



## Book Reviews

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**Democratic Dilemmas of Multilevel Governance—Legitimacy, Representation and Accountability in the European Union** edited by Joan DeBardeleben & Achim Hurrelmann. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, ISBN 978-0-230-50077-8

The ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Union has been the subject of numerous debates both within the academic community and amongst politicians and the public at large. *Democratic Dilemmas of Multilevel Governance* argues that the democratic deficit is, in part, the result of the multi-level nature of the EU. As part of the ‘Transformations of the State Series’, it aims to contribute to the democratic deficit debate by systematically examining the democratic challenges posed by the multi-level nature of EU governance, in the context of wider processes of globalization and state transformation and with reference to the challenges faced by federal (and, hence, multi-level) states. In particular, the editors identify three interlinked democratic dilemmas of multi-level governance: (1) the problem of having to square high demands for democratic governance with weak conditions for democratization; (2) the trade-off between a strong problem-solving capacity and accountability; and (3) the difficulty of achieving both deliberative policy making and equal representation of citizens. The first part of the book examines the three dilemmas further. The remaining three sections discuss these dilemmas in relation to the social conditions of democracy (Part II), the institutional channels for democratic input in the EU (Part III) and EU enlargement (Part IV).

All in all, the book presents a collection of both theoretical and empirical contributions on a wide variety of issues related to problems of EU governance or multi-level governance more generally. Its greatest strength is that each chapter contains an interesting theoretical discussion, and a thorough empirical analysis and/or an original perspective. Any reader with an interest in multi-level governance and questions of legitimacy will undoubtedly be inspired by some part of the book. Yet, despite the editors’ efforts to identify three common themes, some parts of the volume come across as somewhat disjointed. There appears to be no common theoretical frame of reference and some indecisiveness on the question of whether to publish a book on multi-level governance in general or the EU more specifically. While the first part of the book is devoted to conceptual issues and contains both a discussion of different types of legitimation strategies in the EU and two comparative chapters on federal states and international organisations, respectively, the three chapters do not seem to be connected. It is also striking that virtually none of the other contributions contain an explicit reference to this conceptual section, despite the fact that the first chapter does, indeed, make an interesting connection between differing visions of European integration and potential legitimation strategies. Secondly, the two comparative chapters essentially analyse the democratic dilemmas faced by federal states and international organizations, respectively, but the comparisons with the EU remain

superficial or virtually absent. Some contributors adopt a comparative perspective in later chapters (e.g. Raunio), but these comparisons are, of course, problem-specific rather than general. This creates two problems. First, there are two chapters on other systems of multi-level governance in a book that is otherwise exclusively about democratic dilemmas of multi-level governance in the EU. This indecision is also reflected in the presentation of the book, where the title announces a book on multi-level governance, and the subtitle a book on the EU. Secondly, while both of the comparative chapters are interesting in themselves, in the context of the book and due to the lack of references to European governance, they fall short of the ambitious goal of embedding the discussion of the EU in comparative work. It remains open to question to what extent the democratic challenges faced by the EU do, indeed, resemble those faced by federal states or international organizations and whether lessons can be drawn from these systems of multi-level governance.

The book regains cohesiveness in the second and third parts on the social underpinnings of democracy and political participation in the EU, as these chapters build upon each other thematically and the contributors make greater use of cross-references. D. Ost's provocative and original chapter on multi-level governance as seen from the perspective of the new member states is well situated within the context of the preceding chapters, as the author ties his chapter in with Delanty's analysis of the European cultural identity and prepares the ground for the analysis of the experience of the new member states in the final chapter.

Despite the disjointed nature of the first part of the book, the high quality of each individual contribution and the interplay between the contributions in the remaining parts makes this volume informative, comprehensive and inspiring, especially for an academic readership. The main shortcoming of the book is that the contributors have not yet fully realized the comparative (and, therefore, theoretical) potential of the contributions. However, as the editors point out, the "efforts to construct a democratic theory of multilevel governance have only just begun" (p. 243).

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**Regionalism, Capitalism and Populism. The Basque Nationalist Party, the PNV, and Politico-Economic Power in the Basque Country of Spain 1980–1998** by Ilkka Nordberg. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2007, ISBN 9789514109935

This book is first and foremost a study of the contemporary politics of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), which pays close attention to the political economy of the Basque Country, Basque economic policy and the fiscal situation of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country within Spain. As such, it adds to a relatively small literature that tackles Basque politics from this angle. This book was originally written as a doctoral dissertation, which gives it both qualities and problems as a monograph. On the plus side, the research profits from a meticulous sourcing of primary documents, such as PNV and Basque government materials. On the down side, the book

still has a doctoral-dissertation feel when it comes to prose, style and structure, which makes for somewhat tedious reading.

After a useful preface that contextualizes the research project, the book opens with an introduction that presents the research question, discusses the literature and sketches out some theory. In this latter section, the author brings up Geoffrey Elton and Michel Foucault, but not much comes out of this discussion except for a need to focus on power. The second chapter looks at the political economy of the Basque Country within Spain and Europe and provides a historical account of the development of the PNV. This is basically a background chapter, although it has an interesting discussion of the PNV's position towards business and industry in the early days of the democracy. The third chapter looks at the economic policy of the Basque government, but also mixes in a more general discussion of Basque autonomy. This is an interesting chapter that provides strong analysis of the internal workings of the PNV and stresses the internal territorial structuring of the Basque Country as an important variable affecting the politics of the PNV. The following chapter is meant to be the main discussion of the PNV as a 'ruling politico-economic party'. Unfortunately, the concept of politico-economic power is still nebulous by that point and the discussion goes in many different directions, including the *fueros* and the role of the party council. Here, again, the most interesting and important part of the discussion has to do with the position of the provinces in PNV politics. The last chapter is a bit disjointed as it discusses fiscal federalism in Spain and the PNV's position on European integration.

The book suffers from some conceptual confusion. The meaning of 'politico-economic power' remains unclear, despite attempts at defining the concept. The notion of nationalism appears in the discussion, but not that often; the author prefers to use the concepts of 'regionalism' and 'populism'. This choice, however, is not clearly justified. These conceptual problems explain, in part, why the discussion goes in many different directions and lacks a bit of focus. Nevertheless, this book is a useful addition to the reading list of anybody conducting research on Basque politics. It has the merit of considering issues of political economy, economic policy and fiscal arrangements that are too often forgotten by scholars of the Basque Country, who tend to focus on ETA and on the PNV's claims for self-determination.

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**Devolution and Constitutional Change in Northern Ireland** edited by Paul Carmichael, Colin Knox & Robert Osborne. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, ISBN 978-0-7190-7388-5

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of 1998 was a critical juncture for the political, economic and social development of the region. The new territorial politics of Northern Ireland were implemented in a context of the dismantling and regeneration of the United Kingdom's political structures. This book outlines Northern Ireland's tortuous and fractured ventures into devolved governance. Compiled as part of the ESRC Devolution and Constitutional Change Programme, the book's nineteen chapters aim to

assess the constitutional, institutional, intergovernmental, socio-political and economic dimensions of the devolution process.

Following an introduction and overview by the editors, two chapters focus on the overarching constitutional dimension. Wilson's chapter provides a useful review of attempts to forge a constitutional settlement and the difficulties encountered. He proposes an integrationist approach to move beyond elite-driven consociationalism to government by the 'moderate middle'. Using interview data, Morison seeks to ascertain whether the Agreement represents a new constitutional paradigm. He concludes that the text of the Agreement is "too prolix and diffuse" to serve as a constitution.

The political complexities of embedding the Agreement are explored over four chapters. McGarry and O'Leary are positively disposed towards the Agreement but assert that much remains to be done in order to stabilize the institutions. The chapter by Patterson and Kaufman outlines the social and political revolutions which beset unionism during the twentieth century. They use voting data to illustrate the geopolitical differences within unionism, leading the authors to a negative conclusion about the future of power-sharing. Changing interpretations of nationalism and republicanism are the object of Tonge's chapter, in which he highlights Sinn Féin's move from absolutist to pragmatic forms of republicanism and the SDLP's journey to an uncertain post-nationalist perspective. The changing electoral fortunes of both parties prompt Tonge to ask whether Northern Ireland's nationalists and republicans need two communal parties. Mitchell's concern is with party competition and voting behaviour since the Agreement. He analyses party electoral performance and support and identifies demographic and attitudinal factors and the new mobilization strategies that led to change.

Rodger MacGinty explores public attitudes to constitutional options in the context of devolution and concludes that no discernible devolution effect on Protestant and Catholic attitudes can be identified. Throughout 'the troubles', denominational symbols frequently inflamed and intensified the conflict. Bryan and McIntosh examine the significance accorded to such symbols. Disappointingly, they find little evidence of the emergence of a new symbolic sense of Northern Ireland identity. The issue of equality provides material for two chapters. Margaret Ward highlights the traditional under-representation of women in decision-making structures. Some positive developments are referred to, namely the gender quotas on policing partnerships and the significant role of women in the voluntary and community sector. Equality and human rights issues since the Belfast Agreement are detailed by Dickson and Osborne, who are impressed by the Equality Commission and the positive developments regarding human rights.

Reform is not cost-neutral. The financial relationship between Belfast and London is particularly convoluted and the Barnett formula is not universally welcomed. Yet, Midwinter urges caution about changing the current financial model. The Northern Ireland economy and the intricate economic development structures are analysed in the chapter by Goodwin, Martin Jones and Rhys Jones. The chapter illustrates the problems encountered in trying to close the productivity gap between Northern Ireland and the rest of Europe. The reformed institutions and processes are then given attention. Wilford looks inside Stormont, detailing the structures and operation of the assembly and the executive. He explains the problems arising from the complex processes and the policy commitments of the Agreement. The review of public

administration is outlined by Knox and Carmichael. They describe the aims, process and outcome of the review and conclude that it will rationalize the structures and outputs of the region's administration.

The final chapters of the volume move beyond the border. Gay and Mitchell write an interesting chapter on the role of Northern Ireland MPs in Westminster and the differences in approach between nationalists and unionists. Keating investigates the broader implications of devolution for public policy-making in all parts of the UK and urges the institutions and policy actors in the devolved regions "to think creatively and contribute to policy development". Changing cross-border and cross-channel relations are sketched by Coakley, who examines the political and administrative dimensions. Particular attention is paid to the implementation bodies and the political difficulties that have stymied their evolution. McGowan, in the final chapter, examines the post-devolution relationship with the EU. Acknowledging the EU's impact on day-to-day activities and its fostering of better relationships between North and South, he raises the pertinent issue of "appropriate representation" within the EU institutions.

This book provides valuable qualitative and quantitative data on developments in Northern Ireland since devolution. The diversity of contributions is both an advantage and a limitation of the volume. The differing focus, time frames, writing styles and chapter formats do not make for easy reading. Yet, the range of topics and the expertise of the contributors make this a book which deserves a place on the bookshelves of anyone with more than a passing interest in the transformation taking place in Northern Ireland.

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