

## BOOK REVIEWS

Nick Couldry, Sonja M. Livingstone, and Tim Markham, *Media consumption and public engagement. Beyond the Presumption of Attention* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

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The consumption of media in everyday life is not a new topic and has been present in different studies of media, political communication since the time when mass media began to play an important role in the society. However, it is interesting to study media consumption in contemporary society because of many changes on one side in media landscape, influenced by the appearance of new information and communication technologies, and on the other with the decrease of political participation in many democratic societies. For democratic governments, citizen participation, at the first place as voters, should be a key element in the process of establishing goals in a society. Mass media represents a place where ideas and interests can be freely presented and discussed, but they have also served as a sort of assistance for political participation, thus they have an important role both in everyday life and also in politics.<sup>1</sup>

Couldry, Livingstone and Markham's book "Media consumption and public engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention" is oriented toward media consumption and public connection as elements of daily practices of citizens, i.e. people's habits. The main topic of the book is the link between the private and the public through practices of everyday life. Media consumption is positioned between acting and non-acting, since media literacy is linked with action and media trust with inaction.

The book consists of three main parts: Theoretical Foundations, The Public Connection project and a Conclusion. It begins with a thorough literature review in the field of democratic theory, political sociology and media audiences. The literature review helps the authors to build a theoretical framework in which the main research question is embedded, being whether there is a mediated public connection outside the academic literature and in practice in everyday life. They then proceed to provide an answer for it, through the second experimental part of the book.

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1 Denis McQuail and Karen Siune (eds.), *Media policy: convergence, concentration and commerce* (London: Sage, 1998).

The authors seek to find a relation between public engagement and democratic politics through the analysis of different models of democracy, citizenship, political participation. After comparing different types of democracies, the authors come to the conclusion that the democracy in the UK is elitist and not participatory, which means that there is a lack of a stronger relationship between citizen engagement and government action.

Inevitable is the comparison of traditional media with the Internet, which is merging, omnipresent and interactive, and represents an increasing source of news for young people but also a valuable source for all citizens in time of emergencies. The authors notice that it leads to individualization, designated as a new “me-generation”, and fragmentation of media use, moving from mass mediated to multi-mediated culture. These new technological forms of interactive and participatory media have provided the further engagement of audiences, through online communication, connection and deliberation. Nevertheless, the authors state that the Internet optimism is risky, although it can lead to greater civic engagement and mediated public connection.

This book offers an innovative and original approach to studying media consumption and political engagement, which is shown in the empirical part of the book for which the methodology is explained in a very detailed manner. The authors have used, as a major tool the method of diaries, not directed in length, style or structure, in order to observe public communication close up. The diaries were written by 37 persons from England during 3 months. Other methods employed are two semi-structured interviews with the diarists and 13 focus groups with the same people. At the end, a survey was made to provide a context for the data from diaries. It included questions about citizen media consumption, media attitudes, political attitudes and political efficacy. This methodology provides us with plausible research in the domain of media consumption and public engagement and gives the responses on research questions raised at the beginning of the book.

The results have shown that media use is complex and multidimensional and that there are differences in media use and media consumption among diarists. The authors have compared key themes in press and in diaries to find differences between peaks in news coverage and audiences' attention. Media consumption can be considered as a habit but it doesn't guarantee an interpretative context. There is also a broader context of mediated public connection, because different values represent a bridge between the private and public world and can reinforce links between the habits of media consumption and a broader orientation. It is further concluded that there is no correlation between voting and time spent watching TV, but political interest is positively associated with news consumption. The results have also shown that political interest is highly mediated.

Declining political participation contributes to the declining of institutional legitimacy as well. The increasing pluralization leads to the transformation of “politics” and “public” life. There is no ideal type of mediated public connection. Media is used for orienting us to a world of public issues beyond private concerns, and it is not universal but has many individual forms. Therefore, the dynamics of mediated public connections is complex.

There are links between everyday media consumption and the wider social context, which should be taken into consideration. In the context of the digital divide, without stable habits of news consumption the authors are concerned that the gap between the connected and the disconnected will be bigger and exist for a longer time. The analysis of democratic engagement leads to the integration and understanding of media consumption, but there is still a call for government to take a practical steps and action in that sense. Also with that, regular interaction between citizens and media professionals is important because the interrelations between media and government, that citizens are aware of. The online world can extend contexts and networks that can facilitate dialogue with public representatives.

This book is aimed primarily for scholars, but also students, in the area of media studies and communication sciences and also broader of political and social sciences. The style of writing that the authors use is very easy to follow and the way of writing is interesting and maintains the reader’s attention. Sentences are rather short, clear and easy to understand and accessible even for broader audiences. The innovative methodology gives the book a special ease of reading by keeping the reader attentive and concentrated. Thus, it is necessary to say that the authors have thoroughly elaborated the research subject, both from the theoretical as well as empirical aspect and that it represents a significant contribution for the field of media studies.

**Iñaki Garcia Blanco, Sofie Van Bauwel, and Bart Cammaerts (eds.), *Media Agoras. Democracy, Diversity and Communication* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).**

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The normative theory of democracy often states that, among the conditions needed for democracy to function, consensus between leaders and social groups, freedom of speech and access to alternative sources of information are those which contribute decisively to the configuration of a public space wherein debate reveals

its significance in relation to “the fallacy of electoralism” stressed by the studies on democratisation. In other words, the contemporary understanding of democracy – also supported by empirical analyses specific to comparative politics – no longer illustrates the belief that this system resides only in “free and fair” electoral processes – a condition which is necessary but not sufficient for the existence of democracy – but stresses instead the need to include debate in decision-making processes, by giving an opportunity to speak to all the groups activating in the social space.

In this context, the studies published in the volume edited by Iñaki Garcia Blanco, Sofie Van Bauwel and Bart Cammaerts aim to analyse to what extent this diversity within the European Union is reflected, through media communication, in the public space specific to democratic debates. Starting from the reality of a diversity which reflects different identities, is shaped according to cultural space, ethnicity, sex, religion and sexual orientation, the volume undertakes the challenge of analysing the complexity of Western societies from a European perspective, focusing on how media institutions contribute to the configuration of the European public space and manage to involve the groups forming various facets of the same “European identity” in the establishment of a common decisional agenda as a result of public debate. The main argument focuses on the configuration of *Media Agoras*, symbolic spaces where citizens and diverse social groups would be able to express their interests as well as fight to include them in public agendas. Through media communication these Agoras manage to both build the architecture of social consensus and highlight the differences in the European area. Starting from here, the approach aims to clarify and even rethink the relation involving media, communication, diversity and democracy at the level of the European Union. The volume is divided into three parts, each of them presenting three studies. The first part covers the relationship between pluralism and the public sphere as it has been normatively identified by Habermas; the second focuses on how diversity is represented in media discourse and refers to case studies from Portugal and the Netherlands; the final part explores the practical matters involved in the formulation of European policies in the field of media communication and diversity representation. Being the product of a symposium held in Brussels in October 2007, on the subject of “Equal opportunities and communication rights: representation, participation and the European democratic deficit”, the book addresses specialists in communication, journalism and political science, as well as media managers or journalists, representatives of European NGOs or EU decision-makers.

Seen as a whole, the volume covers several issues concerning the relation between media communication and the representation of diversity in the European area. Combining normative perspectives and empirical approaches, the book stresses the social complexity of the European space as well as the problems, at the decision-making level, related to the articulation of media discourse - by institutions such as

the European Commission or the European Parliament - and in connection with the particularities of EU member states. On the other hand, aspiring to a general vision of "European democracy", since its beginning, the book's subtext includes an understanding of democracy in participative terms, seeming to ignore the empirical diversity of democratic models in European countries. On a more specific level, another observation is that although the book generally articulates a pro-diversity discourse in most of its studies with empirical references – based on discourse analysis or case studies –oriented towards the exclusive issue of gender inequality, for example, when referring to how popular Portuguese newspapers represent "the feminine" (the study signed by Carla Martins and Ana Jorge), when discussing moral citizenship and television discourse (Tonny Krijnen's study), when presenting the multidimensional model of reception studies (in the study carried out by Cláudia Álvares) or, finally, when studying some cases of transnational women's advocacy networks in the European Union (Sabine Lang's contribution).

The issue of gender inequality is acute even in the case of well-established European democracies but the situation is all the more poignant in new member states, such as Romania or Bulgaria. However, in agreement with the ideas displayed in the study authored by Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink and Christina Ortner – concerned with "the role of media for the attitudes toward Europe among socially disadvantaged groups" – decoding the issues the EU has to deal with from the perspective of diversity means considering and identifying the ways to involve in public debate "...all sub-populations – including sceptical groups such as socially disadvantaged citizens" (p. 75). Moreover, the aim assumed by the editors of this volume is to reveal how, with the help of *Media Agoras*, citizens and groups with diverse identities could strengthen the functioning of public debate and implicitly of European democracy. Or, when the issue of democratic deficit in media communication is approached only in terms of gender inequality, there is the risk for other aspects, at least as important from the viewpoint of diversity representation, to be ignored. Also, although the editors put forth a "European perspective" (p. 2), the book seems to fall short of this goal, at least from the viewpoint of empirical studies. This is precisely what an approach based on the methodology of comparative analysis would have allowed. In exchange, the analyses in the second part of the book are limited to Portugal (two studies) and the Netherlands, all of them approaching the issue of representing diversity from the perspective of gender inequality.

However, beyond the difficulty of supporting a "European perspective" by inferring general conclusions from particular cases – for example, the studies being gathered under a generalist title ("Representation and Diversity") – it should be stressed that the analyses in the book offer valuable methodological support for case studies. Otherwise, returning to an overall perspective, it is worth noting that the volume advances, both at the normative and the empirical level, a series of approaches able

to provide possibility conditions for the recalibration of academic and political debates concerned with the relation between media communication and the public space or between social diversity and democracy. Also, beyond the particular cases analysed, the volume provides guidelines for a better understanding of how European institutions debate media policies or the involvement of citizens and social groups in public debate and of how the latter receive the information about the evolution of the European Union.

Written in a clear manner – even when, at a normative level, they invoke sophisticated theories in the areas of cultural studies, sociology of public opinion or communication – and with substantial references to research in the field, the studies in the volume represent a needed explicative approach to the articulations of the European public and democratic space.

**Marc Morjé Howard, *The Politics of Citizenship in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).**

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The empirical study of citizenship policy in Europe still represents a poorly understood topic. A number of studies concentrate on the rights and practices of citizens as well as the issues of new migrants and their citizenship status. However, to the present there has been very scarce analysis produced treating comparative studies of citizenship across Europe and providing both historical and quantitative analysis.

In his book Howard looks at the implications for immigrant integration, national identity and democratic politics in the modern era. In particular, he examines these questions through an empirical study of the citizenship policies of the respective ‘older’ member-states of the European Union (EU-15), with some reference to the new member-states (the ‘Accession-12’) towards the end. The book demonstrates the extensive implications of the growing and potentially volatile issue of citizenship policies and immigrant integration. This empirical study of citizenship policy enables a comparative as well as quantitative analysis of citizenship policies across the European countries. The book represents a valuable resource for other scholars researching this emerging issue, as well as for policy analysts and policy makers coming from the countries that are subject to analysis and from other countries. As Howard himself puts it, ‘one of the main purposes of this book has been to rejuvenate the study of citizenship in comparative perspective’ (p. 194) and one can most certainly argue that he has succeeded in his goal.

Howard's approach treats citizenship as a "legal category", focusing on the formal requirements for having access to citizenship, rather than on the rights, obligations, beliefs or practices of citizenship' (p. 4). Via an empirical baseline, Howard constructs a Citizenship Policy Index (CPI); according to the respective CPI score, countries can be categorized as: restrictive, medium or liberal. Afterwards the scholarly task is to investigate what makes a country historically liberal, restrictive or to demonstrate a shift from one category to another. In terms of policy-making, Howard presents a very strong, paradoxical argument: "nondemocratic elite-driven process may lead to more inclusive outcomes, whereas genuine popular involvement can result in a more restrictive laws and institutions" in one country (p. 200).

The methodology used contains research design that includes both medium-N cross-national analysis (for the creation of CPI) and more in-depth case studies of the EU-15, as well as of the 'Accession-12' countries in the last chapter. Howard looks at two sets of factors behind the drafting of citizenship policies: historical variations and factors explaining relative continuity or change in citizenship policies. The latter include (a) international and domestic pressures for liberalization and an absence of public discussions and popular involvement; (b) mobilization of public opinion by 'far right' political party on the issues related to citizenship policies, as a blocking force of liberalization. The Citizenship Policy Index (CPI) presented through a clear and logical framework (and can be appealing even to a qualitative method researcher) is a novelty. The case studies add to the richness of the research method and give the reader a clear and comprehensive insight into respective citizenship policies. The reader is invited to learn more about each presented case.

The book, indeed, covers a wide territory: one can argue at certain points there is too much to be covered by a single research project. Each chapter stands on its own, which makes it easier for the reader to choose the chapter they are interested in. The second chapter that covers the historical legacies of the countries in question seems to stand out from the rest of the chapters. However, one of the aspects considered in this chapter (whether a country democratized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) is not all that clear; at first instance the reader might be in dilemma since all of the old member countries are considered mature democracies.

The 'New European Frontier', or the Accession-12 countries, as Howard calls them, deserve a book of their own. Perhaps Howard should have planned citizenship policies of the Accession-12 as his next research area, since it is obvious that the chapter dealing with those countries is not as developed as the previous chapters depicting the old EU member states. More specifically, a more in-depth analysis of the citizenship policies that were adopted at a later date, especially after 1989, is needed because this particular topic and development has been given little

attention. In the conclusion chapter Howard decides to address the question whether post-national or European citizenship could replace or challenge the national models. This question as such has not been set nor announced previously in the book and the reader cannot help but to wonder of the need to open such debate at the end of the book. Howard could have instead just focused on the limits of the legal approach to citizenship and the argument set previously in the book that populist movements can act as restrictors to citizenship policy liberalization in one country.

Undoubtedly, this is a relevant research subject and national citizenship does matter: "These two countervailing pressures – the need to incorporate more immigrant works within a context of an often xenophobic public opposition – will have to be resolved, in one form or another, over time. And political elites will struggle with these contradictory demands..." (p. 8). The fact that the book leaves room for further research is challenging, inviting other scholars to test the CPI and Howard's theories of liberalization and restrictiveness of citizenship policies. It would be interesting to see whether this approach can be applied to other countries, such as current and future EU candidate countries and other post-conflict and post-colonial states.

**Sigal R. Ben-Porath, *Tough Choices: Structured Paternalism and the Landscape of Choice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).**

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State paternalism smacks of an undue subordination to authorities, this is a common intuition. Sigal R. Ben-Porath might however change one's opinion as she has explored the term in depth in areas related to choice, regulation of intimacy, children and education, and oppressed and illiberal subcultures. While examining the value laden "paternalism", Ben-Porath managed to tap a strong vein which is present in contemporary liberal democracies, that of a link between the debate on policy and the practice of implementing political ideals in particular circumstances. Ben-Porath approached this "last mile" problem with a challenging claim: structured paternalism delivers real options to choose from to citizens whose limited circumstances would not otherwise allow them to realise their civic rights.

First, Ben-Porath summarised arguments regarding autonomy and freedom in, for example, John Stuart Mill and other contemporary liberal thought, namely the opportunity to make one's own life and the harm principle delineating the boundary of one's own freedom. Then she concluded that one needs to have a variety of options to choose from in order to attain these liberal ideals. Ben-Porath claims,

“these ideals are facilitated and pursued through the regulation of opportunities and choices, or, metaphorically, through cultivating a fruitful landscape of choice” (p. 9). She delimits the field of her inquiry to the process of choice by individuals in circumstances which are beyond policy making and ordinary regulation. The process is influenced by cognitive functions, cultural conditions and intimate habits. The keystone between the political and personal is, according to Ben-Porath, education which allows an individual to learn civic skills and become acquainted with various attitudes necessary for making informed choices. This particular disposition stems from Ben-Porath’s expertise as an assistant professor at the Graduate School of Education of University of Pennsylvania.

Ben-Porath presents her argument in the second chapter entitled “Why paternalism is good for you.” She finds that the “justified paternalism” (p. 20) would provide the best method to improve the well-being of individuals and expand their opportunities while respecting their inferred needs and helping them overcome the threshold conditions of civic equality. She rejects Isai Berlin’s concern that state paternalism led always to degradation of citizens by showing disrespect to the deepest human need for liberty, on the grounds that some forms of paternalism were justified as a component of social policy. Apparently, a rational paternalism in Ben-Porath’s understanding need not be coercive or treat an individual disrespectfully since its objects commonly display irrational behaviour. In the search for arguments in favour of this enlightened paternalism, Ben-Porath cites Mill’s call for a protection of individuals with impaired judgement and for those who might want to destroy their liberty by selling themselves into slavery. In these instances the “I know better than Thou” policy is apparently justified.

The positive paternalism would then reflect a moral diversity, differences of aim and preference, and a “bound rationality.” Ben-Porath explains the bound rationality as a cognition within a set of perceptions which do not reflect reality and thus cause irrational outcomes even though in itself the cognitive process is rational. Such a bound rationality is common in individuals who lack information and who are incapable of interacting with authorities for other reasons. Ben-Porath describes a need for the justified paternalism by citing supportive empirical evidence related to choices which some parents make when selecting schools for their children (pp. 129-135).

For this reviewer, the greatest contribution of Ben-Porath’s book is her fresh view on implementing constitutional and related rights in our complex societies. Ben-Porath cites many cases in the USA and UK in which one particular person, despite clearly having rights, lacks the opportunity to exercise them. Such is the case of Sarah (p. 100) brought up in an ultra-orthodox subculture having been barred even from developing the idea of a possibility of leaving that culture and becoming immersed in the mainstream society with different values, despite having an entitlement to do

so as a citizen of a liberal democracy. This level of detail uncovers the disparity between what Ben-Porath terms a “lip service of exit rights” and the facts of an individual’s life. Ben-Porath went on to argue that formal exit rights are not enough without implementing practicable strategies to allow an individual to create a new life based on new values (dubbed “entrance paths”).

Still, such a deep level of analysis does not seem to allow Ben-Porath to fully appreciate other aspects of implementing civic rights which incidentally made Isaiah Berlin or John Stuart Mill argue their case against the state’s patronage. Though Ben-Porath briefly mentions the is-ought argument originally pursued by David Hume, her point of view does not sometimes seem to pay full respect to Hume’s findings, either. Often, Ben-Porath assigned the authority to implement the last mile policies to the leviathan, the state. And, she often makes a moral argument in favour of it.

This however may be a great starting point for Ben-Porath’s further analyses. While thoroughly arguing her case for individuals impoverished in their choices, Ben-Porath might want to include in her analysis the fact that even the state is made up of other people living in their particular circumstances, having own biases and preferences. An administration can hardly be better than the people who serve in it. Ben-Porath’s further inquiries would also benefit from an additional emphasis on responsibility and its relation to morality as her line of thinking now allows her to make claims such as “taking for granted any parent’s natural goodwill for her child as well as her innate capacity to act upon her good intentions is not justified” (pp. 85-86). Every time responsibility is taken away from an individual, such as the responsibility for parenting, some philosophers and even members of certain non-reflective subcultures would argue that the liberal democracy is indeed losing out.

After the century of a welfare or cradle-to-grave state, Ben-Porath correctly identified a need to build rather a different version of it, possibly a Big Mommy State. Her call to reconsider using paternalism in social policy might even be better heard as an argument for a political maternalism in which social realities truly reflect the liberal democratic ideals based on compassion and understanding by those in the position of power. Such a political theory would apparently require a shared responsibility between the individual and state, and this sharing would then result in an intriguing challenge to the classical moral premise of “I decide therefore I am responsible.”

**Emel Akçali, *Chypre: Un Enjeu Géopolitique Actuel* (Cyprus: A Current Geopolitical Game) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009).**

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The end of the Cold War brought old conflicts back into the light. There were some instances when such conflicts bear immediate geostrategic relevance for international actors and practical considerations of the international organisations lead to medium and long-term solutions. Cyprus is one example in this vein, its Greek part being invited to become a full member of the European Union in May 2004, while the Turkish part was placed on a waiting list.

Emel Akçali's book aims to offer comprehensive information regarding the current status of the "Cyprus issue", by covering the geographical, historical and geopolitical aspects of the issue. As the author outlines, the book is nothing but "a modest contribution to the development of a new Geopolitics related to ethno-territorial conflicts from the international stage" (p. 7). Without an attempt to make predictions or to offer universal prescriptions, the reader has the opportunity to read between the lines and identify possible starting points for new creative diplomatic solutions.

The general perspective follows the directions of the "new geopolitics" (p. 31), a vision prompted by the conclusion of the incapacity of the modern state or inter-state system to answer contemporary conflicts (p. 29). This approach contrasts the old perception that ideologically discredited the old geopolitical perspectives. It encourages both the internal and external geopolitics of the states starting from an adequate knowledge of the spaces and the places (p. 31). By the inventory of the problems of the Cyprus issue, the book aims to offer further areas of study and specific research of the political, international and cultural issues.

The reader has the opportunity to find almost everything about Cyprus in the book: the history of the island, the political geography of the two parts, the main foreign actors involved, and the internal factors including the political parties, the media, and the economic influences.

The book is structured into three parts: the historical and geographical dimension of the question and The geopolitics of Cyprus, first the foreign actors and then the domestic actors. After introducing genealogically and descriptively the main elements of the problem, there are presented the main actors involved directly or indirectly in the configuration of the whole issue.

Even for a small island, the special character of its insularity – not isolated by the other more or less close neighbors – implies significant destabilization potential (p.123). With the accession to EU membership of the Greek part of the island, it represents a real door to Europe for the Middle Eastern countries including the states of Israel, Lebanon and Egypt, more significantly. But, at the same time, the European interests of these countries are not clearly outlined in order to have an adequate frame for the further interactions on the geopolitical stage. Given its geographical position, Cyprus represented and will continue to represent, a “terra promise” for asylum seekers and immigrants from neighboring areas, as well as the first choice for refugees during the common conflicts in the region. Equally, Cyprus played and will continue to play a big role as a neutral place for meetings, political dialogues or economic exchanges among partners from the area (p. 157, 174). We might question how much this role is detrimental for a final configuration of a solution as long as the immediate interests of the main actors involved are pledged towards maintaining the status quo.

In comparison with the old school of geopolitics, conflict as such is not considered by the author as a direct consequence of the geographical position and the island’s status, but rather as a result of using and abusing this status by internal actors and other external states directly involved.

The documentary material is very rich: recent historical sources, statistical data (e.g. demographic and economic), maps, pictures taken by the author aiming to illustrate in a way similar to a journalistic approach, the accuracy of the affirmations made, direct interviews with main actors involved in the decision-making process regarding the fate of the two parts of the island as well as international players, but also qualitative investigations made across the two communities, offering not a few ideas about how the future of the island could emerge. One of the most important aspects to be taken into account in the elaboration of a solution is finding the best path going beyond an ethnocentric perspective. In this respect, an increased presence of the European Union, but with a less euro-centrist emphasis might find adequate answers to the very specific issues of property rights, economic development or immigration. In this respect, a concentration on very descriptive aspects of the problem is succeeding in offering to the academic perspective food for thought in order to outline these adequate answers. A larger frame on the theory would suffer of a lack of pertinence.

At the same time, the limits of the study become visible when we have to deal with communities in conflict. The constraints are different, as the conflict narrative is made of small, but highly valuable details, conflictual identities built upon conflictual versions of the pasts. From this point of view, the simple description of a certain situation, without making the appropriate critical evaluations is not helpful for the academic approach. We are provided with data that is significantly

complicating a balanced and reliable approach, mainly when it concerns post-conflict solutions. The abundance of details could dissipate the relevance of the theoretical models appropriate for the cases discussed.

Fernard Braudel, one of the most passionate writers about the Mediterranean space, projected possible changes at the level of individual mentalities on the horizon of the "longue durée" – a mental space covering more than one generation and made possible by very fine repositioning of the ways of thinking. The potential for common bridges forcing the two communities of the island together exist: the environment, the social problems, the status of human rights are only few of the possible topics which could project the discussion between Turks and Greeks from the island of Cyprus to another level of understanding and solution-seeking.

Of course it is not possible to say everything about Cyprus in only one book. What this study succeeded to do is outlining, in as a comprehensive way as possible, the main subjects and challenges at the local, regional and international level. This is, in fact, the strong and the weak point of the research. At the end of the book you could find a significant number of topics to be further analyzed but the reader is mostly left to do the further configuration of the framework alone. Our perspective is enriched and from the qualitative point of view from which we could make conclusions based on the book's documentation.

The book represents a useful tool for international scholars and experts in the area of conflict resolution and the Mediterranean space, as well as for representatives of international organizations or journalists. As very clear theoretical statements are lacking, it is not very clear how much the special situation of the island could be used in analyzing other similar cases and, if so, which cases could fit for eventual comparison. A better academic exploration concerns the positioning of the other regional actors from the Mediterranean space and, mostly, how an eventual resolution could prompt a reconsideration of the map of solutions regarding the immediate area. At the end of the book the reader is enriched with more information about the Cyprus issue, but equally interested to find other resources in order to clarify the social, political and economic aspects revealed in the book.

**Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).**

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Historian Quentin Skinner's latest book deals with the notion of political liberty in the thought of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Hobbes is well-known as a staunch

proponent of absolute monarchical government; thus it might seem strange at first glance that Hobbes's name should find itself associated here with republicanism, a political ideology most associated with rule by the people. However, one sees that the juxtaposition of the two terms in the book's title is not at all out of place once the book's content is taken into account.

Like Skinner's preceding works, such as *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1978) and *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), the argument of this book is based on the author's particular method as first set forth in the late 1960's. According to this so-called "Cambridge" approach to the history of political thought, texts in this tradition can only be comprehensively understood in relation to the (historical) *context* in which they were composed and not exclusively or even primarily on their own terms; the "great books" which constitute the tradition of political thought would thus not be "free-standing," for their authors wrote them in the context of their contemporaries, a situation that may well lead an author into vitriolic confrontation with his opponents. In such a context, an author's *language* does not take a neutral position; rather, his words become *deeds* in the manner of philosopher J.L. Austin's "speech-act" theory. Hence Skinner says that in order to faithfully interpret Hobbes's texts "we need to recognize the force of the maxim that words are also deeds" (xvi). This particular account of Hobbes's idea of political liberty thus seeks to convey "Hobbes's political theory not simply as a general system of ideas but also as a polemical intervention in the ideological conflicts of his time." (*ibid.*)

Skinner states in the preface that the book purports to constitute two main contributions to existing Hobbes scholarship. First, while "most recent studies have focused exclusively on Hobbes's texts, without asking what might have prompted him to formulate and reformulate his distinctive arguments," Skinner has "tried to show how Hobbes' successive attempts to grapple with the question of human liberty were deeply affected by the claims put forward by the radical and parliamentarian writers in the period of the [English] civil war" (xiv-xv). Second, Skinner seeks to refute the "one cardinal assumption" prevalent in recent Hobbes scholarship "that seems to me untenable," namely that "Hobbes's beliefs, including his beliefs about liberty" did not change over the course of his writings (xv). Indeed, the very structure of the book is centered around the evolving character of Hobbes's notion of liberty, which according to Skinner changes markedly between each of Hobbes's three major works: the *Elements of Law* (1640), *De Cive* (1642), and the *Leviathan* (1651).

Skinner opens, however, with an account of Hobbes' early training in Greek and Roman grammar and rhetoric, in an effort to depict Hobbes as a "faithful follower of humanist literary practices," an enthusiasm which, though once renounced by Hobbes, surfaces in the form of the elaborate frontispieces which grace the original

covers of Hobbes' works. This, Skinner says, is because Hobbes' contemporaries held an "interest in matching word and image" because "visual images may be capable of exercising a still more potent effect" than mere words (7). Indeed, this book contains many such frontispieces, not only those from Hobbes' works but also those of his contemporaries. Perhaps the most famous of these can often be found on the cover of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, depicting the all-powerful sovereign as an "artificial" man who contains within himself the "natural men" by whom he is constituted for the sake of peace and prosperity in this "Commonwealth."

Within the larger structure of Hobbes' *oeuvre* as mentioned above, Skinner shows first that the notion of liberty as explained in the *Elements* is marked by a process of "de-liberation," whereby "we deliberate about whether to perform an action within our powers," a process which involves a weighing of "appetites, which incline us to act and our fears, which withhold us from proceeding," with the aim of reaching "a determinate will" (20). According to Skinner's method, works in the history of political philosophy must be understood in their historical context; the passage just cited may serve as an example of this approach, which permeates the book: Skinner shows that the will becomes here "nothing other than the name of the last appetite or fear that brings deliberation to an end," a result that Skinner sees as an opposition to "the entire scholastic understanding of the will as one of the permanent features of the human soul, the faculty that enables us freely to will and thereby freely to act" (25). Skinner amply documents such polemical debates (along with the appropriate frontispieces) which arose between Hobbes and his opponents, such as the Anglican Bishop, John Bramhall. It is precisely these sorts of often antagonistic interactions between Hobbes and his contemporaries that are held here as central to the development of Hobbes's conception of liberty.

Primarily, Skinner seeks to show that the development of Hobbes's notion of liberty achieves itself within the framework of polemical debate between Hobbes and his contemporary opponents who sought the institution of a republic or "free state." Hobbes's involvement in this debate can be seen in his definition of liberty in chapter 21 of the *Leviathan* as the "absence of *external* impediments to motion" (127). Skinner ably demonstrates that this change in Hobbes's definition of liberty did not arise of itself, but grew out of active debates over the notion of freedom. Because Hobbes now says that freedom consists in the absence of external impediments to motion (and not absence of absolute monarchical rule), freedom would now be consistent with monarchy (Hobbes's preference for stable government), whereas according to the opposing republican theorists, liberty would be possible only in a "free state" undergirded by constitutional law. For Skinner, Hobbes may be seen in such a way to modify his notion of liberty in the course of his works in response to his contemporary challengers.

This book is surely a valuable contribution to the existing body of Hobbes scholarship. Rich in well-documented references to figures of slight repute, but whose influence on Hobbes's thought can hardly be disregarded, this work doubtlessly constitutes one of the most important accounts of the Hobbesian idea of freedom. Expectedly, Skinner stresses the *context* of Hobbes's contemporaries in the development of his notion of liberty. Yet one might find in Skinner's approach an exaggerated emphasis on the historical and political context in which a text is composed. One might inquire as to the possibility of the independence of a text from the historical context of its origin; and one might well find in the *interaction* between the text and the individual reader a source of interpretation that *exceeds* those limits that the historical context of a text might demand of its interpretation. If this is the case, then Hobbes's books may well be susceptible of bearing a considerably wider scope of understanding than that which their historical context alone can furnish. That being said, this excellent book does itself contribute significantly to our understanding of Hobbes's notion of "liberty" in the framework of his *oeuvre* and as such ought to take an important place in the existing body of Hobbes literature.

**Richard H. Immerman, *Empire for Liberty, A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010).**

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The academic profile of Richard Immerman places him in the field of US foreign relations research. That is why a book about the American Empire viewed from a conceptual and rather philosophical side came as a surprise. *Empire for Liberty, A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* is an effort to build along a chronological line, the argumentation to support today's existence of an American Empire. The book focuses on the evolution of the idea of an American Empire from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to present day. According to Immerman, the American Empire was built in two centuries, with extreme strains made not only by decision makers, but also by the people.

The six chapters of the book include the stories of six men who influenced the rise of the American Empire. Benjamin Franklin, John Quincy Adams, William Henry Seward, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Foster Dulles, and Paul Wolfowitz are powerful figures who have left a distinctive mark in the American history. With the exception of John Quincy Adams, who was the sixth president of the United States, all of them had remarkable positions in state affairs. What united them was the idea of building an Empire for Liberty, which was to extend the blessings of its nation to other nations worldwide and set an example as far as state evolution is concerned.

Immerman's choice of characters resides in each man's efforts made to accomplish this imperial dream. They were all true believers in America's exceptional destiny and each of them had pursued his own specific path to help turn the United States of America into an Empire. Franklin, for example, believed in the force of identity and citizenship, Quincy Adams advocated cementing liberty from slavery, Seward tried to establish a commercial empire, Lodge supported a US navy to pioneer US initiatives overseas, Dulles backed the idea of US leadership to ensure global peace and civilization and Wolfowitz embraced the credo that the US mission was to provide global democratization.

The topic is ambitious, being embedded in a wider literature characterized by similar endeavors.<sup>2</sup> The goal is to illustrate how these statesmen influenced and worked towards the goal of extending the newly forming United States to the status of an empire, within a dramatic historical context: slavery, the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq are a few examples.

An interesting approach that Immerman uses is to oppose antagonizing views; for instance, he contrasts the mere existence of the US Empire with the fact that the US always seemed reluctant to pose as just another empire. If George Washington and Benjamin Franklin started the development of an American empire, as the antidote and the superior of all other existing empires, George W. Bush tried to put an end to it by stating that there is no such thing, argues Immerman. However, he extracts brand new ideas which show the US as an expanding empire. Its inner growth and external expansion are concomitant and interdependent, and Liberty is an integral part of this empire

From Immerman's perspective, empire and liberty are mutually reinforcing. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the empire the US built, which according to Immerman is the most powerful in world history, was based on global leadership, military superiority and the worldwide spread of institutions that bear the US emblem: NATO, the UN, the IMF, the WTO and many others. Nevertheless, it appears that the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the climactic moment for this empire for liberty because, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, America turned into an empire of liberty for its own people only. The 21<sup>st</sup> century signifies the nadir of the American Empire for/of Liberty, because of its recent humiliation in Iraq and the consequences of the economic crisis. It is here that Immerman refrains from making assumptions but rather sets the scene and let's his readers draw conclusions by themselves. Is there a use for this Empire? This is the point at which his narrative becomes critical. Although his writing is generally

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2 For example, A.J. Bacevich's *American Empire: the Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy* (2002), William Odom's *America's Inadvertent Empire* (2004), Todd Emmanuel's *After the Empire: the Breakdown of the American Order* (2004), and Rodrigue Tremblay's *The New American Empire* (2004).

balanced, here the author points out the malfunctions that occurred in US policy throughout the time, which led to the present dilemma.

The central case of the book rests as follows: the American empire is not as centralized, integrated and huge as the Roman one, nor colonial like the British, but rather an entity of ideas, mentalities, values and interests. Each of the six profiled people developed one of these features. The key point of the argument stands as simple: greatness can only come from inside.

Immerman points out the good and the bad sides of each of these men in a balanced way. One's lack of substance is counterbalanced with another's pragmatic solutions. He is also very sincere as far as these statesmen's motivations . A good example is the abolition of slavery, for the Empire' benefit.

A relevant drawback of this book is that the author does not explore the notion of "imperialism" too much. A juicy term like this one should be better exploited. Immerman only defines it and appears to believe that if he argues the case of empire, this would be quite enough to send the necessary signals that an empire generates imperialism. Another criticism that can be brought to him is that he ends the book too quickly and abruptly, when there was a need for a more refined analysis to address the issue of American Empire/imperialism in the times of George W; Bush, since it was then that the term of "American Empire" was reborn.

Overall, the book is very well written, with an attractive title and a well-polished argument. Richard Immerman seems to be a versatile author, eager to emulate the opinions of the people he chose as examples, advocating that in time, the American Empire and consequently its imperialism, served to bring freedom from slavery, extend economic benefits to the world, fight international Communism and become the crusader against global tyranny. There is a synergy between its interests, power and principles, which proves that America has a destiny to model the world to come. Moreover, Immerman's approach is innovative. By choosing six important figures in the American history and using their life goals and accomplishments to portray the way in which the American Empire's ideas evolved accross centuries he makes connections which reflect, in a unique way, a page of American history. The present Obama administration is not really considered, but it would make an interesting exercise to connect Immerman's present work, with another to be written in, let's say, 100 years from now.

The book constitutes valuable reading for both academics and laymen. However, the numerous references to American foreign policy theory and US foreign relations make it more suitable for academic purposes rather than just good spare time reading. It is a strongly recommended tool for those interested in solving the

mystery of what “American Empire” means and especially for those who would like to see how American political thinking evolved across the centuries.

**Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, *Trials of Europeanization, Turkish Political Culture and the European Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).**

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The concept of ‘Europeanization’ has gained a wide currency among the students of Turkey-European Union [EU] relations with much of the focus devoted to Turkey’s membership process and the EU’s influence on Turkey. Regarding the latter, scholars have utilized this concept to explain Turkish democratization reforms, which the incumbent Turkish foreign minister described as the “silent revolution,”<sup>3</sup> and Turkey’s reliance on soft power tools such as diplomacy and negotiations in foreign policy under the current government. Yet, as Erguder points out in his foreword to this book, although it has the potential to undermine the permanency and deeper internationalization of such reforms, how Turkish political culture has been evolving has remained understudied. Hence, Grigoriadis’ book seeks out to fill this gap. Taking Europeanization as the “goodness of fit” allows the author to clarify that, even though the EU is not the sole factor for the transformation that has taken place in Turkey, the EU has been a crucial pillar in the liberalization of Turkish political culture.

Grigoriadis carries out this task by elaborating on the continuity and change in four core areas where political culture exists: civil society, the state, the secularism debate and national identity in Turkey. With regards to the proliferation of civil society groups for the past few decades in Turkey, Grigoriadis acknowledges the impact of systemic factors such as the end of the bipolar international system and globalization. He also admits that the corrosion of the Turkish state icon, which he delineates as the “demystification of the state” due to domestic events such as the *Susurluk* incident and the deep economic crisis in 2000-2001, and the Kurdish issue, also facilitated the growth of civil society. The EU further enabled the expansion of the realm for civil society groups and associations to operate freely and more effectively by providing them with not only with financial assistance but also by pushing for legislative reform.

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3 Ahmet Davutoglu. “Europe Moet Beloften Jegens Turkije Nakomen” (Europe Needs to Make Good on Her Promises to Turkey), *De Volkskrant*; available at [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/article-by-h\\_e\\_ahmet-davutoglu-published-in-de-volkskrant-newspaper-\\_netherlands\\_-on-08\\_10\\_2009.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/article-by-h_e_ahmet-davutoglu-published-in-de-volkskrant-newspaper-_netherlands_-on-08_10_2009.en.mfa).

Turkey's 'strong state' tradition is a legacy of the Ottoman Empire: in a nutshell, citizens live to serve the state rather than the other way around. Griogoriadis demonstrates how this conception of the Turkish state, though arguably still held by the state elite, might be gradually but painfully evolving. While the influence, positive or negative, of other factors such as the United States after the 1990s, the armed conflict with the PKK [Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan] and the systemic change are all recognized, the EU helped change state-society relations by supporting radical reforms in civil-military relations to curb the interference of Turkish military in civilian politics. The EU has played a vital role in the reorganization and re-composition of the National Security Council to that end and in the closure of the State Security Courts.

If revolutionary transformation has occurred in other areas, the least development has arguably taken place in terms of the secularism debate. Even though the EU defended the rights of religious minorities in Turkey and exerted pressure on Turkey, which favored the *Hanafi* school over others with its policies, to introduce reforms to improve these rights, the actual outcome has not gone much beyond encouraging the government to instigate a societal debate on the issue. At the same time, the EU had been far less interested in urging reform to resolve the headscarf issue although the defense of the headscarf freedom in Turkish universities made constant references to the 'right of education', 'the principle of nondiscrimination', and the 'freedom of religion' being protected by the European Convention of Human Rights and other international human rights treaties (p.114).

With the end of the Cold War, the Turkish state's ability to keep the lid it had long and firmly clamped on rival national identity interpretations and expressions waned. The official, allegedly-homogenous, and secular Turkish national identity faced serious challenge by its own Kurdish, Alawite, and Islamic identity claims. The EU membership process further fanned the healthy yet sterile debate on how to render Turkish national identity more inclusive to incorporate its minorities, such as the Kurds and the Alawites. The pressure that the EU exerted on Turkey through reports such as "the working group on minority and cultural rights" materialized as the state channel started incremental broadcasts in Kurdish and some other minority languages.

At first glance, the EU's contribution to Turkey's democratization reforms seems to be indubitable. Grigoriadis adds to that the deeper and perhaps less visible change the EU has wrought in Turkish political culture. Yet, as the author deservedly notes, the EU's impact is not exclusive of other rival and equally valid explanations. Because "transformation may occur on the basis of "a multitude of coevolving,

parallel and not necessarily tightly coupled processes”<sup>4</sup> the author’s balanced take on the sway of the EU stands as a merit to be applauded. Besides, the clear general structure of the book, which makes it very convenient for the reader to follow the author's arguments, is surely praiseworthy.

Nonetheless, the book suffers from a contradiction. The author purportedly claims that the ECHR decision [to uphold the Turkish Constitutional Court’s decision to close down former Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) in 1998] demonstrated that “Islamic extremism could not be protected by European liberal democratic institutions....Like terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism could not expect support from European courts” (p. 110). However, elsewhere in the book he suggests that the ‘Just Order’ program of the Refah Partisi merely meant a more moral, transparent and honest government; the claim that the Welfare Party posed an existential threat to the Republic was exaggerated because the party only paid lip service to their 'Just Order' program (p. 104). It then becomes the legitimate to ask whether this means that the ECHR affirmed the closure of a popularly elected political party in government, which was forced to resign after the ‘soft coup’ in 1997, with no persuasive grounds and whether ECHR’s that decision contributed to the democratization of Turkey and the advance of “participant” elements in Turkish political culture. Given that Turkish constitutional court members looked to the ECHR decisions as supporting evidence to legitimize that party closure and ban on headscarves<sup>5</sup>, which the author admits (p. 118), and that the Turkish constitutional court continued to be the stumbling block against further democratization and reforms on the area of secularism debate, the ECHR’s seal of the closure of the Refah Partisi based on “sheer suspicion”<sup>6</sup> can hardly be conceived of as a positive encouragement by the EU for the liberalization of Turkish political culture.

In closing, in spite of the reservation noted above, *Trials of Europeanization: Turkish Political Culture and the European Union* proves to be a valuable reading thanks to the author's compelling knowledge of politics of the Turkish Republic since its founding as well as his astute utilization of the concept of ‘Europeanization’ to give the due credence to other possible explanations.

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4 Olsen quoted in *The Politics of Europeanization*, ed. Kevin Featherstone and Claudio Radaelli (eds.) (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

5 Cenap Cakmak, *Limits of the Constitutional Court As a Political Actor Shaping Turkish Political Landscape*, (Bilgesam: 2009); available at [http://www.bilgesam.com/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=220:limits-of-the-constitutional-court-as-a-political-actor-shaping-turkish-political-landscape-&catid=113:analizler-sosyo-kultur&Itemid=148](http://www.bilgesam.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=220:limits-of-the-constitutional-court-as-a-political-actor-shaping-turkish-political-landscape-&catid=113:analizler-sosyo-kultur&Itemid=148)

6 Gunes Murat Tezcur, “Constitutionalism, Judiciary, and Democracy in Islamic Societies,” *Polity* 39 (4) (October 2007): 479-501.

**Andreas Goldthau and Jan Martin Witte (eds.) *Global Energy Governance. The New Rules of the Game*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010).**

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Traditionally, when energy is discussed the focus is placed primarily on the supply side of the chain, on state-to-state competition in which one country's energy gain is another one's loss and on the struggle to achieve energy security and be protected against a possible "energy weapon". Both the academic and the policy worlds still use this zero-sum approach to analyze the energy domain while the changes that have occurred in the global energy landscape should have made this geopolitical paradigm obsolete. With these observations in mind the authors have embarked on addressing this research gap by shifting the focus of the energy discussion from a narrow security perspective to a broader governance-centered view on energy emphasizing the role played by rules and institutions.

In Goldthau and Witte's opinion, the sharp focus on access to resources has kept out of sight key developments that need to be addressed when trying to create effective global energy governance. The central role of increasingly global energy markets, the importance of the institutional framework that regulates the energy market and the significance of non-state actors (international energy companies, financial institutions, international and regional organizations) are in the editors' opinion some of the crucial issues that need to be addressed when energy is discussed. This book is a first attempt to use such a broad perspective to identify and analyze the "rules of the game" and the global energy institutional framework, the interplay between them as well as the consequences of these new developments on public policy.

In tackling a domain so far restricted only to a geopolitical framework, the editors had in front of them the challenge of summarizing a multitude of subtopics intrinsically connected to energy that have been previously overlooked. They divided the book into 4 parts, each collecting several chapters discussing significant aspects within that subtopic in the energy domain. The first part, *Global energy and trade and investment*, discusses the interplay between energy diplomacy and the energy markets (Goldthau), the existing institutional structure in energy trade (Selivanova), and governance solutions for the biofuels industry (Zarrilli). *Global energy and financial markets* addresses issues such as the role of national oil companies in the global energy market (Jaffe and Soligo), the challenges in the emergence of a global carbon market (Blyth), and the investment in low-carbon energy sources in the current context of the economic crisis (Huntington and Jojarth). Part three, *Short-term supply management and long-term energy cooperation* analyzes how the emergence of new high consumers in the energy

market such as China and India makes change necessary in the existing governance structure (Kohl), the role of LNG in a globalized gas market (de Jong, Van der Linde and Smeenk), and consumer cooperation in an uncertain market (Harks). The final section, *Emerging issues and outlook*, discusses efforts to make good governance part of the rules of the game in global energy (Benner and Soares de Oliveira) and the increasing importance of sovereign wealth funds in the global energy circuit (Manzer and Witte). Each part includes a policy perspective where solutions are put forth in order improve current deficiencies in energy governance.

The most innovative aspect of this book is its institutionalist perspective, going beyond traditional energy security to show the important role played by rules and institutions and how making these two aspects the linchpin of the energy debate could stem valuable solutions that will move the global energy market from a zero-sum game to a truly global arena where cooperation could be achieved. The book also has the advantage of offering the reader the possibility to fully understand the debate without requiring a great level of expertise in the field. Additionally, the authors achieve a balance between academic research and policy-oriented solutions making this publication relevant of a larger audience.

Another positive aspect of the book is the fact that it discusses energy in a “global” manner, as promised in the title, not only showing the global interconnectedness achieved by the oil and gas markets but also by analyzing a wide range of aspects in the contemporary energy trade. However, because of this attempt to maintain a global perspective on the domain, the book sometimes gives the feeling of skipping too quickly from one subtopic to the other. This feeling is still present even with the gathering of the chapters in four linked parts.

Overall the book achieves both its purposes: to widen the debate on energy by bringing into the discussion institutions and rules for the global energy market and to offer policy answers. The institutions need to fulfill several tasks such as correcting market failures, lowering transaction costs and setting standards and rules. Also, the authors encourage solutions, such as support for increased information sharing and transparency, inclusion into the energy equation of new consumers from the developing world, a reinforced focus on climate change and creating incentives for trade and investment in the current economic environment.

Throughout the book one central idea unites all the authors: the necessity to create a global energy governance structure equipped with rules and institutions managing the energy needs of all the actors involved in the process. Many of the authors discuss institutions such as the International Energy Agency, the World Trade Organization and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as their role in regulating and managing the various aspects of the trade in energy. However, in spite of promoting this new perspective on energy, the conclusions

reveal the fact that we are far away from a proper governance structure that is capable of dealing with the challenges of our energy needs. Moreover, Albert Bressant, for example, notices that in spite of the dramatic increase in the role of markets, international institutions and non-state actors, the “global energy system is now subject to a hybrid form of governance” (p. 276) and these new players have to work “within quantitative limits that are set by governments and not by the market itself” (p. 276). This makes the process of “reforming the rules of the game for global energy governance (...) a thoroughly political exercise [that] will require major efforts by all involved players” (p. 356). However, with this book the authors have opened the door towards a new way of thinking about energy relevant not only for research purposes but for actual long-term sustainable policy change.

**Hugh Compston, *Policy Networks and Policy Change* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).**

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Devising a theory of political science or public policy that can flawlessly predict the future is among the most sought-after goals of political scientists. While the subjective nature of studying human political behavior is unlikely to permit the formulation of a universally correct predictive theory, there are breakthroughs that doubtlessly give us applicable insight into forecasting future developments in public policy. With *Policy Networks and Policy Change: Putting Policy Network Theory to the Test*, Hugh Compston has attempted to make such a breakthrough.

Before reviewing what Compston proposes and analyzing the degree to which his theory can be verified, it is important to outline the core concepts and assumptions of the book. First of all, *public policy* is defined as “the activities of government as they affect those towards whom they are directed, such as provision of pensions” (p.1), as opposed to general political processes or government actions. One of the book’s core concepts, *policy networks*, is defined as interdependent political actors who exchange resources that they perceive as valuable to them. The actors are broadly defined and include a range of entities from senior officials to non-governmental organizations. Compston has also set some limitations to the predictive capacity of his theory. One is that the actions of policy network members cannot be expected to determine every single outcome in public policy, because various external influences and circumstances may often affect the functioning of a policy network. Finally, the author limits the scope of his study to the 12 most affluent EU member states, except Luxemburg.

Contrary to the views of many political scientists, who see policy network theory as an explanation of policy stability rather than policy change (p.34), the author has tried to adapt policy network theory into a tool that produces testable hypotheses to predict policy change. The way Compston goes about doing that is by first identifying major trends, which he calls *king trends*. These have to have been verified, to affect a large number of people, and to have operated in the 12 most affluent EU member-states in the past. They should also be expected to continue operating until 2020. The criteria are adequate, for the general analysis of public policy that Compston is making; in addition to that, the country criterion is particularly important because it highlights the degree to which public policy in developed countries, like the EU member-states, has become rationally predictable, while that is not the case in developing countries.

Using the theory on the way policy networks function, namely that policy change is determined by resource exchange and by the actors' perceptions, strategies, and norms, Compston has generated hypotheses about how king trends will affect public policy. It is worth highlighting parenthetically that by including perceptions into the list of considerations, Compston wisely controls for the irrationality of human nature.

In order to prove or disprove the hypotheses, the author tests them by verifying their propositions against data of recent policy trends. Finally, Compston uses Popper's falsification approach (p. 74) and accepts his hypotheses as proven if they hold true for 9 out of the 12 test countries. It should be further clarified that by *proven*, he means that the trend has been existing up to the present day and this allows us to make the educated guess that it will continue to operate.

Aside of the being clearly described, Compston's predictive theory is methodologically noteworthy, because it manages to test the validity of its propositions. Performing the latter convincingly is obviously the most challenging hurdle before proving that a predictive theory succeeds. As mentioned, Compston goes about testing his hypotheses by using evidence about recent (past) policy trends; some readers may initially interpret this as circular logic. Compston anticipates and addresses this issue, while also summarizing the testing process: He states that the methodology used to generate the *future policy implications* of every king trend does not refer to and does not require prior knowledge of recent policy trends, but rather relies on the *causal paths* formulated by the theory. The author concludes therefore that there is "nothing circular about using recent policy trends to test its conclusions about the future policy implications" (p. 72),

While Compston's argument regarding circular logic is true and convincingly removes most doubts, one would even better appreciate the validity of Policy Networks theory, if one could compare the propositions derived through the

theory's causal pathways and other hypotheses derives simply by analyzing past policy trends. It would also have been an intriguing addition if the author had included hypotheses based entirely on the analysis of data (past policy trends) and compared their validity to that of hypotheses derived through Policy Network theory.

In addition to its theoretical merits, the book also covers most king trends occurring in the European Union. The author has devoted a considerable part of his book to applying his methodology and formulating the policy implications of issues such as growing affluence, climate change, internationalization of production, population ageing and others. The book closes with an informative and thoughtful chapter on the future of public policy, which completes Compston's significant work with an analysis predicting developments like more business-friendly policies, more intrusive law enforcement, and other practical expectations, that could be applied to the work of both scholars and policy makers.

There is one omission to the list of king trends, which this reviewer would have been interested to read about. This is mass immigration from non-EU countries and the associated problem of insufficient integration, which regardless of one's political bias, is widely recognized as a significant challenge to the 12 countries that Compston works with. It has been occurring for decades, is convincingly verified, and affects a large number of people. Therefore, mass immigration from non-EU countries constitutes a king trend according to the criteria listed in the book. It is also a trend capable of altering public policy, according to the electoral literature invoked in the beginning of the book, by making long-term changes to Europe's demographics and therefore Europe's "electorate of social groups" (p.61), characterized by biases, identifications, interests in specific issues, etc. In this way, it is such a potentially influential trend that it could override other king trends described in the book, and as such merits attention.

The primary merit of *Policy Networks and Policy Change: Putting Policy Network Theory to the Test* is that Compston has successfully done something very difficult – create a convincing predictive theory, which positively responds to testing. He has done this in a clear and accessible writing style, and has analyzed some of the most important trends in Europe through the prism of the theory. He has also been successful in escaping the rigidity of other predictive theories, by giving enough weight to subjective factors like the changing perceptions of political actors. Compston can be credited with making a noteworthy scholarly contribution to the field of Public Policy.

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