broadly into ‘Third Wave’ countries – namely those seeking democracy between the mid-1970s and the end of the twentieth century. One chapter each is allotted to the former Eastern Bloc, Muslim-Majority Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The lessons identified are twofold: democracy is always possible but the journey to it ‘was not swift nor was it without struggle’ (p. 202); and successful democratisation depends on the ‘long term of the emergency of a political constituency for democracy’ (p. 203). With the ‘Arab Spring’ in mind, the book moves smoothly from countries which proceeded on relatively democratic paths, such as Slovakia and Serbia, to others where democracy proved more elusive, such as Ukraine and Belarus.

The book has been masterfully written, without theoretical rigidity. Grand wrote the final chapter (Chapter 9) as policy recommendations towards foreign intervention in the ‘Arab Spring’. These recommendations are based on personal experience from when the author spent time in some of the case study situations mentioned in the book, such as Prague immediately after the Velvet Revolution; enough to make writing this work a ‘personal passion’ (p. x).

Although well researched, the book is sometimes a little sketchy in its description, superficial in content and short in the analysis, presumably caused by attempting to comprise an ‘all-inclusive’ corpus of global transitions. Examples could have included better detail and related to Arab Spring countries in a less panoramic manner (such as looking for similarities between Egypt’s civil society and that of the former Eastern Bloc, or highlighting differences between the civil-military relations of Turkey and those of Syria). Also, Grand could have begun with some defining terms – especially for ‘democracy’ and ‘revolution’ – rather than oscillating between their modalities interchangeably and vaguely. Nonetheless, this book is a judicious post-modernist project, replete with evidence construed as a note of optimism against the bloody tribulations of the ‘Arab Spring’.

Mustafa Menshawy
(University of Westminster)


The publication of the fourth edition of *Comparing Democracies*, this time with the focus on *Elections and Voting in a Changing World*, is welcome news for election aficionados and anoraks such as this reviewer. Like previous editions of this classic work, the volume is a collection of highly readable chapters by some of the foremost experts on elections and other forms of voting. This new edition features contributions from well-established political scientists like Michael Gallagher (Chapter 2: Electoral Institutions and Representations), Pippa Norris (Chapter 9: Electoral Integrity and Political Legitimacy) and G. Bingham Powell, Jr (Conclusion: Why Elections Matter). In addition, there are new chapters by emerging ‘stars’. One particularly well-written and insightful chapter is Jennifer Gandhi’s thorough account of ‘Authoritarian Elections and Regime Change’.

The new edition is broader in scope than the earlier ones. ‘Earlier editions’, as the editors write in the introduction, ‘would not have discussed autocracies at all’. ‘However’, they continue, ‘we now live in a world where all but a handful of countries hold elections of some kind. While the integrity of such elections varies widely, there is now a considerable body of scholarship that examines the implications of elections taking place in authoritarian regimes’. For this reason, chapters on such matters as elections held in dictatorships and on the monitoring of elections have been added to the list. These chapters are factual as well, since they are firmly grounded in statistical analysis. Indeed, more so than any of the earlier editions, the present volume is characterised by the considerable use of statistical models. This gives the book more aca-
demic and scholarly gravitas, but it might also scare away some practitioners who are less comfortable with regression models.

Another valuable aspect of the book is that it provides a list of all the electoral systems used around the world, which includes disproportionality scores, the effective number of parties and the percentage of female MPs.

That the book has been expanded in several ways means, sadly, that other chapters have been omitted. It is regrettable that this book does not contain a chapter on referendums and direct democracy, especially given Lawrence LeDuc’s expertise in this area. But this is a small price to pay. For the comparative political scientist this edition is an improvement on earlier editions. It is a safe prediction that the individual chapters will be cited extensively in years to come.

Matt Qvortrup
(Cranfield University)

Power Sharing in Deeply Divided Places
by Joanne McEvoy and Brendan O’Leary (eds).

This edited volume by Joanne McEvoy and Brendan O’Leary is an insightful addition to the National and Ethnic Conflict in the Twenty-First Century series from the University of Pennsylvania. The editors have carefully selected fifteen contributions that examine past and present power-sharing systems, providing thoughtful analysis on their successes and failures. In the introduction, O’Leary identifies four main forms of democratic power sharing: centripetalism, multiculturalism, consociation and territorial pluralism. Throughout the volume, the authors focus on these four methods, as both advocates and adversaries, creating a consistent approach to power sharing throughout the volume.

The contributions are divided into three parts: Power Sharing and Electoral Systems; Historical and Conceptual Forays on Power Sharing; and Contemporary Power-Sharing Questions. It is apparent that one of the main aims of this volume was to analyse power sharing from a multiplicity of disciplines. Hence there are contributions from a political perspective, such as Chapter 3 by Allison McCulloch, ‘The Track Record of Centripetalism in Deeply Divided Places’, which sits comfortably alongside Samuel Issacharoff’s legal analysis of courts and constitutions in effective power sharing in Chapter 8. This not only broadens readers’ understanding of power sharing, but also opens the volume to a wider audience. To ensure that the volume is up-to-date and relevant, the editors have selected contributions that focus on contemporary power-sharing systems, with the exception of Benjamin Braude’s discussion of power-sharing provisions under the Ottoman and Safavid empires in Chapter 6. This chapter provides an engaging history of power sharing in divided places and is essential to the comprehensive analysis found in the volume.

O’Leary proposes that the intellectual function of this edition is to encourage policy makers, advisors and teachers of policy making alike to consider the merits of power sharing, as well as its potential drawbacks (p. 412). The contributions successfully achieve this, demonstrating the mixed results of power sharing in deeply divided places. It is apparent from the contributions selected that the normative debate on power sharing, whether within or outside deeply divided places, is unlikely to stop (p. 412), with varied opinions and proposals found throughout. Overall, the book is well constructed and would serve as a useful tool to students, teachers and specialists of many disciplines, owing to its successful balance of background detail through the wide range of case studies and critical analysis.

Elyse Wakelin
(University of Leicester)

How Rivalries End

The emerging scholarship surrounding the concept of ‘enduring rivalries’ offers a promising way to understand the dynamics of severe interstate interactions between the same pair of states over extended periods of time. Although many works are available on how rivalries originate and develop, few have devoted attention to explaining why rivalries de-escalate and terminate. Karen Rasler, William Thompson and Sumit Ganguly’s How Rivalries End is explicitly dedicated to broadening this aspect. The authors argue that some rivalry terminations can be easily explained by
using a couple of variables, but some belong to a different category that withstands coercion, subordination or surrender. They claim that their proposed expectancy framework — which encompasses this puzzling category — not only helps to understand why these more immune and less coercive rivalries resist de-escalation or termination, but also outlines principal conditions for them to attain this objective.

The book consists of eight chapters. The first two are devoted to elaborating the termination theory. From Chapter 3 onwards, the authors examine ten case studies of rivalries: Egypt-Israel, Israel-Syria, Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan, China-Soviet Union, China-United States, China-Taiwan, China-Vietnam, Thailand-Vietnam and North Korea-South Korea. Using the framework described above, the book tests de-escalation and termination of paired rivalries — three that were successfully de-escalated, four that were terminated and three that are continuing — through a combination of four variables: shocks, reciprocity, expectancy revision and reinforcement. In a compelling manner, the book explains that revision in adversaries’ perception can have a substantial impact on ‘the perceived degree of threat or enmity status’ and ultimately lead to the termination of rivalry (p. 185). However, the authors maintain that sometimes expectancy revision is not sufficient to bring about the desired outcomes. In such situations, shocks are needed to bring dramatic changes to the existing status quo. This might alter their capabilities, territorial sovereignties or alliances or redistribute power within alliances, and that might in turn cripple the potential of adversaries to continue the rivalry. Each case study, as well as the introductory theoretical chapters and concluding commentary, provide fascinating analyses of how endogenous and exogenous factors can have an influence on rivalry behaviour and how they determine the course to expiration either with or without war.

In sum, by testing multiple cases, this important study enriches and deepens our knowledge of rivalry de-escalation and termination through a well-designed model which sheds light upon the scientific study of the end of strategic rivalries. By laying a theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis of rivalry termination, How Rivalries End is an indispensible asset for scholars and researchers in international relations, security studies and foreign policy. For its succinct account, this noteworthy work is highly recommended to advanced students and scholars.

Surinder Mohan
(University of Jammu)


For many years, studies in comparative politics have focused on different countries to look at how varying institutional settings lead to different outcomes. An inherent shortcoming in this approach is the difficulty of comparing contexts that differ fundamentally across a large spectrum of dimensions. Focusing on subnational units instead provides a potential solution to this problem, as regions in large federal states often vary on a number of theoretically interesting dimensions, while sharing other aspects that are challenging for cross-country studies.

This edited volume on Russia’s subnational politics demonstrates how such an approach can be beneficial both for a better understanding of a specific regional context, as well as for an audience interested in more general questions of comparative politics. In the book, a group of veteran Russia watchers explore how Russia’s regional politics have changed since Vladimir Putin started building a new kind of authoritarian regime from the early 2000s onwards.

Two studies on local regimes and regional governors show how the attempt by Russia’s federal elites to secure their hold on power led to regional administrations being characterised by permanent short-term horizons, with the vote-share for the ruling party United Russia instead of economic dynamism becoming the key evaluation criterion for local leaders. We then see in two further chapters how United Russia offers only limited added value for local politicians in terms of winning electoral campaigns. Nevertheless, most opposition politicians feel a need to join United Russia after winning an election as the party serves as the only vehicle through which access to rents and support from the federal centre can be gained.

The second part of the book focuses on current problems in Russia’s regions such as increasing xenophobia and inequality and the inefficiency of the health care sector by showing how a system geared
towards providing political support for the ruling elites fails to deliver across many other respects.

In looking at the sustainability of Russia’s dominant party regime, the concluding chapter underlines the importance of regional political machines. By replacing regional insiders with loyal outsiders, the regime inadvertently destroyed some of these machines and thus damaged its ability to generate electoral support and political stability.

While the book does a good job of illustrating the complexity of managing a dominant party regime, many questions with regard to Russia’s regional politics are only scratched on the surface. There thus remains a lot of potential for future research, and this not only for the Russian context, but also with respect to comparative subnational politics in other large states, with cross-national subnational analysis possibly becoming the next big methodological step on the horizon.

Michael Rochlitz
(Higher School of Economics, Moscow)


Transitions to Democracy: A Comparative Perspective seeks to explain how international influences interact with domestic ones to produce successful democratic transitions. It emphasises influences beyond that of the US, with a focus on the contributions of the EU, NATO, the UN and various NGOs. The book itself is a collection of case studies from around the world, divided into successful (such as Poland), incremental (such as Mexico) and failed democratic transitions (such as China in 1989). The case study selections include post-communist states, former military dictatorships in Latin America, as well as states in Africa and Asia. Such a wide variety of cultural and political contexts makes the authors’ conclusions more universally applicable than a book more focused on only one such context (such as post-communist countries). The recurring theme between case studies is that ‘international democracy promotion efforts were ... a necessary but insufficient factor’ (p. 9) in many of these transitions. In particular, the book focuses on how external efforts to build expertise in terms of observing elections and help with broadcasting opposition messages, etc. aided success in those countries where there were strong local grassroots movements towards democracy, but that no amount of external aid could make up for the lack of local democratic movements.

Each chapter begins with a thorough review of the cultural and historical context of the country in question as it relates to democracy, and then explores the domestic and foreign influences on the success and failure of the transition in question. The book is consistently well-written and provides clear and specific evidence to back up its claims, although its chapter on Russia would have benefited from a more thorough analysis of the failure to consolidate democratic gains there and Putin’s reversals of many early democratic successes. Its strong emphasis on local cultural and historical context in each case study makes it far easier for the reader to understand why the democratic transitions succeeded or failed in each country. It also seeks to make specific and realistic foreign policy recommendations based on actual historical experience, describing how foreign governments can help expose problems of non-democratic regimes and boost the abilities of local democratic movements to achieve their goals.

With a wide variety of examples from around the world, the editors have succeeded in providing an excellent overview of how international influences have affected democratic transitions everywhere, one that is relevant for any scholar studying democratisation.

Ryan Boudwin
(University of Warsaw)


In the last quarter of the twenty-first century, the information and communication technology revolution and civil society activism, among others, put the state under tremendous stress to provide services. Public trust in government and institutions has been declining in both developing and developed countries. This book makes theoretical and empirical contributions
towards understanding the nuances of accountability in crises by using Sweden as the case study.

Lina Svedin argues that the way mechanisms of answerability operate in a crisis impinge in a direct and fundamental manner on public trust in governing institutions. She outlines three aspects of the accountability process – its environment, structures and agents – which constitute the web that makes accountability possible in an administrative system (p. 20). Svedin finds that within the complex web of bureaucratic and political actions, democratic processes have been undermined across time, contributing to misplaced and declining trust in governing institutions. Specifically, this is the case among the Swedish public because the mechanisms designed to secure the legitimate exercise of power and democratic values in a crisis are poorly utilised.

The book can be divided into two parts. The first part provides the theoretical discussion along with a comprehensive framework to scrutinise accountability in a crisis, and the second part presents the empirical study of accountability in the Swedish context. There are nine chapters in the book, which are very succinct, lucidly logical and well written. The book should be read by researchers, political leaders and policy framers who wish to comprehend various dimensions of accountability in crises.

The book is very scholarly in its entire approach and its comparative outlook is its strongest point. The author demonstrates how the empirical results can be applied to other administrative contexts (e.g. the UK, the US and the Netherlands). Further, a very rich and in-depth review of 64 Swedish crises between 1931 and 2005 has been provided to make this work diverse, enriching and prolific. There are two anomalies in this book, however. The first is the book’s scope, which does not highlight issues and concerns regarding accountability mechanisms in the developing world because the book is solely devoted to the developed world. The second anomaly is that methodologically the author has used the case study approach with great zeal, going deeper and deeper into each case with the intention of providing a rich contextual account, but without resolving the issue of dependability and general applicability to the wider context, especially the developing world.

Vijender Singh Beniwal
(Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi)

General Politics

The Latina Advantage: Gender, Race and Political Success by Christina E. Bejarano. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2013. 183pp., £37.00, ISBN 9780292745643

Ethnicity and gender are both widely considered to impact on candidates’ electoral chances. More specifically, ethnic minority status and female gender are generally perceived as disadvantageous candidate characteristics. As such, minority women could perhaps face a ‘double disadvantage’ as a result of their intersectional identities. The rise of a Latina presence in the US Congress, however, challenges the idea that disadvantages are additive. As suggested by the title of the book, Cristina Bejarano argues the very opposite: instead of a ‘double disadvantage’, the intersectional identities of Latinas could allow them to gather electoral resources that come from Latino communities and women groups.

To test her theory, Bejarano divides the book into two parts. The first investigates voter attitudes towards female and minority political candidates. In this context, she uses data from the General Social Survey and finds that both women and minorities are more likely to support a minority candidate for president. Applying data from the American National Election Studies she also concludes that respondents who do not share the same ethnic identity as their incumbents are more likely to favourably support female, rather than male, incumbents. The second part identifies the percentage of minority population and the percentage of Hispanic-owned firms as the most important state-level factors in predicting Latina political representation in the US. Engaging in direct comparisons of races in Texas and California, Bejarano also concludes that minority female candidates benefit electorally from ‘high quality’ characteristics, such as campaign finance.

All in all, Bejarano’s theory makes logical sense and could indeed signify an important breakthrough in the literature of candidate recruitment. Although, overall, her empirical findings support her expectations, coefficients are at times inflated by interpretation, while data mismatch and base assumptions are not fully discussed. For instance, some of the conclusions derived in the first part of the book are based on survey data that
pertains to African Americans or minorities in general; in the second part, the only positive and statistically significant coefficients produced by the model applied to Latina women (to predict their descriptive representation) are smaller than the ones produced in the model applied to Latino men. As a consequence, Bejarano’s findings, taken together, seem to provide a trend, but, if analysed as individual chapters, only yield partial support for her theory. Despite these faults, Bejarano’s contribution ‘calls for a re-examination of the concept of racial threat to include the impact of gender’ (p. 11). Her well-structured book and intelligent theory should be considered a starting point for future studies that wish to engage in nuanced and effective analyses of the recruitment and electoral processes.

Maria Luiza A. C. Gatto
(University of Oxford)

Oil by Gavin Bridge and Philippe Le Billon.

The mainstream literature on sources of economic growth follows extensions of the 1956 neo-classical Solow-Swan exogenous model, and assumes that labour, capital and technology – but not energy – are primary factors, and therefore inputs for the production function. Gavin Bridge and Philippe Le Billon demonstrate that oil is a vital energy input of the production function, a driving engine of the contemporary economic system and a prerequisite for economic growth.

Oil is organised into seven chapters, followed by a list of chapter-related notes, selected reading and an index. Chapter 1 identifies the characteristics of the contemporary oil sector and the role it plays in the geopolitics of oil, formulated by the authors as a ‘struggle to define who wins and who loses as oil moves from underground reserves to the point of consumption’ (p. 27). Chapter 2 is dedicated to the global oil production network and explores the linkages and relations of power among its components. Chapter 3 presents a systematic analysis of oil consumption and marketing. Chapter 4 highlights the complexities of oil security as a function of four criteria: availability, accessibility, acceptability and affordability. It demonstrates that although some synergies among the criteria are possible, there are also considerable trade-offs. Oil-fuelled development from the perspective of both producers and consumers is the central topic of Chapter 5. A salient point is that it aggravates environmental problems, sharpens inequalities, creates obstacles to economic diversification, is subject to oil-revenue volatility and may have an adverse impact on the quality of governance. Chapter 6 delineates the key rules and structures of oil governance and the challenges of fragmentation and incoherence which it faces. The final chapter discusses the structural shifts undergone by the global oil industry as well as their implications for its future. Four main priorities for oil governance are set: ‘reducing oil volatility, matching oil supply and demand, transitioning to low-carbon energy sources, and addressing the “oil curse”’ (p. 188).

Given the complex system of factors and interactions through the hydrocarbon chain, a major strength of the book is its well-structured, multidisciplinary and easy-to-follow approach in the presentation of the coherent content. A minor shortcoming of the book is that it provides rather scarce coverage of the Russian Federation’s oil industry, which plays a key role in contemporary global oil geopolitics. Beyond this minor flaw, this is a major book that will appeal to professionals, academics, politicians, students and members of the general public who are interested in the geopolitics of oil.

Iva Mihaylova
(University of St Gallen)

He Runs, She Runs: Why Gender Stereotypes Do Not Harm Women Candidates by Deborah Jordan Brooks.

Media coverage and subsequent journalistic analyses of the 2008 US presidential elections suggest gender biases harmed both Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin. As a means of verifying ‘common knowledge’ on gender stereotypes and voters’ perceptions, Deborah Brooks asks: ‘Do women running for office face tougher expectations by the public regarding their qualifications and behaviour than male candidates do? If so, does that contribute to the parity problem?’ (p. 8).

To answer this question, Brooks uses a representative sample of 3,000 respondents (p. 12), drawn from the YouGov database, to test experiments based on the Golberg paradigm design (p. 45). Based on this design, Brooks presented respondents with articles about female and male fictitious candidates that had exactly the same
characteristics, except for their gender. As such, six aspects of campaigns – candidate experience, crying, anger, toughness, lack of empathy and knowledge gaffes during the campaign (p. 51) – were interacted with gender and analysed in regard to their impact on ‘overall favourability, likely effectiveness in Senate, and likely effectiveness as US president’ (p. 54), as well as their perceived ‘issue competencies’ (such as knowledge of the economy) and ‘personal traits’ (p. 55).

Brooks’ conclusions are optimistic: gender stereotypes are still in place, but they do not disproportionately hurt the electoral chances of female candidates. Also, contrary to journalistic accounts, Brooks does not find evidence to support the suggestion that women are penalised for ‘violating gendered prescriptive stereotypes’ (p. 144), and even that inexperienced female candidates have a slight advantage over inexperienced men.

Brooks’ writing is clear and exciting, which means the book contributes not only to the scholarly literature on women and politics, but also to the overall non-academic discussion of the topic. Perhaps precisely because of this attempt to connect to a non-academic audience, however, the book seems to bear a disconnected design: it is motivated and framed in regard to the presidential elections, but undertakes analyses at the legislative level. The reader is also left to wonder whether findings could be biased as a result of using YouGov, a self-selection platform for population sampling, or by respondents’ knowledge of the intent of the study (an issue Brooks briefly discusses on p. 170).

Brooks’ work is aligned with recent findings on voter behaviour and candidate gender, and is well timed and placed within the literature’s growing understanding of the relationship between gender biases and descriptive representation. It also succeeds in combining non-academic discourse with methodological rigour, thus potentially satisfying a large and diverse audience.

Maria Luiza A. C. Gatto
(University of Oxford)


Environmental cataclysms are looming in the background of a new wave of fiction dedicated to climate change. Similarly, a growing corpus of academic literature seeking to sensitize readers to the possible environmental effects to come is gaining popularity. In this respect, the late Gary Bryner’s book (completed by Robert Duffy) Integrating Climate, Energy and Air Pollution Policies contributes to the current debate on climate change policy making by emphasizing the importance of integrative policy analysis. The author’s main thesis is that it is desirable to consider climate change together with air pollution, energy, transport and agricultural policies. The book focuses on the US, the world’s second largest energy consumer after China, according to recent data from the International Energy Agency. However, rather than set an example of climate change coordination and capacity-building, the author notes that America’s policy is highly decentralized, fragmented and disrupted by polarized politics and led by a broad coalition of interests.

A key idea of environmental science, which Bryner builds upon, is that ‘everything is connected to everything else’ (p. 1). The adopted approach is of a roughly focused empirical discussion by sector, illustrated with a rich variety of facts and data about US politics and policy making. The major strength of the book lies in the suggested policy options that encourage policy integration. The book’s first two chapters are dedicated to the relevance, key concepts and challenges underlying policy integration. In Chapter 3, Bryner navigates the US climate policy system and evaluates whether the cap-and-trade system or carbon taxation are real policy options for emissions reduction. Chapter 4 explores integrative energy, climate and air policy options for reducing the reliance on coal, the dirtiest fuel in terms of emissions, to generate electricity. Chapter 5 comprises options to embed energy efficiency and renewables in an integrated energy and climate policy. Chapter 6 examines strategies for the reduction of emissions from transportation – for example, though fuel switching, improved fuel efficiency, transportation planning and land use. Three strategies for mitigating climate change in agriculture are proposed in Chapter 7: biofuels production, carbon sequestration and the reduction of greenhouse gases. The final chapter summarises some key topics previously presented and concentrates on the importance of sustainability in the assessment of policy choices.

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Through its holistic, well-structured, critical, in-depth approach and proposed solutions, the book will appeal to policy makers, political scientists, economists and business professionals. Its reading will also benefit undergraduate students with a background in public policy or environmental science.

Iva Mihaylova (University of St Gallen)


The book is a study of the emergence of a diverse, fragmented and polycentric media environment facilitated by the rise of digital communication. Andrew Chadwick offers a new analytical approach of hybrid media system to understand the rapid transformation in political communication in Britain and the US. The coming of newer media doesn’t lead to the displacement of older media, but rather facilitates the emergence of a hybridised media system. New publics created by the rise of newer media are often the hybrid as they are also consumers of older media: ‘partly amalgamated combinations of groups, organizations, and social norms and practices that were previously associated with older media’ (p. 24).

Along with the rapid rise of new technologies and the internet, the ‘single daily news cycle’ (p. 62) has become a thing of the past. The involvement of mass participation in the creation of online content demonstrates that no longer do political elites alone constitute political events. Rather, non-political elites contribute equally in shaping political events, which has transformed power relationships in news production. Drawing upon the cases of Bullygate, Britain’s first ever live televised prime ministerial debates in the 2010 general election, and the 2008 Obama campaigns, the author shows that there is a certain degree of interdependence between broadcast media, the press and digital media actors, as well as grassroots activism in the ever-expanding political communication environment.

Chadwick demonstrates the emergence of diverse sources of frames and perceptions that have enabled some activist audience members to make strategic, timely and swift interventions in the production of media content. This also makes it difficult to identify the creator of the events or news. Rather, most of the events are now co-created with different actors being involved simultaneously – political actors, media actors and publics – as communication now takes place in multiple places simultaneously. The case of WikiLeaks is a clear rupture in the evolution of news making and political mobilisation, and shows how digital technologies can enable even a small group of individuals to wield ‘substantial organizational power’ (p. 96).

Chadwick provides a compelling analysis of the complexity of hybrid media systems where political life is mediated through the web of networked actions involving offline and online communication as well as grassroots activism. This transformation which has been facilitated by digital technologies has broken the ‘elite political-media nexus’ and enabled ordinary citizens to make strategic interferences in order to safeguard the public interest. The book is a valuable contribution to the debates on the rupture caused by digital technologies which has changed the power relations in society, and it would be useful for scholars of political communication, social theory, media studies and comparative politics.

Taberez Ahmed Neyazi (Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi)


In Warrior Geeks, Christopher Coker centres himself upon the nature of warfare, and more notably the manner in which humans have both shaped and been shaped by this phenomenon. In investigating this relationship Coker aims to show that, while in the past warfare has been a very human activity, shaping us as much as we shape it, the future state of this symbiosis threatens to be very different. The advent of modern technologies, along with the manner in which the boundaries between technology and the humans utilising them has become blurred, together threaten a post-humanist state in which all that is human is purified from
what until this point has been an intrinsically human act.

These conclusions are demonstrated through charting the historical evolution of warfare from Ancient Greek to modern-era conflicts. This approach at once demonstrates the classical relationship of humans with warfare and how socio-technological developments are beginning to alter that interaction.

The first three chapters of the book draw heavily on classical readings of Greek history and philosophy. By also charting a course of historical explanation through some of the most prominent philosophical minds of the past several centuries, including Descartes and Habermas, Coker uses these initial chapters to set the stage for his further analysis, describing the Greek form of warfare as well as his envisaged post-human state of warfare. These chapters demonstrate the qualitative, philosophical approach of the rest of the chapters, which proceed to demonstrate how particular methods of technologically advanced warfare interact with this process of dehumanisation as the Greek, human ideal of war is replaced with the post-human one.

Coker’s argument is compelling. His description of warfare as intrinsically human – demonstrated through numerous sources of literature across a wide time period – is difficult to dismiss. Likewise the description of a post-human form of warfare, where the Geeks have supplanted the Greeks with their notion of war as ‘the heart of their humanity’ (p. xi) is similarly well supported.

Coker’s first three chapters, in which the trends of human relations with warfare are laid out, are well written; however, one might object that they are overly drawn out as major points are made well and then re-asserted with slight variation. The final chapters of the book, however, dealing with cyber warfare, robotics and biologically altered soldiers, and discussing how these technologically-driven forms of war are tipping the balance of relations in warfare away from the human and towards a human abstraction, make for a captivating read.

Adam Drew
(Royal Holloway, University of London)


The Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity might not be the first attempt in the English language at compiling works dedicated to the concept of human dignity, but it is by far the most ambitious and comprehensive. The Handbook consists of 62 contributions from a variety of fields and subfields within philosophy, theology, history, legal studies and bioethics. The book has three main aims: first, to provide a copious understanding of a concept that, despite its centrality in the configuration of contemporary societies, is still seen by some as a secondary concern; second, to depict the main debates regarding the origins, meanings and role of human dignity in current social and political debates; and third, to become a reference point not only for scholars and students unfamiliar with the concept, but also for critics and advocates of human dignity alike.

The editors of the Handbook acknowledge the monumental character of their task and remind us that this book is not the definitive work on the topic. Rather, they suggest it should be seen only as ‘an opening publication’ (p. xxi) that will inspire further research on the concept. The editors also alert us to the book’s pragmatic take on the general understanding of dignity. By this is meant that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights functions as a starting point for a good number of the discussions within the book. Such a pragmatic orientation could therefore become a point of contention for audiences not interested in ‘legalistic’, ‘rights-driven’ or ‘too-Westernised’ approaches to dignity. It is also important to note that such a monumental work is not exempt from disparities. Although each piece functions within the aims of the Handbook, some of them are merely descriptive whereas others are exceptionally thought-provoking and original. These disparities are not fatal, although some readers would probably wish that less-known topics, perspectives and authors had been given a more detailed treatment. Despite these criticisms, it must be said that the Handbook fills a gap in the literature on guidance.
books by treating human dignity in an eloquent, pluralistic and yet non-condescending style.

Annemi Chaparro
(University of Essex)

Note


The roots of contemporary urban riots are closely linked to the institutions of state violence, especially the police. From the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles to the riots in Bristol or in France, the inciting events are all spectacular instances of police violence on the poor, racialised and marginalised populations, inhabiting particular areas of cities. Enforcing Order is a rigorous ethnographic study of an anti-crime squad operating in one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse banlieues of Paris, where such riots have taken place. By documenting and illuminating the routines of the police, as well as their interactions and encounters in this banlieue, it uncovers the everyday violence, racism and discrimination inherent to the police practices.

Didier Fassin uses ethnography not only to document a single reality of a particular Parisian banlieue, but also to provide informative conceptualisations that can bring light to urban policing in general. Most notably, to understand the dynamics between poor minority youths and the police, he uses Althusser’s concept of ‘interpellation’, showing how policing is a means to subject formation, marking the immigrant and the racially differentiated poor youth of the banlieues as the subjects of the state rather than its citizens. This subject formation is a violent and racist one, and not simply due to police officers’ prejudices. It derives, as Fassin argues, from larger political discourses that label minorities as the source of the problems of neoliberal French society which are then perpetuated by an institutional structure that treats police violence over minority youth as an acceptable form of intervention – visible in the non-punishment of the cases of police misconduct and ill treatment. In turn, policing is not about creating security, but a particular form of order in which the use of force and violence against the ‘enemy population’ of that particular order is produced, while security is reserved for the ‘real’ citizens.

Enforcing Order’s richness does not reduce its accessibility. Fassin’s storytelling and style of writing makes this ethnographical study accessible for all kinds of readers. This is, in fact, a conscious choice by the author: ethnographies of the police are imperative to ‘democracy’ (as he titles his last chapter), which can only flourish where public debate and scrutiny over such institutions of force exist. Indeed, the book is addressed to all concerned: the police, the public and academics.

Zeynep Gonen
(Beykent University, Istanbul)


This is an edited collection of fourteen chapters which explore the contribution of the University of Oxford to the discipline of politics. It is divided into two main parts. The first focuses on the development of the discipline as a whole, while the second examines subfields such as electoral studies and international relations. Chapters in both parts combine coverage of institutional factors (such as the comparatively late development of departmentalisation at Oxford) with discussion of the work of particular academics and their ideas. Teaching is mainstreamed within this account, with frequent references to how the PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) curriculum has evolved as part of the wider intellectual and organisational developments. Introductory and concluding sections by the editors draw the contributions together and seek to provide explanations for the factors that have shaped political studies at Oxford.

The list of chapter authors is a who’s who of political studies over the last 30 years or more. All appear to
have connections to Oxford, and in this sense, the book is something of an insider’s account. This could have resulted in a lack of ‘relational distance’ (a term used a number of times in the book to refer to the potential problem for Oxford academics of their closeness to political power). This does not prove to be a problem. Authors are able to create a critical distance from their subject matter and on more than one occasion take noticeably different positions from one another in their analysis of issues (see, for example, the chapters by Alan Ryan and Robert Goodin). A further potential issue is the distinctive institutional structure of the university. As an outsider, I felt able to follow most of the institutional manoeuvrings covered, but did feel at some points that a deeper understanding of areas such as the structure of academic posts, college finances and the role of a warden would have allowed even greater insights into the areas discussed.

In summary, this is an important volume which should be read by those who are interested in the development of political studies in the UK. It will also appeal to those who are interested in the development of higher education in general and the University of Oxford in particular.

John Craig
(The Higher Education Academy, York)


During the Second World War, three prominent members of the Frankfurt School – Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse and Otto Kirchheimer – worked as political analysts in the Central European Section of the Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the wartime forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency. This volume contains some of their most important intelligence reports on Nazi Germany as well as texts contributing to a better understanding of National Socialism. Written between 1943 and 1949 and declassified between 1975 and 1976, these documents address a variety of issues ranging from analyses of the Nazi mentality and practice, the persecution of Jews and the nature of political opposition, to the Nuremberg Trials, the denazification process and the building of a new Germany.

In his foreword, Raymond Geuss refers to the complex links between economic power and politics in Nazi Germany, to the Nazi cult of technical rationality, as well as to the contemporary relevance of the Frankfurt School’s discourse on the meaning of democracy and freedom in the socio-political formations of advanced capitalism. Raffaele Laudani, in his introduction, charts the efforts of Neumann, Marcuse and Kirchheimer to bring into the world of intelligence the spirit of the Frankfurt School. The three scholars managed to produce ‘a cohesive interpretation of the Nazi “enemy” with a clear Frankfurt imprint’ and ‘to reconcile their intellectual agenda with the “productivist” exigencies of the American intellectual-military establishment’ (p. 8). However, regarding the democratic reconstruction of post-war Germany, the American authorities were allied with the Christian democratic centre and thus the whole process was deprived of the progressive tone of the leftist anti-Nazi opposition favoured by the Frankfurt group. But they were slightly more successful in influencing the preparation of the Nuremberg Trials. Neumann’s theory of antisemitism as ‘the spearhead of terror’ and the discussion of criminal responsibility and the Führerprinzip gave a theoretical framework for assessing the Nazi atrocities.

Marcuse’s texts on German social stratification, on Nazi leadership and people’s morale, as well as his analyses of both the KPD and the SPD illuminate particular aspects of German society and politics. The discussion of the Nazi plans for domination provides an engrossing account of aggression, conquest and political terror. The volume concludes with an extract from Marcuse’s lengthy report on ‘The Potentials of World Communism’ in which he explores the evolution of communism, its programme, and its assets and liabilities.

This book would be of interest to anyone whose research focuses on Nazism and the Second World War, the Frankfurt School, political theory and intelligence studies. Historians, intelligence experts and psychological warfare analysts would also immensely benefit. Secret Reports on Nazi Germany offers a powerful combination of the thrill of
the ‘secret world’ and the delight of theoretical sophistication.

Stamatoula Panagakou
(University of Cyprus)


This is a well-written and very useful addition to the body of literature on regulation, and is part of Palgrave’s excellent series on public management. The introduction situates the book firmly in the context of ‘the rise of the regulatory state’ (p. 2), taking a thoroughly modern stance on the interface between the state, public regulators and private actors. More importantly, it also argues forcefully for approaching the subject in a more holistic fashion. It challenges the notion of regulation as ‘a technocratic and apolitical process’ (p. 8), and the consequent implication that the ‘exciting’ debates all occur during the preceding legislative phase. Rather, it sets out to expose the many subtle trade-offs, unintended consequences, pressures, problems and remedies that exist in this activity. In short, it encourages the reader to ‘think like a regulator’ (p. 9) – an exercise in which the reader is ably assisted during the remainder of the book.

An excellent chapter then lays out four theoretical perspectives on regulation, taking the reader through Stiglerian interest group politics to a more sociological account focusing on ‘ideas and world-views’ (pp. 36–9). From there, the authors deftly cover a series of key theoretical and practical debates: alternatives to command-and-control regulation, difficulties in regulating across borders, and the complexities of managing network industries and handling financial risk. Each chapter explains the complexities of these debates via a series of practical scenarios, and in a refreshing approach Lodge and Wegrich take various examples of regulation, or regulatory shortcomings, and transport them to a fictional realm – ‘Amnesialand’. This alternative reality then suffers a financial crisis, experiences problems in regulating its monopoly water supplier and its prison sector, and so on. The guiding principle (‘thinking like a regulator’) runs through these analytical narratives, helping bring together theory, practical problems and empirical cases.

This approach sums up the book’s great strength. For the student of public administration its range and analytical rigour offer very useful entry points into many aspects of regulation. Meanwhile, one can imagine an exasperated professional, wanting to know quite why the regulatory regime she experiences is so ineffective, finding in this book a pithy and engaging explanation; ditto – for the other side of the regulatory fence: the under-resourced and equally exasperated practitioner. For both audiences – the academic and the professional – the fluent tone makes light work of often very complex issues of policy making.

John-Paul Salter
(University College London)


The early years of the twenty-first century have witnessed violence and horrific actions by terrorists and fundamentalists, who have invaded, killed, captured and mutilated in the name of their Islamic belief(s). What are the reasons for such violence among Muslims and non-Muslims? How can Muslims pose their Islamic values and cope with modern thought? How is it possible for people to reject and dissolve contemporary fundamentalism? These questions are answered in a book by Abdelwahab Meddeb, originally written in French in 2009 and entitled Pari de Civilisation.

Some Qur’anic verses ostensibly outline an ethical or social pattern that leads Muslims towards developing their power through war or vice versa. For instance: ‘Fight those who do not believe in Allah …’ (Q 9:29) is known as the ‘War Verse’ and has been referred to by many Islamic extremist movements in the Middle East and Africa. In this regard, Meddeb states that ‘this is the verse invoked, for example, by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) terrorists who massacred the monks of Tibhirine in Algeria in 1996. The same verse is said to grant religious legitimacy to the suicide bombers of Hamas in Israel’ (p. 14). Later on, in Chapter 3 ‘On the Arab Decline’, Meddeb continues to define Islamism and Arabism as well as their direct or indirect influence on the emergence of various inadequate and impoverished interpretations of Islam. It seems the author endeavours to open a new window...
towards the potential of Islamic civilisation that has been concealed behind fundamentalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and which has led to the manifestation of a rough picture of Islam in the West. The author also states: ‘One way to fight against fundamentalism, therefore, is to acknowledge Islam in all its complexity and its contributions to universal culture’ (p. 50).

The six chapters with two appendices – including a dialogue with Christian Jambet and an analysis of Obama’s speech in Cairo in 2009 – together make this book a fascinating reference and one to recommend to enthusiastic scholars of Islamic studies, political science, the Arab World and Middle Eastern studies. Moreover, Meddeb’s work very suitably supplements recent activities dealing with the revival of Muslim thought.

Majid Daneshgar
(University of Malaya)


The book starts with an explanation of the basic concepts of complexity theory, including emergence, self-organisation, co-evolution and system dynamics. According to the author, even the term ‘complexity’ itself needs some clarification. For example, Göktug Morçöl does not accept that the term is something narrowly or merely related to large numbers, but it is mostly related to multiple interactions and connections. The same is true for the term ‘randomness’. ‘Complexity’ should be defined with reference to nonlinearity, rather than randomness, because even random systems can produce a complex pattern. Furthermore, the author discusses the epistemological differences between other theories and schools. At this point, the book contrasts with Newtonian/positivist assumptions. Finally, the author offers and discusses specific methods of complexity theory. Considering the contents, the book can be seen as an attempt to challenge Christopher Pollitt’s critical arguments regarding the epistemology, methods and concepts of complexity theory.

Morçöl successfully makes a link between complexity theory and public policy. ‘Public policy’ is described as ‘an emergent, self-organization, and dynamic complex system’ (p. 9). The basic question of the book is to solve the macro-micro or agency-structure problem. Concepts do matter and the term ‘emergence’ is presented as a solution to the micro-macro problem. In order to support his position, the author especially employs Anthony Giddens’ structuration and Niklas Luhmann’s social system theory. The book’s explanation of ‘emergence’ does not negate the power of the individual actor’s capacity of self-organising, while insisting on the structure’s enabling and constraining power on the self-conscious individual actor’s behaviour. Morçöl’s approach breaks the causal link between policy actions and outcomes. Self-conscious and intentional actors cannot produce planned outcomes due to the multitude of actors and the system’s autonomy; therefore, unintended consequences should be a crucial part of public policy analysis in terms of nonlinearity. Such an approach also rejects the notion of equilibrium, and defines the policy system as a dynamic process.

All in all, this book is not only a debate on complexity theory and public policy, but it should also be seen as a debate on social sciences in general. It is suitable for both newcomers and advanced readers. For newcomers, the first part can be seen as a kind of literature review and elaboration of the basic concepts. The second part is appropriate for postgraduate students who are interested in the epistemology debate. The final part on methodology may attract the attention of advanced readers.

Hasan Engin Sener
(Yıldırım Beyazıt University)


The bursting of the real estate bubble in 2007 and the subsequent stock market crash shook fiscal stability across all layers of the US. The 2012 Chicago Urban Forum at the University of Illinois, themed ‘metropolitan resilience in time of economic turmoil’, deployed metropolitan regions as a new front against wide-ranging challenges considering their capacities to ‘adjust, adapt right-size, react and respond’ (p. 13). Following the event, this book reveals the potential of
metropolitan regions to cure, but also to transcend, endemic impasses beyond their respective borders. It is stated that 85 per cent of US gross domestic product is generated within/in relation to cities and metropolitan regions (p. 6). The extent of these areas provides a perceived convenience of their ability to cluster industries due to existing systems of infrastructure, prevalent tax and regulatory regimes with buyer-supplier networks, and the accessibility of the workforce.

The book’s contributors competently present a diachronic apprehension of urban places and develop their themes while defining essential fields, actions and actors in the time of the ‘new normal’. It represents a solid effort to diagnose complexity and ultimately it puts forward a balanced departure from orthodox fiscal and administrative norms, finely tuned in line with the parameters of the city, such as socio-economic composition. The emphasis on the competence of ‘centralised’ formations and formulations is worth mentioning in particular (pp. 37, 44, 85, 106, 121 and 138). This stress is balanced against the vital role assigned to civic networks and the engagement with ‘unnatural bedfellows’ for the optimisation of resilience.

The ‘big picture’ concerning infrastructure investments and the overview of budget theory and techniques is refreshing; the (re)assessment of the status of social safety nets and pensions strengthens the argument. Casting institutions and information as ‘feasible and constructive’ mechanisms could not be more apt. The criticisms expressed towards pro-cyclical, quick-fix policies, special tax provisions and ‘illusions’ of property development illustrate the kind of gems buried inside the book. Furthermore, its proposed job-centred strategy as a driver for development is remarkable. The chapters on the legacy costs of earlier decisions and ‘collaboration as new competition’ lead readers to devote their attention to something new. Still, the recurrent criticism of more fragmented local government settings cannot avoid falling into the ‘trap of scale’ (pp. 37 and 114). Ultimately, this well-written and insightful book is a must-read for scholars and students of politics and economics as well as policymakers.

Zeynep Ceren Akyüz
(Development Studies, SOAS/University of London)


Human-centred notions of development have slowly taken over in academic discussions, displacing the previous economic-centred ones. Welcomed as an advance from narrow growth-oriented notions, in general, human-centred understandings have reinforced the notion that development should occur within the current liberal-capitalist global framework – albeit an improved one.

Benjamin Selwyn joins the human-centred trend in development studies from an alternative, critical, perspective. In The Global Development Crisis, he advocates for a ‘labour-centred conception of development’, one that understands that capitalist markets are ‘not neutral arenas of exchange or benign spheres of developmental opportunities’ (pp. 2–3). Selwyn argues that capitalist social relations preclude the possibility of achieving real human development, and explores different theoretical perspectives that may help us address this limitation. In his engagement with these theoretical perspectives on development (that include List, Trotsky, Schumpeter, Gerschenkron, Polanyi and Sen) Selwyn prioritises a Marxist lens that, he argues, allows us to conceive ‘a vision of human development free from exploitation’ (p. 208). In this vision, the labouring class regains its associational and structural powers to advance a human-centred notion of development.

Selwyn lucidly discusses the contributions of the aforementioned political economists, whom he identifies as central in advancing notions of human development. In each case, he focuses on both providing a comprehensive account of their main contributions, as well as arguing how a Marxist understanding of development would further advance and improve the given analysis. Against common criticisms, Selwyn’s use of Marx is explicitly qualified as going beyond a dogmatic perspective with its deterministic and economistic approach, which sees development following a Eurocentric and linear pattern. Rather, Selwyn successfully argues for a version of Marx’s vision of development that recognises the nonlinearity of development, the richness of development beyond economic determinism and the agency of development located in the global struggles of the labouring classes.
Within the myriad discussions of Human Development that do not question or transcend capitalist notions of development, Selwyn’s book offers a critical and refreshing analysis. Yet while his perspective on the role of the labouring classes in achieving human development is a welcome and necessary perspective, the focus on labour struggles does not seem to give sufficient space or attention to equally central elements that the liberal-capitalist framework of human development relegates. For example, this labour-centred development analysis would benefit greatly from the alternative notions of development currently being espoused by indigenous movements in the Global South, taking into account environmental, sustainability and gender concerns. Selwyn’s cautious indication that such concerns will be addressed in future research projects makes this book an insightful and necessary first step in the right direction.

Ana Carballo
(University of Westminster)

Britain and Ireland

Public Policy Investment: Priority-Setting and Conditional Representation in British Statecraft

Politicians and City investors are generally disliked by the public. Anthony Bertelli and Peter John’s Public Policy Investment contends that they have something else in common: that political leaders, like fund managers, are responsible for investing in and managing portfolios, for interpreting risk and for responding to markets. The essential difference is that these responsibilities in the political sphere revolve around the public–policy agenda.

The book is an offshoot of the UK Policy Agendas Project, on whose data it draws. It begins with a narrow and deceptively simple question: Why have successive British governments prioritised some policies over others? The general answer is wide-reaching in its implications. All governments invest time and attention in certain policy areas. The combined package of these investments is akin to a ‘policy portfolio’, which governments manage on behalf of the public by periodically altering their legislative programme. The policy investments that governments make – or rather the level of attention they choose to devote to certain issues – are a response to divided, unclear and volatile public preferences, as well as the changing objective economic and political conditions that differentially impact on policy domains. Such responses underpin a process of ‘conditional representation’, and governments are re-elected or defeated at the polls, in part, on the quality of their responses and their ability to invest attention wisely – in short, their ‘statecraft’.

The book’s conceptual framework is likely to be unfamiliar to many students of British politics, especially its political executive. Some readers may also be deterred by the complexity of the framework’s details, as well as the empirical measures employed. Yet, readers should persevere with this highly original and sophisticated study. It is thought-provoking and sheds new theoretical and empirical light on the policy choices that recent governments and prime ministers have made. To be sure, the book raises many questions about which more needs to be said – not least the role of the mass media in transmitting and translating preferences and policy investments, how well the model works beyond the 1971–2000 period, and how far actual intra-executive discussions and decisions accord with the logic of policy investment. Nevertheless, this book is an important contribution to British political science. Many advances in the study of British politics seem to be imported from the US; the ideas in this book about why governments are responsive and what makes for effective ‘statecraft’ are very likely to be exported.

Nicholas Allen
(Royal Holloway, University of London)

Britain and the War on Terror: Policy, Strategy and Operations
by Warren Chin. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 240pp., £55.00, ISBN 9780754677802

This book by Warren Chin addresses an important issue, which has received little interest from researchers until now – namely the UK’s participation in the Global War on Terror. The timeframe studied ranges from 2001 to 2010, which is a very short period, but it is well analysed in detail by Chin. Meanwhile, the geographic frame relates to the conduct of this war both in the Middle East and on the home front.

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The book comprises eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusion, in which the author develops a gradual approach to the topic, beginning with the British framework for conducting the War on Terror, followed by an analysis of the confronting framework of al-Qa’eda, the British decision to go to war, the Iraq and Afghanistan operations and, finally, the confrontation of terrorism on home ground. The aim of the book is specified very clearly on page 3 of the introduction: to ‘provide a critical analysis of the UK’s conduct of this war’, and Chin’s major research question focuses on whether the UK’s strategy has enough elements to be considered a grand one or not. In order to do that, he has to explain why the British strategy and operations failed – an aspect about which he reminds the reader constantly, turning the book into a rounded work.

In his approach to answering this question, the author resorts to the use of definitions which he then demonstrates/deconstructs to the verge of breaking them to small pieces in order to reach a better argumentative construction for his hypotheses. Chin’s work is structured case by case, starting with the basic historical elements. This deconstruction process is intended to leave no trace of doubt on any of the hypotheses to which he resorts within the main body of the work. Additionally, his approach is very synthetic, which makes it easier for the reader to extract the essential elements of the topics discussed. In this regard, the book is highly recommended for students and early career researchers.

Taking everything into consideration, Warren Chin’s book is an incredibly well-documented and well-written piece of research, extremely valuable to researchers, but also accessible to the lay reader. The writing is fluent and energetic, making this book a strong recommendation for all those interested in British security strategy and planning.

Oana Elena Branda
(University of Bucharest)


This book focuses on the role of the British Intelligence Services in the latter days of the British Empire. It focuses on the years between 1948 and 1975, concentrating on how the intelligence gathered was used and how it ‘impacted on wider foreign, defence and colonial policy, and how assessments were shaped by competing understandings of broader international forces and threat frameworks’ (p. 3). This is clearly a very complex and extensive topic, so Rory Cormac has sensibly focused his work on four case studies of varying colonial nations from that period: Malaya, Cyprus, Aden and Oman. The case studies are tackled in this order so as to provide a chronological structure to the publication while also teasing out the various themes over the period. As Cormac himself states, the case studies ‘serve as vehicles to explore broader themes and issues relating to intelligence assessment and threat conceptualisation’ (p. 6). In the final chapter, Cormac focuses on the Joint Intelligence Committee and considers both the flaws and strengths of the intelligence community over the time period.

While this might be a slightly dry topic for some, Cormac writes with enthusiasm and this makes for an accessible and engaging book. His structure works very well and allows the reader to become engaged in both the regional peculiarities of each country as well as the overarching reach of the forces of Empire and its administrators and supporters. Cormac also notes that the Cold War is ever present and the implications of this to the British, who were constantly fearful that the shadow of communism might envelop their much treasured (and eventually much maligned) Empire, are outlined within the pages.

My only real criticism is the timescale of this book. Cormac has focused very much on the dying years of Empire, and with good reason. This has allowed him to focus on the activities of British Intelligence within the Cold War era without the distractions of world war or very large-scale domestic uprising (such as those in India or Palestine, for example). It would have been very interesting to see how his conclusions would stand up in earlier colonial periods and in larger, more unsettled areas. However, what Cormac has achieved here is an interesting, well-written, academically solid book which I heartily recommend to students of the period.

Victoria Honeyman
(University of Leeds)


Patrick Diamond is a political practitioner turned academic, almost a poacher turned groundskeeper. This provides an interesting slant to his work, something he himself acknowledges. In this book, Diamond has used an ‘eclectic’ array of literature, 52 hour-long interviews, unpublished papers, diaries, memoirs and Select Committee reports to inform his study of New Labour (pp. 8–9). His aim is to focus on the ‘statecraft of Labour’ – a term recently utilised by Ed Miliband. Diamond aims to focus on the traditional elements of such a study – the continuity and the change – in this case within the core executive in Britain. The book is separated into two large sections: the theory of governing Britain and the practice of governing Britain. This enables the reader to dip into the book for selective passages if needed, while still allowing a more engaged reader to create a more complete picture.

Diamond uses a form of critical realism in his writing that fits well with his argument and conclusions. His theoretical passages are very strong and his wider conclusions are very well argued. His writing style is engaging and enjoyable to read. He paints a fairly familiar picture of panic and ignorance among New Labour when entering Number 10 for the first time, suggesting that their new methods, of moving power and influence to special advisers, for example, were a product of that rather than a deliberate attempt to reduce the power of the civil service. These ideas have been discussed before by others, but Diamond adds to this existing work by suggesting that the result was not a reduction in power, more a reorganisation. He argues that the increase in special advisers by the Blair government and the perceived sidelining of the House of Commons has not reduced the power of the core executive. Instead, that power has been transferred to other places and individuals.

I found this book to be very interesting and a worthy addition to any British politics bookshelf, but not groundbreaking. The ideas contained within can be seen in other works; while they are perhaps not housed within one single work, they are definitely discussed elsewhere. None of this dilutes Diamond’s work, as he has produced an engaging and interesting book.

Victoria Honeyman
(University of Leeds)


Public Services: A New Reform Agenda is an attempt to provide an elaborate analysis of public services. This project is largely based on British politics where public services play a crucial role. The editors use an interdisciplinary approach. The fundamental enquiry that the book tries to address is how public services should be structured so that they provide maximum benefit to citizens, and how they need to be delivered, because the world is witnessing a changing relationship due to migration, new gender roles and new patterns of inequality, among others. The book provides a theoretical perspective and identifies the prospects of state intervention for the betterment of its citizens: on the one hand, by enhancing citizens’ capabilities (moving on from Amartya Sen), and on the other hand, by implementing policies in the arena of health, education, social security and so on.

This volume offers a series of contributions by various authors on how future public services must be envisaged, and it has been divided into three sections. The first section tries to elucidate what should be provided as the basis of public services and what they should pursue. This section tries to provide a relational perspective where neither the state nor citizens nor the market are solely responsible, but where instead in today’s context they should work collectively or mutually towards a goal.

The second section expounds a new public services ecology, which highlights how not only individual actors, but the system as a whole contribute equally because they are in a structural configuration that works with respect to one another. Nonetheless, the centre still exercises the core responsibility for enhancing the capacity, capability and culture of the system; and its role in managing the overall performance of the system and also in providing the strategic initiative is decisive.

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The third section tries to address the fiscal challenges in the era of globalisation that a state confronts. Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and various forms of social exclusion have become even more embedded because the fruits of globalisation have not been those that were envisaged. The trickle-down effect is weak when it comes to the betterment of the lower sections of society.

Although this volume is a great initiative in the field of public services, it could have been more coherent in its presentation. Sometimes it becomes ambiguous as it tries to deal with many issues all at once. On the whole it seems that the contributions in the book are appropriate for their intended audience.

Sakshi Bahuguna
(Jawaharlal Nehru University)


The question of whether or not we are witnessing a strengthening of English national identity has, in recent years, been largely displaced by the question of what the implications of such a shift in the collective consciousness might be. The potential repercussions cut across party politics, constitutional reform and cultural matters, as well as a whole host of public policy issues. Michael Kenny’s new book is the most ambitious and significant work in this field to date. In a masterly survey he amasses and reviews the available evidence from a host of sources. These include academic literature from political scientists, sociologists, historians, literary scholars and others; data from opinion polls, speeches, interviews, think tanks and the blogosphere; and a rich seam of popular culture, including music, visual arts and writing. Kenny synthesises this material into a compelling account of the politics of English nationhood in the context of declining attachment to the notion of the UK as a union state.

The book begins by revisiting the renewal of Englishness in the 1990s, which, importantly, predated the devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly by the New Labour government. Kenny then sketches out three main interpretations that he suggests have dominated the debate. These are a progressive view associated particularly with Tom Nairn’s break-up of Britain thesis, a conservative view that traces Englishness to an ancient historical lineage and an ‘Oakeshottian perspective’ (p. 74) that has a Whiggish feel to it, being ‘closely orientated to the existing constitutional settlement and the forms of thinking underpinning it’ (p. 76). Subsequent chapters consider recent trends in English national identity (e.g. in relation to class and ethnicity), the renaissance of a cultural dimension to Englishness, and political challenges such as resolving the constitutional imbalances caused by devolution and disputes over the Barnett formula, which is used to allocate funding between the nations of the UK. The picture that materialises is one of the advent of English identity as an increasingly influential dynamic in British politics, with which the mainstream parties are struggling to come to terms. Yet it is essential that they do, as ‘a vital struggle over the political soul of Englishness is steadily emerging as the most important of the various English questions that now need to be faced in British politics’ (p. 243).

Richard Hayton
(University of Leeds)


At a time when the modern state is faced with the pressures of austerity and a rising anti-politics sentiment among its citizens, The Blunders of our Governments takes on the important task of cataloguing and diagnosing the many policy failures of British government. In this book, Anthony King and Ivor Crewe provide readers with twelve readable ‘horror stories’ of British public policy, linking them to defects in cultures and practices prevalent in Westminster and Whitehall. Its format makes it accessible for a popular audience, but means that it frustratingly fails to make any reference to the substantial amount of research that exists on policy disasters. Because of this, a lot of what is already known about the dysfunctional pathologies of modern British government is overlooked. For example, Michael Moran’s 2003 The British Regulatory State provides a compelling account of why policy catastrophes occur in an era in which governments are supposed to be ‘smart’ and risk-aware. Similarly, many of the arguments made by Patrick Dunleavy in 1995 (‘Policy Disasters: Explaining the UK’s Record’, Public Policy and Administration, 10 (2), 52–70) about large-
scale, avoidable policy mistakes being endemic to Britain’s political/administrative system are revisited here, and some of the same cases are even drawn upon.

In some respects, The Blunders of our Governments is in line with a healthy tradition of self-deprecating tendencies of the British ruling class, which has endured a crisis of self-confidence since the breakup of the British Empire and in successive decades of crisis of the economy and political institutions. King and Crewe’s thesis is premised on the belief that governments mess up too much, and that this ailment is distinctly British in its origins. On the other hand, it perpetuates a dangerous in-group view of the ruling club – based on the stories told by key actors – without asking searching questions about the tools that governments opt to use and broader trends in modes of delivery of public services for the modern state, or why these do not avert policy blunders.

The book’s lack of reference to comparative examples is similarly symptomatic of this insularity, as too is the lack of systematic analysis of evidence to back up the far-reaching assertions offered. As with any account written by insiders with connections to the political elite, this book is highly revealing of an outlook on the challenges of governing, which is rather charming, but which is at the same time disabling. It presents only a faux challenge to the political elite and will readily be embraced by them, as it reflects their own worldview.

Will Jennings
(University of Southampton)


Template for Peace provides a detailed examination of the peace attempts in terms of the policies of governing Northern Ireland. Shaun McDaid highlights the importance of this period by emphasising the significant change in the history of Northern Ireland along with the prorogation of the Northern Ireland parliament (Stormont) by the British government (p. 1).

The book follows a chronological order for investigating the underlying reasons for the conflicts between the parties in terms of the dilemma over direct rule and power-sharing. More particularly, the author critically analyses the White Paper (the Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals) and Sunningdale Agreement and exhibits that there was strong opposition to these resolution efforts through the strikes conducted by the Ulster Workers’ Council. Moreover, the author successfully deepens the analysis through the investigation of the other aspects of this conflict – namely the social and economic crises such as segregation, weak economic growth and sectarianism.

As the book indicates, the Sunningdale Agreement constituted the framework for the peace in Northern Ireland and formed the basis of the Good Friday Agreement. Therefore, the major perception of this book is its focus on the misunderstanding of seeing the Sunningdale Agreement as a lost peace process and the Irish Republican Army’s ceasefire in 1975 as a missed opportunity. In fact, this book successfully interprets the British government’s objective of having an executive constitutional form in Northern Ireland, and the importance of the Sunningdale Agreement as the first accord in which the Irish government recognised Northern Ireland (p. 25).

McDaid effectively demonstrates that the security crisis was the main hindrance which decreased the chances for peace. Additionally, he predominantly argues that, despite claims that there were plenty of options within the decision-making mechanism, the archival documents illustrate the opposite position and show that the only way for a stable Ireland was to continue direct rule until a power-sharing agreement could be recognised.

McDaid provides a comprehensive assessment of the position of several different parties in terms of political, social and economic policies through archival research. His book is recommended to researchers who work on the Northern Ireland peace process as it provides background information on the resolution efforts between the British and Irish governments and political parties.

I. Aytac Kadioglu
(University of Nottingham)


The ongoing threat of dissident republican violence in Northern Ireland is a reminder that, for a small but
committed number of ultras, the ‘war’ for a united Ireland is not over. Consequently, Ireland’s dissidents are attracting increasing academic scrutiny (including work by John Horgan, Martyn Frampton and Jon Tonge). John Morrison’s book adds to this corpus of work through a focus on the impact of organisational splits in the development of dissident republican political and terrorist activity.

In so doing, Morrison takes a long view. The book is not just about contemporary dissident republicans; it tracks the impact of splits on the republican movement over time, since the creation of the Provisional IRA in 1969/70. Interviews with current, or former, republicans (both mainstream and ‘dissident’) provide a rich seam of primary data on which his findings are based. Such work is all the more valuable in light of the recent Boston College tapes controversy, and its implications for securing oral testimony from former combatants.

Methodologically, Morrison has used a ‘variation of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)’ to analyse this data (p. 10). IPA, though, is only briefly introduced at the book’s outset and there is little reference to precisely how it was applied to the data throughout the remainder. However, Morrison’s use of organisational and social movement theory to explain the macro and micro processes of republican splits provides a fresh perspective on the topic.

As with any book, there are inevitably some points of contention. For example, internment was introduced by the Northern Ireland government, not the British parliament, in 1971 – although the British government acquiesced in the decision, and later introduced detention legislation following the onset of direct rule (p. 82). And the book might have benefited from engaging with pioneering works on Irish republicanism (particularly the under-studied Official IRA) by both Sean Swan and Kacper Rekawek.

Overall, however, the book has many strengths. The final chapter, in particular, provides an excellent account of the recent workings of various dissident groups, and explores the nexus between dissident republicanism and criminality – concluding that only dialogue will bring about a cessation of dissonant activity (p. 201). It is not easy to write an innovative book on Irish republicanism. Morrison, however, has managed to do just that. With its combination of theory and interview data, the book will prove a valuable addition to scholarship about the ideological evolution of those who continue to engage in, or support, the use of violence for political ends in Ireland.

Shaun McDaid
(University of Huddersfield)

Europe


This book summarises eleven articles that were first published in a special issue of West European Politics in 2012. It adds a new perspective to the study of Europeanisation as it does not solely focus on the EU’s top-down impact on domestic structures in its member states, but also includes a horizontal dimension of Europeanisation in order to investigate the impact of the EU on policies and institutions of new member states, accession candidates, neighbourhood countries and other regions of the world. Therefore, the authors of this edited volume embed Europeanisation in the wider context of research on transnational diffusion and analyse ‘to what extent policies and institutions of the European Union spread across different contexts’ (p. 1).

The articles in this special issue are organised into three groups. While the first group of articles sheds light on the direct influence mechanisms of the EU (e.g. coercion, socialisation, persuasion) on new member states and accession candidates, the second group deals with the European Neighbourhood countries that do not have an accession perspective. The dependent variable of these two groups of articles is domestic institutional change, particularly with regard to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In contrast, the articles in the third group focus on regional institutional change as the dependent variable – namely the degree to which regional integration and integration efforts follow EU models. These articles address emulation and thus more indirect mechanisms of diffusion.

Börzel and Risse conclude that sufficient evidence for both the EU’s impact on domestic or regional institutional change in its member states, neighbourhood countries and beyond and some diffusion of EU
institutional models of regional integration can be found in the individual articles. Although its impact is ‘patchy, often shallow but certainly not spurious’ (p. 193), it is nevertheless worthwhile to integrate Europeanisation research into the larger context of transnational diffusion. However, the articles also show some limits of diffusion approaches in the social sciences which tend to favour structure over agency and therefore focus on institutional convergence and isomorphism rather than on variation in institutional outcomes (p. 204).

Overall, From Europeanisation to Diffusion provides a comprehensive account of integrating Europeanisation research into the larger literature of diffusion and it will be of great interest to scholars and students of European politics.

Eva Oller
(Frei Universität Berlin)


Ruslan Dzarasov is a Moscow-based Russian economist whose intimate knowledge of the Western scholarly tradition has enabled him to produce a book that can be understood internationally. Another reason why The Conundrum of Russian Capitalism stands out among its peers is the attempt of the author to fuse a Marxist understanding of societal production and distribution with Western political economy. Although the resulting theoretical approach does not stand on its own, or form a complete and self-sufficient conceptual framework, it does constitute an interesting attempt that is worthy of attention by its peer scholars.

The book focuses on Russian capitalism, establishing the question of why Russian businessmen are not interested in long-term investment, favouring instead short-term inferior investment. Dzarasov argues that the answer may be found in the nature of modern Russian capitalism, which has a binary origin: it has its roots in the by now degenerated bureaucratic Stalinist Soviet system and global, financialised capitalism. According to the author, the key task for major insiders is the extraction of rent through controlling financial flows instead of working effectively and making profits. Insider rent is formed by surplus value. Dzarasov brings a solid empirical base in order to build and support his arguments. Not surprisingly, then, the book contains thirteen tables and 33 figures. The choice of case studies as the major empirical base for the study confirms once again that the volume does not belong to the field of economics, but rather to transitive political economy.

One interesting feature of The Conundrum of Russian Capitalism is its schemes of the dubious enrichment of Russia’s big business and its major insiders. These schemes convey the complexity of interconnections between different financial institutions and production units, ranging from one-day firms and newly emerged financial institutions to old Soviet industrial mastodons.

In conclusion, the author argues in favour of a continental model of corporate governance in Russia, as opposed to the American model. Theory-wise, Dzarasov suggests that in order to serve the needs of modern society, economic thought must not limit itself to the self-sufficiency approach of the market, but instead develop a balanced view, which would include the notion of planning. Given that the author is not a native English speaker, the book may be regarded as well written and – at least in the sense of language – will be an easy read for those who want to learn more about the nature of Russian capitalism.

Ararat L. Osipian
(Vanderbilt University)


At the time of the book’s writing (May 2014) Portugal was about to exit a three-year bailout programme. Under the ‘tutelage’ of the ‘Troika’, the people of Portugal had experienced sweeping austerity and structural adjustment, bringing fundamental societal change in its wake. This edited volume is a timely edition in providing a clear account of the social, political and economic historical development of Portugal up until its twenty-fifth anniversary of accession to the EU in 2011. The aim of the volume is therefore to analyse the effect of the integration process in conditioning a trajectory which brought Portugal, and the wider Eurozone, to the point of crisis.
To fulfil this aim, the volume is split into three parts. The first section covers a wide range of general accounts of political, economic and societal change during the period of integration. This covers areas such as post-revolutionary democratisation, the relationship between economic restructuring and monetary union, and changes to society through family relationships, migration and the welfare state. The second part focuses more closely on specific policy areas which dominate the EU’s agenda. These include the common agricultural policy, trade, EU structural funds and the Lisbon strategy. The third part focuses on the changing foreign policy landscape, identifying this as the area which has been least affected by the integration process. This section covers areas such as a nascent European foreign policy and security identity, changing relationships with old colonial states such as Angola and Brazil, and the growing centrality of Spain in all aspects of Portugal’s development since accession, especially economic. In a couple of chapters evidently bolted on in light of the Eurozone ‘debt crisis’ one chapter is dedicated to lessons to be learnt in light of Portugal’s 25-year experience, along with an account of the crisis itself.

While there is plenty of empirical detail which readers will find useful regarding the changes that have taken place in Portugal, there is an overall analytical lacuna in the book. Almost all the time it is simply assumed that European integration is the dominant driver of change. This may be the case, but the point of academic analysis is surely to explain how and why this happens. Such an explanation does not take place, primarily due to a desire to cover a wide range of topics, creating a situation of quantity over quality.


The reform process of the EU in the first decade of this century, from the Nice Treaty of 2001 to the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, is analysed at great length and in considerable depth in this book. What to some observers may have appeared as a light or troublesome process of ‘muddling through’ is here found to be something quite different – namely a series of rational choice processes where numerous actors participated and interacted on the basis of the principle of rationality and according to decision theory. Two results are emphasised in the book on the basis of most thorough investigations, both theoretically and empirically: first, that Valéry Giscard d’Estaing was the most successful in turning a first-round defeat into final victory; and second, that the Lisbon Treaty is not a minor reform, but instead represents a major overhaul of the EU institutions.

Is this true? To some extent, or at a global level? The EU still does not have a constitutional framework and its popular legitimacy has hardly increased since the Lisbon Treaty came into force in 2009. Yet it is also true that reforms could be implemented by reviving them from the rejected constitutional draft, although again without popular acceptance.

Both the theoretical modelling, which uses Tsebelis’ veto player theory, and the comprehensive empirical enquiry into the preferences of the many players in the long drawn-out process, which deploys two-dimensional scaling of an enormous number of data items, responses and questionnaire results, make for an impressive rational choice book on the EU, which complements other approaches well.

The authors underline the increased decisiveness of the Union as a whole (its group capacity to decide and the increase in winning coalitions) after Lisbon, but they fail to see the important redistribution of voting that has also taken place, especially with regard to Germany. There is no doubt that ‘Deutschland’ is the hegemon of Europe, not only economically but also within the EU Council. This effect (i.e. voting power redistribution and not merely the EU’s increased efficiency through group decisiveness) can only be seen by using the power index approach, which Tsebelis rejects.

I must also say that the impressive empirical enquiries of König et al. could have been presented in a more reader-friendly manner. One hardly understands what the scores −2 to 2 stand for in some of the many diagrams concerning ‘jurisdictions of the EU’ and the ‘institutional rules of the EU’. Tsebelis’ terminology is not unambiguous, as he equates veto player unanimity with policy stability and reductions in veto players’ power with policy instability. This is the
language of the Arrow theorem, which does not fit the EU so well. Too little group decisiveness is probabilistically conducive to policy inertia, whereas more group decisiveness may promote policy change, but this is not a logical necessity.

Jan-Erik Lane
(Public Policy Institute, Belgrade)


European integration is usually taken to stop at the gates of ‘core’ state powers, such as defence, fiscal policy (including taxation), and the structure and design of public administration. This is why the EU is said to be a ‘regulatory’ polity. Beyond the Regulatory Polity? shows, in a less hesitant manner than the title suggests, that the core state powers have been Europeanised, even if in a very differentiated manner, ranging from in-depth Europeanisation of fiscal policy to rather limited Europeanisation of defence policy.

The fundamental contribution of the book is theoretical. The editors and most of the authors of the chapters refine the well-established theory (see e.g. Majone) which considers that European integration is shaped by the interplay of forces ‘demanding’ integration and ‘supplying’ integrative decisions. In the neat framework defined in Chapters 1 and 13, integration ‘demand’ is said to be fuelled by: (a) the inefficiencies and externalities resulting from overlapping national policies; (b) the economies of scale that would result from integration; and the self-reinforcing, (c) quasi-inertial drive to integrate generated by previous decisions. On the supply side of integration, one finds: (a) political actors arguing and deciding publicly; and (b) (much more frequently) non-majoritarian actors (i.e. the Commission, Court of Justice and Central Bank) pushing forward integration by stealth.

When it comes to integration of core state powers, the widespread belief among political actors that integration may have a heavy political price for those favouring it results in a quasi-monopolistic position for non-majoritarian actors (the Commission, Court of Justice and Central Bank) as suppliers of integration. Chapters 10 and 12 document this peculiar dynamics with great analytical precision (so great that at some points, however, it borders on fastidiousness). This creates a major ‘bias’ in favour of integration by stealth, and sets limits on the extent to which capacities can be built at the European level. At the same time, the very invisibility of integration through stealth accounts to a large extent for the march forward of integration into core state competences.

The volume will prove extremely useful, both as a concise and empirically documented update on the state of European integration for professionals, bureaucrats and lecturers, and as a key resource for students engaged in European political or legal studies. Still, the reader may be given leave to miss a more normatively based problematisation of what the core powers making statehood are, and above all, the basis for characterising some powers as core and others as secondary. If the present crisis of the EU has proven anything, it is that such characterisations may be tricky (as is perhaps hinted in Chapter 11).

Agustín José Menéndez
(Universidad de León/Arena, University of Oslo)


The Eurozone crisis that began in 2010 has precipitated a plethora of political economic analysis about why it occurred, and what the appropriate response(s) should be. This volume, situated within the neo-institutionalist literature, is a short volume which adds to this.

Bob Hancké’s primary focus is on how wage formation institutions help explain the crisis. In the run-up to the single currency, coming into force in 1999, wage moderation was enforced across most European countries, witnessing some convergence. However, once independent national central banks had been replaced by the supranational European Central Bank (ECB), wage formation once again diverged, coalescing around two blocs: ‘a highly integrated northern bloc where wage bargaining keeps wage costs under control in all sectors of the economy, and the southern European countries, where labour costs have risen relative to the north’ (p. 60). Hancké therefore
considers that Germany was able to ensure that wage moderation continued when the euro was introduced due to a set of strong wage formation institutions. On the other hand, states such as Portugal or Greece, lacking such institutions, have fared less well. Competitiveness of southern European political economies was hindered, especially by public sector unions, as new freedoms led to wage increases. This in turn led to inflation, further enhancing the calls for more wage increases, creating a vicious circle. In essence then, Hancké’s account rests upon an explanation of lost competitiveness because trade unions, especially in the public sector, were not able to ensure wage moderation due to absent institutional constraints that were present in states such as Germany.

There is much empirical detail that will be of use to analysts of Europe’s political economy in this book. However, the emphasis on national institutional deficiencies – e.g. the inability to moderate wages – generates an analysis of the crisis that plays into the hands of capital by legitimating a reduction in unit labour costs in order to restore competitiveness, which in turn further reduces the wage share of labour across Europe. This is due to the fact that there is no underlying analysis of Europe’s uneven capitalist development, which has conditioned the trajectories that Hancké places so much emphasis upon. This is despite the fact that early in the volume he recognises that such underlying dynamics exist (p. 9), but without any systematic analysis of their importance, instead focusing purely on wage formation. This must be considered a limiting factor for the explanatory potential of this volume.

Jamie Jordan
(University of Nottingham)


For all its faults, the EU has been edging ever closer to a ‘perfect Union’. However, the explosion of legal literature on the ‘constitutionalisation’ of the EU often fails to pull together the various strands of legal theories on the EU or the ‘pluralistic’ nature of the EU. In *Constitutional Pluralism in the EU*, Klemen Jaklic has been able to gather under one roof with great lucidity the diverging constitutional legal pluralist thoughts. The book is at once a manifesto, an inter-theoretical assessment and a set of guiding principles for the (superior) pluralism of the EU as an entity, a power player in international law and politics, a legal subject of both national and supra-national law, and moreover a pluralist federal state. The book maps the corpus of constitutional pluralism discourse as espoused by renowned scholars such as modern Scottish ‘enlighteners’ Neil MacCormick and Neil Walker, or by other Europeans, such as Joseph Weiler, Mattias Kumm and Miguel Maduro on the European project, thoughtfully compiling and analysing their arguments. Jaklic sometimes agrees with certain strands of the arguments articulated by these modern enlighteners and sometimes tears apart those very same arguments. The end result is a form of constitutional legal philosophical pluralism injected with ‘respect’, ‘religion’, ‘peoples’ and other strands in a pluralistic society.

In navigating the labyrinth of constitutional pluralism, using an Ariadne’s thread, Jaklic has been able to deconstruct the branches of pluralism and rescue constitutional pluralism ‘into the sufficiently distinct and superior new branch of constitutional thought’ (p. 251). Chapter 9 contains Jaklic’s proposal for this new superior conception of pluralism for the future development of a European constitutional order (where constitutional sources straddle ‘heterarchy’ [pluralism] and ‘hierarchy’ [monism]) that is more universal and inclusive (i.e. offering genuine equality).

Although the book is a thoughtful compilation of constitutional pluralism, in particular bringing the various camps together, the shortfall of the book is its own notion of superior constitutional pluralism, which the author has largely developed around democracy. The notion and practice of ‘democracy’ has always been a challenging issue and even where democracy has been exported from Europe to the rest of the world, it is nothing new from which to construct a superior pluralist constitutional order. Although Jaklic suggests in the final chapter that democracy needs to be reinvented a third time, the great expectation of superior constitutional pluralism, in an otherwise well-articulated book, fails to materialise, as is only to be expected, given there is nothing new under the sun.

P. Sean Morris
(University of Helsinki)
In this book, Michael Keating makes a deep and rich reflection about the role of territory in the current political, social and economic situation in Europe. The book opens with an overview of the most relevant theories about the concept of ‘territory’ and its role in the history of the European state (Chapters 1 and 2). In Chapters 3 and 4, Keating examines functional rescaling concerning social, economic and cultural systems, and underlines how territory is still a key factor in political life. The rescaling process has necessarily influenced the role of institutions and how they act in these new social, economic and political spaces that governments try to regulate and control (Chapter 5). After this, Keating investigates how social and economic interests are adapting to rescaling and how this process influences policy making (Chapters 6 and 7). Chapter 8 is devoted to normative theory and it explains the implications of the rescaling process for self-government and social solidarity, while in Chapter 9 there is a deep and precise analysis of the dynamics of this process, especially how regional governments are becoming strong political actors and how constitutional reforms are now a permanent feature in European politics. The book ends with some reflections on how the 2008 economic crisis has affected the rescaling process.

Despite the fact that some social scientists proclaim the end of territory as a way of political and social organisation and are sure to detect a process of progressive de-territorialisation, Keating demonstrates that instead we are facing a rescaling process that allows the migration of functional systems, political processes and economic organisations towards new levels, both supranational and subnational. The author’s study is focused on the emergence of a territorial meso level (the regions) that is growing as an arena for economic development, as a new powerful level of government, as a space for political and social contestation, and as a space for institution building.

Keating’s book has the great value that it deals with a major topic of political science – the territorial organisation of the state and the models of power exercise – that involve the emergence of a new space for political production, contestation and competition. This analysis is particularly interesting because it is done in a strictly comparative way, and this allows the author to sustain its theoretical assumptions with a remarkable quantity of empirical connections. The book is particularly interesting for those scholars involved in federalist and European integration studies, comparative politics and policy-making studies.

Eugenio Salvati
(University of Pavia)


What are morality policies, how do they differ from ‘normal’ public policies and what are the distinct conceptual and empirical challenges they pose? These are the fundamental questions which Christoph Knill et al. set out to answer in their book Morality Policies in Europe: Concepts, Theories and Empirical Evidence. This work is the collective product of a new research project, headed by Professor Knill at the University of Konstanz, which aims to integrate a policy sector more commonly discussed in American political science circles than within the European context. Linking apparently quite disparate social phenomena such as abortion, assisted suicide, stem-cell research, same-sex rights, prostitution, gun ownership, drug consumption and alcohol is never going to be an easy task, but the case is made that policies in these areas remain distinct as they primarily concern disputes over values rather than resources.

The book’s authors, over subsequent chapters, develop the theoretical distinction between morality policies and ‘normal’ policies further, analysing the importance of confessional political parties (Chapters 3 and 4), policy framing (Chapters 5 and 6), path dependence (Chapter 7), institutional religiosity (Chapter 8) and policy entrepreneurs (Chapter 9) as explanatory factors in the development, change or persistence of morality policies. A broad range of empirical evidence is offered to support theoretical and conceptual arguments, including interesting medium-to small-n cross-country, historical comparisons, but evidence is heavily weighted towards Western European cases.

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Knill et al. provide a timely and important contribution to the literature not only in their efforts to broaden the theoretical and empirical base of European public policies, but also in documenting and analysing an interesting public policy trend. The theme that runs through a majority of this book’s chapters is that Europe is experiencing growing permissiveness and that morality policies (or at least the moral terms in which these social phenomena are framed) are in decline – when social permissiveness or liberalisation is resisted, this is done less frequently in moral or religious terms. A great part of the text is dedicated to fundamental definitional and conceptual concerns. While this can occasionally become repetitious, it is an invaluable step in developing the common language, understanding and frames of reference necessary for explaining these contemporary social phenomena. Such phenomena have rarely been studied discretely in such a comprehensive or comparative manner, and this book provides a strong conceptual base for further research.

Adam Standring
(Universidade Nova de Lisboa)


In De-Mystification of Participatory Democracy, Kohler-Koch and Quittkat attempt the Herculean task of scrutinising the mechanics and reality of civil society involvement in the governance of the EU through a normative democratic lens. The authors approach this task with a primary focus on the consultative activities of the European Commission, with reference to the Lisbon Treaty and its somewhat vague legislative basis for civil society opportunity to input its representative views into the governance of the EU. The book’s sections cover the consultation regimes of the Commission, the tension between valuing professional networks and grassroots organisations, and the difficulties faced by civil society organisations in communicating EU policy back and forth between the Commission and their constituents. The book’s fundamental argument is that while participatory democracy has been championed in the rhetoric and written into instruments of the EU as a key tool in the legitimacy of EU policy, there has been little scrutiny of the participatory channels established to achieve such aims.

As with seemingly all pieces of research involving the contested concept of ‘civil society’, the book includes an initial discussion on its definitions and parameters, and the authors provide a reasoned and logical basis for their treatment of it. The concept of ‘participatory democracy’ is also considered, although in much less detail than an enthusiast in this area would hope to see.

The book is rooted in the assumption that participatory democracy is a fundamentally positive ideal, and therefore the demonstration of weaknesses in the operation of participatory democracy that the authors provide could be considered to be crafted somewhat parochially in a conclusion that simply implores the European Commission to do better and the European Parliament to become more linked into the process. Given the growing literature on the EU as a structurally un-democratic web of institutions that cannot be approached in a similar fashion to state-level government, it is surprising that the authors have not engaged with this body of literature; at the very least, to reinforce the findings relating to the lack of plurality in civil society engagement as symptomatic of deficiencies in genuine interest in EU policy by the wider EU polity, or further, to discuss greater democratic deficiencies in the EU’s institutional composition.

That said, this is an enjoyable, focused and well-written volume in an important and under-researched area that will be of value to those interested in the operation of civil society at the EU level.

Rebecca Rumbul
(Cardiff University)


Children of the Dictatorship is the first systematic study in English that deals with the Greek youth movement, and the different groups within it, during the Colonels’ dictatorship of 1967–74, a period which ended with the spectacular student resistance occupying the Athens Polytechnic in November 1973.
By analysing the practices and rhetoric of the student movement during the dictatorship, Kostis Kornetis makes an important observation that signifies the developments taking place within the student movement itself. According to the author, the ‘historical generation’ of the student movement, that of the Lambrakis Democratic Youth (founded in memory of the left-wing politician and activist Grigoris Lambrakis), went out of action at the end of the 1960s. This was followed in 1971 by a new, more radicalised, generation of students, emerging as a reaction to the military junta’s ‘controlled liberalisation’ experiment that sought to ‘educate’ a new generation of students.

What is of great significance is the fact that a comparative perspective is adopted at times, which gives Kornetis the opportunity to avoid an ethnocentric interpretation of events. Comparisons allow Kornetis to draw similarities and demonstrate with great dexterity how the Greek student movement was affected by other student movements in other parts of the world (namely Thailand and Chile) or the similarities which the Polytechnic’s bloody conclusion shares with countries such as Mexico and Czechoslovakia. The author’s comparative approach leads him to the conclusion that there are also cultural elements that differentiate the two student generations. Drawing, implicitly or explicitly, parallels from other countries Kornetis argues convincingly that the new generation of students was defined and influenced by Western European and American cultural points of reference: rock music, movies such as Woodstock and The Strawberry Statement, and the blue jeans outfit instead of ties and suits. All of these demonstrate that the social transformations that were observed in other countries during the ‘Long 1960s’ were also observed in Greece.

To sum up, Kornetis manages to offer a book of the highest standards. It is an impressive work that represents a genuinely innovative and well-balanced contribution not only to the field of Modern Greek history, but also to social and student movements. Furthermore, the book allows for better and more informed debates concerning the impact of cultural politics, and hence it may be used to instigate further comparisons and discussions, not limited to Europe but also with neighbouring Turkey, whose student movement is undergoing significant changes. Finally, there is no doubt that the present study will become an indispensable tool for all those interested in both Greek history and student politics.

Nikos Christofis
(Leiden University)


In this impressive book, Elizabeth Roberts and Kenneth Morrison offer a detailed and up-to-date account of the history of the Sandžak region, located on the borders between present-day Serbia and Montenegro. This is the first full account of the shifting history of this primarily Muslim region and its population, and the authors succeed in their undertaking. Thus, this is a fascinating book leading and guiding the reader through the ups and downs, peaceful and especially conflict-burdened times of the region, showing and analysing the divisions and unfulfilled aims for autonomy. It is an important case study, showing how a regional approach in no way limits the study to local interest.

The two authors have subdivided the task between them: Roberts covers all of the history of the region up to the end of the First World War, whereas Morrison devotes his chapters to the more recent history leading up to 2008. Each of them is responsible for eight chapters, offering valuable information. Over 190 pages, supported by 80 pages of endnotes and bibliography, Morrison and Roberts offer an amazing, sometimes almost overwhelming quantity of facts and information. This rather thin volume is not only an outline of the Sandžak’s history, however; it even offers a general history of Southeastern Europe, consequently placing and locating the Sandžak within the context of the megatrends and developments throughout the Balkans.

One critical remark has to be allowed. Unfortunately, the study lacks a concluding chapter, summing up the findings of the book and emphasising the key factors of the history of the Sandžak. The book ends with a prediction that ‘failure to address the area’s pressing political and economic issues will only serve to preserve the unstable status quo – the Sandžak will remain ... “lost” ’ (p. 190). This might very well be the case. However, a substantial concluding chapter would have been helpful, especially to those readers who...
might be challenged by the quantity of facts offered in an almost encyclopedic style.

Due to the very condensed and facts-heavy approach, this well-written book is mainly aimed at an academic audience. It is very useful to scholars of Balkan studies, whereas students might prefer a less condensed and more general focus. Nevertheless, journalists and practitioners might benefit from this highly important study as well. Six maps are very useful and further the reader’s grasp and understanding of the subject.

Jorgen Kuhl
(A. P. Moller Skolen, Schleswig, Germany)


The book is a collection of articles edited by Susanne Oxenstierna and Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen. The main purpose of the twelve chapters of the volume is an exploration of Russia’s energy challenges up to 2030 and the resulting security implications. In relation to the energy analysis, Chloé Le Coq and Elena Pal’tseva take readers around ‘EU-Russia: Gas Relationship at a Crossroads’, and in so doing explain the energy strategy of Russia for the period up to 2030. They present an overview of the goals and objectives within the context of strategic management of the Russian economy. Then they discuss the prospects of following the strategic guidelines of an energy policy and how the strategic initiatives of energy development could be implemented. ‘Nuclear Power in Russia’s Energy Policies’ is the concern of Oxenstierna. She explains that the accident in Fukushima in 2011 has not changed the resolution of Russia to pursue nuclear power expansion, although Russia lags behind in having sufficient technology and investment for such expansion.

In relation to the second theme of the volume of energy security, ‘Russian Bioenergy and the EU’s Renewable Energy Goals: Perspectives of Security’ is studied by Tynkkynen. He discusses the security implications of the increasing potential of Russian-EU trade in Russian renewable energy resources, which raises new questions regarding EU-Russia energy dependency. The share of Russian bioenergy in the European market is increasing, bringing with it a new angle on diversification of the EU’s energy supply. In ‘Securing Electricity Supply for a Growing Economy’, Laura Solanko provides an examination of Russia as the world’s fourth largest electricity producer and consumer after the US, China and Japan. She offers an overview of the reform process in Russia and places it within an international context by comparing reform outcomes with the experience of other countries. She concludes that the Russian reformed power sector is far superior to the pre-reform structure in Russia. However, it is not clear if the reformed power sector can partially undertake the investments envisaged in the energy strategy up to 2030.

The volume provides fresh knowledge on energy as one of the complex issues facing Russia in the new millennium. The volume should be a welcome read for energy policy makers, scholars, students and those who are interested in energy relations.

Fatemeh Shayan
(University of Tampere)


The book explores ‘what legitimacy (and its lack) mean in the case of the EU’ (p. 1). In contrast to commonly used quantitative opinion surveys, with little insight into what legitimacy means to the respondents, the author opted for a qualitative cross-textual analysis. Claudia Schrag Sternberg analyses long-term patterns and critical shifts in the discourses within, mainly, the European Commission, Council, Parliament and Court of Justice through official documents, speeches and press conferences. In addition, she analyses short-term case studies in the national public sphere – namely France and Germany – based on newspapers and intellectual essays.

Schrag Sternberg’s work highlights the shift from an output-oriented discourse on legitimacy in the EU to an input-oriented discourse. Integration cannot be seen as a Pareto sum game where everybody wins, as the early legitimacy strategies (harmony, consensus and the convergence of interests in a European common good, pursued on the basis of expert rationality) suggested, but one where input-related issues (such as identity and
democracy) also become important. Schrag Sternberg has analysed the mainly elite-dominated discourse of the 1950s up until the 1970s, the first changes in the 1980s, and finally the French and German debates before and after Maastricht. Conclusions in each chapter make the work easily accessible.

The author describes her research design as being exploratory rather than explanatory, where ‘the history of discursive contests over EU legitimacy is not investigated as a dependent or an independent variable’ (p. 8), and she makes explicit that she does not aim to generate testable hypotheses for future research. It remains unclear where Schrag Sternberg defines the added value of her work, if her work is neither identifying causalities nor generating hypotheses. The author points out that she focuses on the terminology, the vocabulary and the semantics used in constructions of a legitimate order of society. The author claims not only to include ‘top-down legitimization discourses, but also their resonance, reception, and contestation in the discourse or their addressees: the member-state publics’ (p. 10). But limiting her analyses to the level of official documents and newspapers, the results are restricted to the elite’s understanding of what legitimacy means in the EU. It would be interesting to explore not only the elite’s perception, but also people’s understanding of legitimacy in the EU. While Schrag Sternberg comments that the research design should go beyond survey research, she does not offer an alternative approach to overcome these limitations.

Keeping these limits in mind, The Struggle for EU Legitimacy is an excellent starting point for everyone interested in the EU’s legitimacy, what legitimacy means for the people and how legitimate the EU is.

Norma Osterberg-Kaufmann
(Leuphana University Lüneburg)


In Constructing European Union Trade Policy, Gabriel Siles-Brügge focuses on the drivers of the 2006 Global Europe agenda of preferential market opening. In the context of a stagnating Doha Round and the proliferation of free trade agreements (FTAs) around the world, the shift in trade strategy led the EU to abandon its ‘multilateralism-first’ stance ‘to actively embrace preferential market opening as the most significant instrument in its offensive trade arsenal’ (p. 2). In order to explain this shift, which, according to the author, occurred in the absence of any institutional change to EU trade governance, Siles-Brügge incorporates important insights of the rational choice institutionalist approach (material determinants) and of existing constructivist approaches (ideational drivers) to develop further a novel constructivist international political economy (IPE) framework. This emphasises the role of discursive drivers, such as neoliberal discourse and ideas of policy makers. The empirical argument aims to explain: (1) what accounts for the EU Commission’s subsequent turn to bilateralism; (2) how the Commission managed to push Global Europe during the economic and financial crises; and (3) what explains the convergence of the EU’s commercial and developmental FTA agendas. Two case studies, the EU-Korea FTA and the Economic Partnership Agreements with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, are applied to explain these questions empirically.

By focusing on the neoliberal beliefs of policy makers, in particular those of the officials in the Directorate-General for Trade, two aspects are illustrated: first, that policy makers were ‘premised on seeking market openness in exchange for trading away ‘pockets’ of protection’ (p. 58); and second, that they intended to construct an ideational imperative for trade liberalisation. Siles-Brügge claims to have proposed ‘an improved theoretical method’ (p. 22) by complementing material determinants with ideational drivers to explain these developments.

By focusing primarily on the EU level, EU business associations and policy makers, the reader is given a significant insight into how and why these actors construct trade policy. EU member states, however, are neglected, and given the constant member state–Commission interaction, national governments remain key actors in EU trade policy. Therefore, national material and ideational drivers, affected by distributive concerns of trade liberalisation, which in turn shape governmental trade policy positions, also seem to play a role in constructing EU trade policy. This book nonetheless provides both an empirical and a theoretical contribution to constructivist IPE and to the study...
of EU trade policy and trade governance. Anyone interested in the above will appreciate the value of this book.

Aukje Van Loon
(Ruhr University Bochum)


Were Richard Katz and Peter Mair right about their influential ‘cartel party’ thesis? Are political parties today increasingly withdrawing from society, becoming more and more disengaged with their social roots and pursuing a strategy that binds them closer to the state? Well, this might indeed be the case with the so-called ‘mainstream parties’ of the centre-left and centre-right in Europe, but there are also significant exceptions to this rule. Myrto Tsakatika and Marco Lisi’s edited volume puts to the test the ‘cartel party’ hypothesis by examining the radical left European party family. What they find is that those parties have not withdrawn or disengaged from their social bases, but rather have been actively pursuing linkage strategies.

By utilising analytical tools from political parties theory (namely the notions of ‘participatory’ and ‘environmental’ linkage), the reader’s attention is drawn to the various linkage strategies that the radical left parties of the European South have adopted since the fall of the Berlin Wall and leading up to the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008–12. Their empirical cases range from some of the oldest and most established parties within this party family (e.g. AKEL in Cyprus and KKE in Greece), to parties that have only recently emerged and/or have just gained momentum (e.g. SYRIZA in Greece and SEL in Italy).

Tsakatika and Lisi in their thorough introductory chapter, which also summarises and reflects upon the major findings of the volume, discern four patterns that pervade all of the case studies, concerning the factors that affect the initiation of linkage strategies by those parties: (1) the importance of ideological consistency and the focus on specific social constituencies, contrary to what ‘catch-all’ parties pursue; (2) the emergence of external major events that trigger linkage strategies in order to broaden the parties’ appeal; (3) ‘parties’ responses to electoral incentives’, such as organisational reforms due to poor performance in specific elections; and (4) ‘responses to changes in national party competition’ (pp. 6–8). A major distinction emerges between the parties that emphasise forms of democratic centralism and strong leadership (the ‘Leninist’ strand), on the one hand, and those that purport to stimulate bottom-up participation and loose networked structures with social groups and movements, on the other. For now, the second strand seems to be more successful, especially within the crisis context.

To sum up, this is a fascinating and timely read and will be of interest both to students of political parties and to experienced scholars. What is more, it is among the few books that focus on the theme of the new European radical left that is emerging as a challenging research agenda.

Giorgos Katsambekis
(Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)


Alasdair Young and John Peterson begin their book with the observation that there are numerous unexplained tensions in EU trade policy and, consequently, in the academic assessment of the EU as an actor in international trade policy. The authors attribute this inconsistent depiction of the EU to the fact that most researchers only focus on individual aspects of European trade policy, while losing sight of the bigger picture. Due to a broad definition of trade policy, this book not only covers bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations like most studies, but also includes non-reciprocal trade policies, the effects of the Single European Market on trade policy, regulatory cooperation and the use of trade policy as a foreign policy tool. Young and Peterson’s central argument in Parochial Global Europe is that EU trade policy is in fact composed of distinct policy subsystems, each characterised by different political dynamics. Drawing on the ‘open economy politics’ approach, the authors find three internal factors that shape policy outcomes in each
subsystem: the constellation of social actor preferences, the pattern of political institutions and the autonomous preferences of governmental actors. The balance of economic power with the respective trade partner(s) as a fourth factor captures the importance of the international context in EU trade policy making.

Young and Peterson go over well-trodden ground by applying the two-level game metaphor and the principal-agent approach to explain trade policy processes. However, the authors manage to integrate both theories and adapt them to the complex EU trade policy system. Since the negotiator and the ratification process as the key links between the domestic and international level are different between the three EU levels, the authors reject notions of a three-level game in EU trade policy and argue convincingly to think of EU trade policy as two two-level games – national-EU and EU-international – linked by the principal-agent relationship between the Council and the Commission. Furthermore, Young and Peterson demonstrate that the two-level game can not only be applied to negotiation processes, but also serves as a fruitful heuristic instrument in other trade policy areas. With this analytical framework the authors succeed in explaining why the EU is liberal in some respects and protectionist in others, and why it struggles to comply with World Trade Organization rulings despite being a champion of a rule-based multilateral trading system.

The book begins with an analysis of the contemporary European malaise, rooted in the crises of cohesion, imagination and trust. Given these premises, the downfall of the EU polity will be inevitable. The author identifies three scenarios of disintegration: the inability of the EU establishment to handle economic and political events; the pursuit of ambitious federalist reforms; or a benign-neglect policy. Nonetheless, the EU’s positive achievements, coupled with the ‘fear of the unknown’ (p. 55), will prevent the abandonment of the European project. Reintegration may materialise in state-dependent forms – the United States of Europe or a German-led Federal Republic of Europe – deemed incapable of appealing to citizens’ enthusiasm. For Zielonka, the only viable option would be a neo-medieval Europe.

For its clarity, the book will appeal to both students and non-experts interested in the destiny of the European polity. It offers a cogent analysis of the economic, political and institutional problems affecting the EU machinery and a convincing discussion of the possible scenarios for reintegration. However, possible developments emerging from a state-centred differentiated integration (e.g. multi-speed Europe) are dismissed. Furthermore, the theorisation of a neo-medieval Europe, although intriguing, does not provide an entirely new contribution to the field of European Studies. The scenario of ‘a more flexible, decentralized and hybrid Europe’ (p. 75) characterised by the weakening of the nation state and dominated by networks and clubs of state and non-state, public and private actors draws on the main arguments of multilevel governance scholarship. Similarly, the emphasis on large cities and regions as engines of European integration recalls the literature on regionalism in Europe. However, Zielonka breaks the interdependence between regionalisation and Europeanisation, envisaging the shrinking of the powers and influence of the EU institutions.

It is indubitable that the shaking of the EU’s foundations is providing opportunities for local authorities and non-governmental organisations to influence European politics. However, the author provides too little evidence to persuade readers that the European new medievalism would rescue European integration.
Asia & the Pacific


Single-authored by a frequently-quoted scholar on Asia, this book aims to offer a broad historical analysis of the political, economic and strategic forces that have influenced the international relations of Southeast Asia. Divided into nine chapters, it adopts a bottom-up approach to the evolution of intra-regional interactions (particularly since the end of the Cold War) that determine how external actors and events are perceived in Southeast Asia, and which shape their impact on this region as a whole. As the author claims, people’s ideas, social construction and identity formation are the crucial factors that make up Southeast Asia’s international relations. But he does not dismiss the relevance of great powers or realistic theory for the Southeast Asian regional order. This timely and important volume definitely adds something new to the existing academic discourse.

However, it has several limitations and loopholes. First of all, the research provides neither a provocative argument nor a predominant focus. While the author himself states that ‘[s]ome of the chapters in the book clearly overlap with one another’ (p. 15), it actually deals with a wide range of themes and periods. With a comprehensive narrative of major issues and developments, this volume could only be used as a ‘text’ for university courses on Southeast Asia’s international relations. However, it has several limitations and loopholes. First of all, the research provides neither a provocative argument nor a predominant focus. While the author himself states that ‘[s]ome of the chapters in the book clearly overlap with one another’ (p. 15), it actually deals with a wide range of themes and periods. With a comprehensive narrative of major issues and developments, this volume could only be used as a ‘text’ for university courses on Southeast Asia’s international relations. Second, while the book lacks a detailed analysis on the region’s diplomacy and foreign policy towards great powers or its role in the international system, there is a notable portion on the US. On the other hand, it does not present an insight into how Japan’s political economy of foreign aid, trade and investment has gradually helped make Southeast Asia one of the world’s most modernised and dynamic areas. Third, the author views Southeast Asia as an ‘imagined community’ granted that the region’s many indigenous traditions have survived the centuries of borrowing and change. Nonetheless, this term is coined precisely in order to talk about nationalism.

Fourth, although the writer hopefully envisages the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a fast-growing entity distinct from most other regional organisations in the world, he has not explained why ASEAN regionalism is not as successful as the EU. Fifth and finally, it is frustrating that the book concludes with a quote from another expert’s publication, without recommending some invaluable suggestions for the future of ASEAN. This is necessary because this institution is witnessing emerging challenges to its coherence and confidence amid Asia’s new regionalism and especially China’s growing competitiveness in an era of economic globalisation.

Despite the above, this book is systematically developed, theoretically sophisticated and richly documented. Its goals have been achieved as well. Distinctively, Amitav Acharya has to some extent demonstrated his bold stances in this ‘many-to-one’ piece.

Monir Hossain Moni
(Asia Pacific Institute for Global Studies (APIGS), Dhaka, Bangladesh)

China’s Regional Relations: Evolving Foreign Policy Dynamics by Mark Beeson and Fujian Li. London: Lynne Rienner, 2014. 253pp., £45.50, ISBN 9781626370401

Foreign policy makers in Beijing have long sought to offset American influence in the Asia-Pacific. Mark Beeson and Fujian Li argue that China is navigating this challenge by adopting a neighbour-first approach to foreign policy, ratcheting up engagement with long-overlooked multilateral organisations along China’s periphery. The authors’ argument is simple: multilateral organisations define their own boundaries and enjoy selective membership. Moreover, they increasingly function as vehicles for establishing regional policy. Beijing is seizing the opportunity to expand influence within multilateral organisations, promoting China’s national interests in settings where American diplomatic and economic preferences are muted.

The book begins by describing China’s historical role in East Asia and examines the country’s transformation after three decades of economic growth. Chapters 5 to 8 provide descriptions of China’s regional relationships in Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Central Asia and Australia, respectively. Attention is given to China’s evolving attitudes towards the many multi-
national organisations established across the region: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The discussion reveals that China’s foreign policy goals are highly differentiated between regions, characterised by varying emphases on trade, investment, energy, minerals, security and territorial integrity. Beeson and Li highlight the nuances of China’s foreign policy, pausing often to comment on the degree to which specific measures adhere at times to realist and at times to liberalist modes of thinking.

For East Asia specialists, much of the background information contained in this book will be a form of review. Advanced readers should quickly move through the initial chapters and focus on the extended discussion of a particular region of interest. The chapter on Central Asia is noteworthy; it describes the competition between Russia, India, China and the West for energy security reminiscent of the ‘Great Game’. This chapter also reinforces Beeson and Li’s thesis, demonstrating Bejing’s growing appetite to lead through multilateralism as embodied in the SCO. The inclusion of a chapter pertaining to Sino-Australian relations is well-received, highlighting an important bilateral relationship often under-emphasised in broader discussions of China’s rise.

Beeson and Li acknowledge that despite China’s best intentions to engage, many key relationships remain strained due to territorial disputes and entrenched differences. Nevertheless, China’s campaign to lead Asia – a position held by Japan in recent years – will continue to determine foreign policy dynamics in the region. All things considered, this book is enjoyable to read and general audiences will gain a better understanding of both East Asian regional politics and Chinese foreign policy from this account.

Daniel Westlake
(George Mason University)


In Talibanistan, Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann bring together a notable mix of experts to explore the Taliban. They note that the aim is to study the ‘mystery’ of the Taliban movement (p. xi). The fact that they try ‘to clarify some of the murkiness’ in one work is no small achievement given the ‘measure of impenetrability’ of the Taliban (p. xii).

The book’s fifteen chapters are lucidly written. The first five contributions deal with the historical and ideological matters that led to the formation of the Taliban. They address issues such as the ‘factors that spurred their rise’ (p. 1), such as the role played by Hamid Karzai, the Northern Alliance and the international forces in post-2001 Afghanistan (Anand Gopal); the Taliban’s relationship with al-Qa’eda (Anne Stenersen); the ‘roots and resurgence of the Taliban’ in Zabul and Uruzgan provinces since the Soviet occupation (Martine van Bijlert, p. 99); the Taliban in North Waziristan (Gopal et al.); and in South Waziristan (Mansur Khan Mahsud), which arguably is the ‘important centre of jihadist militancy in FATA’ (p. 156) and ‘home to the diverse collection of Pashtun tribes’ (p. 193).

The remaining ten chapters deal with the Taliban in other regions and issues related to the approach to ending the Long War. They concentrate on the ‘hybrid’ COIN (counterinsurgency) tactics being used by Pakistan and its role in supporting the insurgencies (Sameer Lalwani); the impact of the Central Intelligence Agency’s drone strikes where, interestingly, it is said that civilians constituted ‘7 percent of the fatalities’ (Peter Bergen and Jennifer Rowland, p. 232); the country’s worsening radicalisation due to the drone strikes (Pir Zubair Shah, p. 245); opinion in Pakistan’s tribal regions, which expresses opposition to the Taliban and to al-Qa’eda but rejects the activities of the US (Ballen et al.); the political landscape of Taliban insurgency in Pakistan (Hassan Abbas); the rise of the Taliban due largely to the ‘inefficient justice system’ in Swat province (Daud Khan Khattak); the endemic ‘poverty, and low literacy rate’ in Bajaur (Rahmanullah); the commonalities of the militants in Pakistan (Brian Fishman); the death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011 (Thomas Lynch); and negotiating with the Taliban (Thomas Ruttig).

The contributions in Talibanistan are well researched. The last two chapters are especially valuable because they suggest that America should champion ‘serious talks’ between Pakistan and India (p. 410), outline the need to respect Pakistani sovereignty
and innocent Pakistani life (p. 412), and conclude that
US strategy ‘undermined the chances for negotiations’
with the Taliban (p. 435) even while the need for
‘confidence-building measures’ was being stressed (p.
470). Ironically, however, the book does not discuss
the exit strategy for the international forces, which in
every sense is a minus. Nonetheless, this is a book that
one can delightedly recommend to all readers who are
interested in Afghanistan.

Kawu Bala
(Bauchi State Judiciary, Nigeria)

The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy
and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia by
288pp., £30.00, ISBN 978019959936 3

Are we witnessing a ‘power shift’ in which US
hegemony is superseded by a militarily and economi-
cally rising China? Evelyn Goh challenges the crude
analyses of East Asian relations, which too often
relegate changes to balance-of-power or economic
interdependence. Employing an international society
approach, the book argues that we are not confronted
with a power transition, but an order transition. Goh
demonstrates how governments renegotiate the nor-
mative structure of East Asia’s institutions taming
US and Chinese power. Distinguishing processes of
deference/assurance and constraint/containment vis-à-
vis hegemonic power, the critical role of small and
middle powers is highlighted. Upward and down-
ward processes of complicity and resistance have
created a layered hierarchical order including regional
actors such as China, Japan, South Korea or
ASEAN below the overarching umbrella of US
hegemony.
The renegotiation of East Asia’s normative structure
entails institutional bargains, security public goods pro-
vision, regionalisms and community building as well as
collective memory revision. Regional order is the
result of institutional rivalry between an American-led
open order and a new China-centred closed regional-
ism. The 1989 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
(APEC) framework, and the 1998 ASEAN Plus Three
scheme exemplify this competition. In contrast, cases
such as maritime disputes in the South China Sea have
illustrated the preference among East Asian states for
the US as a regional security guarantor. Similarly, the
2003 Six-Party Talks represent an institutional bargain
for the Korean nuclear crisis which circumvents Wash-
ington’s role as the region’s ultimate deterrent and
security guarantor. East Asia’s financial regionalism,
however, has sustained US hegemony as Japan and
China were unwilling or unable to establish counter-
institutions that could challenge the US-led neoliberal
consensus in post-1997-crisis Asia. Financial regional-
ism thus emerged in support of the global architecture.
Finally, the region’s inability to overcome historical
animosities in Sino-Japanese and Japan-Korean rela-
tions has reinforced America’s hegemonic role in East
Asia.

Goh illustrates how East Asian states have (re)nego-
tiated the social compact that shapes the regional order
and has consolidated US post-Cold War primacy. How-
ever, President Obama’s announcement of an
American pivot to Asia, China’s potential fear of con-
tainment and Beijing’s assertiveness in managing its
territorial disputes raise questions as to how resilient
this order is and to what extent it has socialised its
members. Moreover, the impact of domestic dynamics
such as US budget shortfalls on Washington’s role in
East Asia requires further analysis.

Sebastian Maslow
(German Institute for Japan Studies (DIJ), Tokyo)

Contestation and Adaptation: The Politics of
National Identity in China by Enze Han. Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 2013. 204pp., £47.99, ISBN
9780199936298

Nation building is one of the big issues that matters to
almost every country, and this volume by Enze Han
contributes much towards our understanding in this
field. Although the discussions in Han’s book are
mainly set in the context of modern China, there is
substantial food for thought for everyone to take
home.

Han skillfully uses a single theoretical framework to
explain why the politics of Chinese nation building
succeeds among some ethnic minority groups while
failing among others. He argues that the international
dimension is essential for understanding such variation.
According to Han, groups without external kinship
ties often tend either to keep the status quo or to
assimilate into the mainstream Chinese national iden-
tity. However, groups with external kinship ties appear
to be much more heterogamous in terms of their reaction towards Chinese nation building. First, those with worse living conditions than their external kin and with external support for independence or rebellion are more likely to resist China’s nation-building efforts. Second, members of ethnic minority groups which suffer worse living conditions than their external kin but receive no external support often either emigrate or adapt to the conditions within the current state. Third, groups that enjoy better living conditions than their external kin but somehow still receive external support for independence normally choose either to ‘maintain a low-intensity national identity contestation’ (p. 16) or to adapt to the status quo. Finally, groups with better living conditions than their external kin but without external support either keep the status quo or assimilate into the mainstream Chinese national identity.

Han’s analytical framework is neat and elegant. His subsequent empirical chapters on the politics of national identity among five ethnic minority groups in China (the Uyghurs, the Chinese Koreans, the Mongols, the Dai and the Tibetans) are substantial and consistent. In addition, he also manages briefly to cover the historical dynamics of China’s nation-building politics, making this comprehensive and insightful book a must-read for anyone interested in either China or the politics of national identity.

Han successfully bridges the long-existing divide between studies on China’s domestic politics and those on its external relations. Yet, although Han takes history seriously, his analytical framework is by and large a static model. The model does its job well, but an inspired reader might want to reflect further on the directions of causality. For example, wouldn’t it be possible that the external support is more likely to be offered to contesting ethnic groups than to other groups in the first place?

Yu Tao
(University of Central Lancashire)

Development and Welfare Policy in South Asia
by Gabriele Koehler and Deepta Chopra (eds).

In recent decades, much has been written about similarities and differences in social protection among countries located in the same region of the world. In this edited volume, Gabriele Koehler, Deepta Chopra and their contributors ask whether there is ‘a distinct geography of welfare in the South Asian region’ (p. xvii). Featuring descriptive quantitative data and in-depth analyses of six countries (Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), this volume offers a negative answer to that question. Although ‘there are some similarities in the way development and welfare are addressed ... it does not seem that a South Asian geography of a developmental welfare state is emerging. Instead, one may say that there are strong trends towards a particular type of targeted welfare, with a very weak pathway towards rights-based welfare’ (pp. 209–10).

A central aspect of the volume is the discussion about such a rights-based approach, which is especially prominent in India – a country where the language of rights has become increasingly central since 2004, marking ‘a historic break in the Indian state’s approach to poverty alleviation’ (p. 85). A sharp contrast with the recent policy innovations witnessed in India is the neoliberal approach that is now dominant in Sri Lanka. While this country appeared as a social policy pioneer in the three decades that followed independence in 1948, since 1977 it has been characterised by neoliberal retrenchment in social policy. Although they have long been social policy laggards compared to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan have all improved their safety nets in recent years. A particularly interesting case is Bangladesh, which shows much improved social development indicators despite clear governance challenges. As for the Maldives and Nepal, they have both witnessed significant social policy innovation in the context of recent political transformations. Finally, Pakistan has innovated mainly through the creation in 2008 of the Benazir Income Support Programme, which ‘represented important changes in the design and implementation of social protection in Pakistan’ (p. 152).

One issue explicitly neglected in this volume is policy implementation, which deserves more attention in future comparative social policy research about South Asian countries and beyond. That being said, this is a most insightful and informative volume and a must-read for students of social policy interested in these South Asian countries, which are typically
under-represented in the international comparative policy literature.

Daniel Béland
(University of Saskatchewan)

**India: Political Ideas and the Making of a Democratic Discourse** by Gurpreet Mahajan.

Gurpreet Mahajan’s intention in this book is to authenticate the view that political theory in the West is different from that in the East. Towards such authentication, she identifies different political variables such as equality, freedom, religion and its democratic discourse and convincingly argues that we should not view these variables in the Indian context through a Western lens. Mahajan makes that sharp distinction by presenting different examples and the views of various Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bamkim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. In the process, she has provided a detailed exposition of Indian democracy.

The book is divided into separate chapters on Equality, Freedom, Religion and Diversity, and each of these is presented from an indigenous rather than Western perspective. For instance, when Mahajan talks about democracy, she tries to link the individual to society and then society to the state. When it comes to secularism, she makes a distinction against its Western interpretation and instead presents how important religion is in the Indian context through a Western lens. Mahajan makes that sharp distinction by presenting different examples and the views of various Indian thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bamkim Chandra Chattopadhyaya. In the process, she has provided a detailed exposition of Indian democracy.

The book is very well researched, with critical analysis of all the available literature by the author, who has presented her unique concept of Indian political theory as being distinct from that of the West. With its simplicity of language, coherent thought and consistent flow, this book is a must-read for Indian as well as non-Indian readers as it beautifully introduces such exciting political concepts.

Aditya Anshu
(Jawaharlal Nehru University)

**Regimes of Narcissism, Regimes of Despair** by Ashis Nandy.

In *Regimes of Narcissism, Regimes of Despair*, Ashis Nandy moves beyond the clichéd trope of what he calls ‘normal politics or economics’ (p. ix) when it comes to examining the distinctiveness of India’s political culture. Instead, Nandy reveals how ‘two predominant psychological states: narcissism and despair’ (p. ix) fundamentally (re)shape the intellectual history of Indian politics, and do so alongside the practices of territorialising, stakes, contentions and issues of subjectivity involved therein.

The book comprises eight chapters that hover at the interstices of issues concerning nationalism, terrorism and mass violence, ideas of happiness and humiliation. The overarching theme of ‘modernity’, which has been a pressing concern for Nandy throughout his career, weaves the chapters together. For Nandy, modernity in South Asia – he takes the examples of China and India (p. 13) – is a perennially incomplete project, emanating from and tutored by West European frameworks of reference that are incongruous with South Asian contexts. The vicissitudes in personas arising out of the desire to cope with a conceptually untranslatable worldview (as reflected in the lives of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Madanlal Pahwa) is illustrative of the very problem Nandy has set out to explore.

In the first chapter, drawing on the ideas of Gandhi and Tagore, he distinguishes between ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’; interestingly, however, without alluding to Sumit Sarkar. This is symbolic of the overall tone of this book: the pieces, most of which are actually
extended from Nandy’s lectures, still read like lectures, rather than essays. To cite just one such instance, Nandy notices that ‘in community-based societies of the South ... the commitment to ideologies is mostly skin-deep ... and social relations and basic human values are seen as more important’ (p. xv; emphasis added). With regard to India, which, Nandy himself acknowledges, is ‘no longer the country on which I have written for something like four decades’ (p. ix), to cite but one, vast generalisation like this has no particularity, no justification and, in the eyes of a critical reader, calls for historical reconstruction.

I find this broad-brush approach markedly different from Nandy’s earlier works. The argumentation is at times too fast and unassimilable – for example, when over the course of two paragraphs he moves across seven different thinkers (p. 158–9) without going into their respective particularities. For longstanding Nandy admirers, myself included, this is, I am afraid, not Nandy at his best.

Avishek Ray
(Trent University, Canada)


Whether China will become democratic in the foreseeable future has long been a major concern for students of Chinese politics. The articles collected in this book examine the factors that may facilitate or impede China’s transition to democracy.

According to the analyses here, several positive factors are propelling China towards a speedier democratic transition. With continued and strong economic growth, China’s leaders proactively address the roots of popular contention by making health and retirement insurance available, attacking corruption, mitigating environmental pollution, and increasing government transparency and accountability. Especially at the lower levels of the political system, the leadership has introduced direct elections and implemented a more transparent cadre recruitment system (Chapter 4). The dramatic wave of popular unrest sweeping the nation in recent years also poses a severe threat to the central government, pushing for a potential democratic breakthrough, as Chinese citizens today are more dissatisfied, more mobilised and less fearful than in the past (Chapters 11 and 14). Moreover, a revival of liberal values, such as individual freedom, property rights and the rule of law, emerges in people’s daily lives and spreads in the ‘network society’ (Chapter 20). Since use of the internet is growing rapidly in China, particularly among the younger generation, ‘digital resistance’ increasingly becomes a tactic for collective mobilisation and public protests, such as the case of the protests against a paraxylene (PX) plant in Xiamen (Chapter 24). Overall, it is widely accepted that China is now at the tipping point (Chapter 13), and political change is inevitable (Chapter 1).

On the other hand, some essays are less optimistic about the prospects for democracy, viewing the current changes not as moves towards democracy, but as adaptive responses that an authoritarian regime strategically deploys as a way to strengthen its rule. As Andrew Nathan suggests, ‘under conditions that elsewhere have led to democratic transition, China has made a transition instead from totalitarianism to a classic authoritarian regime, and one that appears increasingly stable’ (p. 75). In particular, although state workers and peasants have all engaged in protests in recent years, their demands revolve around practical interests, such as economic entitlement and unemployment compensation, rather than enthusiasm for liberal democracy. In other words, the motives behind today’s protests are clearly not revolutionary (Chapters 15, 16 and 17). In sum, while it is inevitable that the current political system must change and will be changed, ‘the timing and character of that change will depend on contingent events that are inherently unforeseeable’ (p. 132).

Fei Yan
(Tsinghua University, Beijing)


Dictators repress at an informational cost: fear prevents ordinary people from expressing their true preferences. This is Ronald Wintrobe’s ‘dictator’s dilemma’. Using the case of newspaper readership in China, Daniela Stockmann claims that one solution to this dilemma is media marketisation. Scholars argue that media
marketisation can either facilitate democracy or strengthen dictatorship (p. 3). Stockmann’s book introduces a new theoretical perspective to the literature: marketised media can, under certain circumstances, allow citizens to express their true preferences, while at the same time enhance government credibility and reduce the cost of control.

When preferences of the government and the median citizen converge, the government takes a *laissez-faire* approach, and journalists report based on citizen demands; this increases government credibility and reduces the cost of media control. When convergence is absent, the government again directs reporting (pp. 30–5). For Stockmann, media marketisation may bring about political change without democratisation (pp. 256–60).

Stockmann’s book is impressive in both its theoretical innovation and its comprehensiveness in describing the process of China’s media reform. Moreover, it is a serious attempt to exploit mixed methods available in the social sciences. Students of media studies and authoritarian politics will find this a terrific read. However, the book falls short in the empirical part. First, Stockmann’s credibility experiment does not have a clear treatment – i.e. ‘official frame’ and ‘non-official frame’ are such loaded concepts for good experimental work (Appendix C). Second, her quasi-experiment, which is interrupted time-series, also does not follow standard modelling procedures – e.g. testing for series process (p. 187). Perhaps her data are inappropriate for time-series. Third, Stockmann’s econometric justification sometimes makes little sense; see how she writes about adding control variables (p. 192). Fourth, her rationale for modelling choice is sometimes unspecified – e.g. why not use nonparametric techniques when the ordinary least squares linearity assumption is violated (p. 214)? Finally, she may also have measurement problems: does it make sense that Shanghai has less media marketisation and less newspaper credibility than Guizhou, the poorest province in China (p. 227)?

I pose two larger questions for Stockmann to ponder. First, why doesn’t the Chinese state get rid of official papers since people don’t believe in them, and just monitor the unofficial ones to maximise credibility? Second, why does censorship in newspapers increase when reporting is concerned with political reputations and the careers of political elites (p. 103), but maybe not so much on China’s internet, as according to Gary King et al.’s recent study on internet censorship in China?

Adam Liu  
(Stanford University)


Contestations around the idea of social justice have been central in the discipline of politics. As politics is seen as the ‘who gets what, when, how’, the idea of social justice has been caught between arguments of individual merit *vis-à-vis* discrimination based on ascriptive identities. The debate on social justice in India has evolved around the question of caste and remedial measures have been framed by the state primarily as reservation policies, to ameliorate the injustices caused. Although an overlapping consensus has been generated over the necessity and desirability of addressing group-based injustice in a deeply divided country like India, scholarly work on social justice has not been holistic. Against this backdrop, where the majority of work on social justice has hinged on the premise of the need for social justice, the present volume provides a comprehensive account of the evolution of social justice discourse in India along with a cohesive argument regarding the need for the social justice agenda to change with time.

A decisive shift in the trajectory of social justice in India took place in the 1990s, when the Other Backward Classes and Women demanded that the state redress the inequalities that they faced as a group by providing reservations to them as well. Since then, there have been no major shifts, but present-day inequalities arising out of the market, disability, intersection of caste and religion and sexual orientation make it necessary to develop a more complex understanding of social justice. There is, however, an impending challenge from the Dalit Muslims, who have been voicing their concerns against the way in which the present social justice framework refuses to acknowledge the discrimination they face.

Vidhu Verma argues that against this backdrop, even while the social justice framework in India has to remain sensitive to discrimination and inequalities
arising out of caste, there is a need to extend the existing domain of social justice beyond caste considerations. In brief, there is a need to re-imagine the social justice framework *per se*. As the author does not aim at a general audience, the elaborate case references make the book meander through exhaustive details. However, this does not discount the strength of the work, which lies in its holistic approach to the social justice framework in India, accounting for its historical, political and ideological dimensions at the same time.

Poonam Kakoti Borah
(Gauhati University, Assam, India)

**Other Areas**


*Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony* tries to interpret the conditions under which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) emerged, and how it has consolidated its political power over the past decade. What has become clear, even more in recent years, is that the AKP government represents the reconsolidation of the neoliberal hegemony. It is neoliberal hegemony, and not Islam as many researchers and commentators claim, that provides the legitimising framework for the AKP’s authoritarian politics. This becomes evident throughout the book and the analysis of AKP’s conservative, authoritarian populism.

*Turkey Reframed* tries to demonstrate the above argument, but it presents a significant difference from previous studies on the AKP in the sense that it contextualises the latter within the 30-year general process of the neoliberal hegemonic constitution. The primary concern of the book and of its contributors is to discuss hegemony in its class terms, and not the hegemony of a political party. In order to demonstrate the particularities and complexities of Turkish politics and society, the book is divided into two parts. Part I reveals the plurality of political and non-political actors and the relations between them which have played a role in the Turkish state transformation since 1980, placing ‘class’ at the core of its analysis. It is widely accepted among the contributors that while previous hegemonic projects failed, the AKP hegemonic project – due too to the establishment of its own official brand of nationalism – seems more successful. Its success lies in the unity which the AKP established between dominant and subordinated classes, and the hegemony, in Gramscian terms, which the party managed to manufacture through that unity. Part II of the book puts its emphasis and sheds fresh light on issues such as social welfare, gender and sexuality, organised labour, working-class formation and social movements (Islamist and Kurdish). The book’s final chapter is a postscript dealing with the Gezi resistance of June 2013. Among other things, all of the chapters (the postscript included) demonstrate to what extent the AKP’s neoliberal hegemonic project has been consolidated in Turkish society.

*Turkey Reframed* is a welcome contribution to the burgeoning studies on the AKP, while the class-oriented analysis of the contributions offers a priceless addition and a fresh look at the vast array of mainstream explanations. The book’s wide range of topics is most impressive, while all of the contributions are both masterly and lucid. There is no doubt that *Turkey Reframed* will be widely accepted and become one of the standard readings on understanding contemporary Turkish politics, and more specifically the AKP era. It is highly recommended.

Nikos Christofis
(Leiden University)


This edited volume engages with the role of Islamic law, constitutional politics and authoritarianism within the legal and constitutional structures of Egypt and Iran. Fundamentally, the book compares two different Muslim societies: Egypt, being predominantly a Sunni and Arab nation; and Iran, which is overwhelmingly Shi’ite and ethnically Persian. The project is carried out in twelve chapters, historically focusing on two periods: the Mubarak era and Muslim Brotherhood
period in Egypt; and the post-Khomeini period in Iran. In each chapter, the focus is on how Islamic law and politics were twisted to justify two authoritarian regimes’ political and legal reconstructions in the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution of 1952 and the Iranian revolution of 1979. Therefore, the book is not only of interest to legal scholars but also to political scientists.

The book first focuses on Iran and then on Egypt by analysing Islamic jurisprudence, judicial and constitutional politics as well as legislative propriety. Arjomand shows the weak power of the independent judiciary in Iran, since authoritarian regimes are characterised by a weak separation of powers. Similarly, Künkler underlines the dominance of the hardline Islamists’ power within the revolutionary government’s executive body in Iran, while Farhi investigates the parliamentary struggle for independence in post-Khomeini Iran. Tellenbach examines the principle of legality in Iranian constitutional and criminal law, whereas Ehsani deals with the question of property in Iran. The rule of law and state authoritarianism under Mubarak is explored by Bernard-Maugiron, while Al-Sayyid delves into the questions of rule of law, ideology and human rights in Egyptian courts. The next chapters by Brown, Rutherford and Skovgaard-Petersen demonstrate the role and complexity of Islamism within the recent Egyptian political culture.

The book shows how two regimes in Egypt and Iran came to power with the promise of full democracy and the rule of law, but became similar to that which they originally sought to overthrow: the authoritarian state. However, this does not answer why a vicious circle occurs between religion and politics in most Muslim societies. Future research would benefit from assessing the relationship between the actors that have dominated Islamic legal discourse and the brokers of political power that shaped the outcomes of this discourse in the twentieth century. Although the historical trajectories of two Muslim societies differ significantly, the book nonetheless provides a vital historical background for the development of the Green movement in Iran and the January 25 Revolution of 2011 in Egypt.

Mehmet Karabela
(Queen’s University, Ontario)


The current volatile political climate in the Middle East has provoked questions on whether the entire region is moving towards complete chaos. This precarious situation has prompted scholars to investigate the possibility of regional collapse. One of the scholars to take up this question is Mohammed Ayoob, a distinguished professor emeritus from Michigan State University. In this work, Ayoob contends that the nature of the Middle East coupled with the recently manifested ‘dialectic of revolution and counter-revolution’ (p. 2) can either result in ‘an implosion, or a number of mini-implosions’ (p. 4).

Ayoob devotes the entire work to explaining how five conflicts can further erupt and result in the implosion of the entire region. The first conflict revolves around the diverse political and social forces that comprise Islamism. The second conflict centres on the seemingly unending hostilities between Israel and Palestine. The third conflict is based on Iran’s intense desire for nuclear technology. The fourth conflict involves the national rivalries between regional hegemonic forces, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran. Finally, the fifth conflict surrounds the problems created by global powers such as the US and their involvement in the area.

The work is not only well written, but also compelling, concise and clear. In his political analysis, Ayoob has not only identified several conflicts that are likely to enflame the region, but he has also put forward solid arguments as to why these conflicts pose substantial risk. In reflecting on this work, there are two issues that need to be mentioned. First, the work is not designed for readers who wish to understand what is currently transpiring in the region, but have little background on Middle Eastern affairs. In order to truly appreciate this work, the reader requires at least a basic understanding of Middle Eastern history, politics and society. Second, given the erratic situation in the region, there is a chance that this work will quickly become obsolete if a significant political change occurs in the near future. This possibility is evident, considering Ayoob has already added an afterword in order to account for the recent political developments in Syria and Iran. The question on the future of the Middle
East is worthy of debate by academics who seek to describe the political landscape of the region. However, these scholarly debates are limited, as only time can accurately reveal the next configuration of the Middle East.

John Cappucci
(Carleton University)


Understanding Turkey’s Kurdish Question is a fine collection of essays regarding one of Turkey’s longstanding, protracted issues. The issue gained momentum during the last 30 years and now it has become one of the most troublesome issues of the Turkish Republic. The volume seeks to address, analyse and clarify the complexities of the Kurdish Question from different perspectives, which has at its core, as Keyman and Özkırmılı argue in their essay, the vicious circle of ethnic Kurdish and Turkish nationalisms.

The greater part of the book focuses on the Kurdish Question as it has developed over the past 30 years. However, the authors do not fail to approach the subject historically and place it in an historical framework. Thus, the first part of the book deals with the emergence of Kurdish nationalism and the different stages it has gone through since the mid-nineteenth century, beginning in Ottoman times when the idea that the Kurds constituted a ‘nation’ gained ground, and then later during the Turkish Republic, in which the Kurds and other ethnic groups were denied rights of autonomy.

The second part of the book is the longest one and consists of six chapters. This part covers a wide range of topics, starting with the emergence of the Kurdish Question and the establishment of the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan, followed by the violent periods of conflict between the PKK and the Turkish governments, which ended with a considerable amount of human casualties for both sides. Further analysis considers civil-society initiatives, proposals for a solution to the issue and the policies formulated by the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government with the democratic opening and its subsequent failure.

One of the most important conclusions for the reader is that the book’s authors acknowledge that a military solution to the issue is not an option for a steady and viable solution. The third part of the book takes as its focus the Hizbullah and Hizmet (Gülen) movement, their relations and clashes with the PKK, and the complications which these groups present for the PKK’s stance.

Finally, the fourth section deals with the international dimension of the Kurdish Question. The significance of this last part is that it entails the recent developments following the Arab Spring, and the implications for Turkey’s domestic and foreign relations.

In conclusion, Understanding Turkey’s Kurdish Question offers a significant contribution to this highly important issue and it should be seriously consulted and read by scholars, students and policy makers alike. It is a signal and valuable contribution to the topic, and its well-balanced and well-researched essays build upon and update past literature with current developments.

Nikos Christofis
(Leiden University)


This book investigates the rapid transformation in the environment of Turkey’s political economy. The relationship between politics, religion and business is explored throughout the book. It provides an intensive overview of markets and market actors in Turkey. The Islamic dimension in particular, especially the rising significance of Islam over capitalism in Turkey, marks the book out as a ‘must-read’ for those who are interested in Turkish politics. However, I will highlight four methodological shortcomings which lead the book to an externalist reading of Turkish capitalism.

First, there is an apparent dualist reading of the state and civil society and the assumed antagonism between those spheres. For instance, on page 6, the authors emphasise their insistence on the ‘society shaping role of the state’ and the role of ‘business actors’ on the re-shaping of the business environment. No doubt, this relation is seen as symbiotic, but the methodological separation makes the analysis external. In this way,
the state and the civil society appear as autonomous entities and their dialectical relations are replaced by an external influence. External influence could be temporary, whereas dialectical relations are permanent.

Second, and similarly, the separatist understanding of the market, the political and the economic from civil society is observed throughout the book. As Buğra and Savaşkan highlight, interpreting from Polanyi’s notion of ‘disembeddedness’ from his magnum opus The Great Transformation, ‘the institutional realms in which these principles operate remain clearly separate from each other’ (p. 8). Although the authors point out that it is necessary to go beyond Polanyi, and they also refer to the integrity of the state, the market and civil society (p. 9), the tone of an externalist understanding is apparent throughout the book.

Third, civil society is identified as automatically progressive in the book. Therefore, civil society should be strengthened and conditions should be set in its favour as the strong state historically represses civil society. This claim is rooted in the dualist reading of state-society relations. As the authors point out, with religion as the spirit of new capitalism, the rise of political Islam is conceptualised ‘as a reaction to Kemalism by formerly oppressed believers who currently make their presence felt in the public sphere’ (p. 15). An externalist reading of the political and the economic makes this oft-shared claim significant.

Finally, the social relations of production, which refers to class structure, is disregarded in the authors’ analyses. Class is used as an overarching sociological entity rather than an antagonistic concept. For Buğra and Savaşkan it seems that intra-class conflict has been replaced by class conflict since 1980, with which I would disagree.

Overall, apart from some methodological shortcomings, this book is an excellent overview of recent developments in Turkey’s political economy.

Gorkem Altinors
(University of Nottingham)

Women and Civil Society in Turkey: Women’s Movements in a Muslim Society by Ömer Çaha.
Farnham: Ashgate, 2013. 222pp., £65.00, ISBN 978 1 4724 1007 8

This book highlights the importance of placing women’s movements at the forefront in understanding the context of the formation of civil society and democracy in Turkey. The book has seven chapters. It starts with the introduction of social contract theories and then scrutinises how civil society and feminism are positioned in the field of political philosophy, drawing on the work of social and gender justice authors and philosophers. The first half of Chapter 2 focuses on the final decades of the Ottoman Empire, particularly the Reform Edict of 1856 and the Constitutional governments of 1876 and 1908, with the aim of documenting how these two important acts of modernisation paved the way for women to appear in the public domain, and how this led to the development of a women’s movement for the first time in the Ottoman Empire. The second half of the chapter examines the early years of Turkey, with a concern for how women are positioned merely as symbols and guards of the regime and modernisation, and how efforts to establish women’s institutions, movements and parties were suppressed during this period. Chapter 3 portrays civilian affairs, consolidation of democracy and women’s involvement in politics and the emergence of feminism in the post-1980 period after the fall of the military regime of 1980–3. In doing so, it also touches upon analysis of different feminist discourses such as liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism and feminist actions. In Chapter 4, the author demonstrates how feminist actions and the campaigns of these different feminist groups influenced the agendas of politicians and brought about some constitutional and legal changes. Finally, Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, develop a comprehensive analysis of two suppressed women’s movements in Turkish history: the Islamic women’s movement and the Kurdish women’s movement. These chapters argue that these movements contributed to the emancipation and self-realisation of women through the recognition of their different and subjective identities. The author concludes the book with a discussion of the significant role of women and feminism in creating a more democratic civil society in Turkey.

This book offers an engaging and insightful overview of women’s movements and their relation to civil society in Turkey, and provides a useful reference point for feminist authors and researchers wishing to understand the complex historical and sociological context of Turkey. Thus, it covers an important gap in Turkish literature by offering a descriptive analysis of
feminism and women’s movements from a critical and equality-seeking perspective.

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Democracy’s Fourth Wave? is a study of the role of digital media in social revolutions in general and the Arab Spring in particular. The book offers convincing arguments about the changed tactics of democratization movements in the post-broadcast digital era, where the internet and mobile phones have been used extensively by activists and protestors ‘to realize shared grievances and nurture transportable strategies for mobilizing against dictators’ (p. 34), which has changed the relations of state and society. Through comparative studies of countries in the Middle East and North Africa, Howard and Hussain analyse the role of digital media during the Arab Spring. Instead of examining one causal factor, the authors look at the combination of causal factors or conjoined causal explanations to preserve the nuances specific to particular cases.

While there are the successful cases of Tunisia and Egypt, there are cases where revolution failed. The political outcome of the revolution can be judged not only by whether the regime changed, but should also be assessed by looking at various welfare concessions granted by the regimes to their citizens in order to win their loyalty in the wake of the Arab Spring. The authors also analyse the role of Al-Jazeera English service in the hybridised media networks, which cater to both transnational and transregional publics and helped draw in international support networks.

The chapter contributions analyse the impact of failed leadership by both the military and civilian regimes, and the mismanagement of the oil industry, which produced a fractured state exacerbated by the inability to define the country through a centralised over, shutting down the internet for an extended period would adversely affect the economy and result in growing international pressure. The authors find that digital media represent a ‘consistent component’ in conjoined causal combinations that help in explaining the Arab Spring.

Howard and Hussain, through empirical examples, amply demonstrate the positive impacts of digital media in the Arab Spring, but refrain from regarding these events as a wave of democratisation. Overall, the book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on digital politics and would be useful for scholars of social movements, political communication, media studies and comparative politics as well as to policy makers.

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In an in-depth revelation, this book analyses 50 years of Nigeria as a nation after colonialism. Relying upon an historical and structural framework with the emphasis on trajectories such as the economy under petroleum, religion, federalism and the electoral system, the authors analyse the relationship between the leadership and the people, emphasising the gap that exists in terms of wealth sharing and the achievement of a true democracy in Nigeria. Discussions on the role of colonialism and its influential effects reveal an ‘imperial conspiracy’ within the process of decolonisation, leaving power in the hands of selected unskilled and immoral elites (Chapter 1 by Adebanwi and Obadare). The colonial uneven division of Nigeria into three regions in anticipated unity, described by a late and former leader as the mistake of 1914, is portrayed as leading the nation to its present decay through the projection of leadership in elitist protectionism and charismatic authority (Chapter 2 by Eghosa Osaghae, and Chapter 3 by Adekunle Amuwo).

The chapter contributions analyse the impact of failed leadership by both the military and civilian regimes, and the mismanagement of the oil industry, which produced a fractured state exacerbated by the inability to define the country through a centralised
system of federalism. They bring to the fore the role of religious connectivity to politics, defining and shaping negotiations nationally and globally, and its abuse as a pathway to violence. The historical narration of electoral processes reveals an attempt at achieving credible elections, marred by the selfish ambitions of leaders and a betrayal of the social contract (Chapter 7 by Kew) between government and the people, resulting in a downward path towards elections without credibility.

Although the book does occasionally mention women and other marginalised groups, it fails to include detailed discourse of the role of women in the 50 years of Nigeria as a nation in any of the chapters. On the whole, in an innovative combination of theory and methodology, the book provides the informative conclusion that Nigeria, with its vast oil and other resources, should have attained its perceived position as the ‘giant of Africa’. However, the outcomes described above have left it in a state famously described by one of its past leaders, Obafemi Awolowo in 1947, as a ‘mere geographical expression’ (Harneit-Sievers, p. 146).

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