



The European Polity and Policy Making: Contemporary Developments and Future Challenges

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This second special edition of *Political Perspectives* intends to continue with the themes established within the first edition, while simultaneously expanding its scope. Therefore not only does this second edition focussed upon EU level developments within the European polity and policy making, but it also includes developments within the various member states. The two levels of analysis are intimately linked and any holistic understanding of the EU requires a knowledge of developments within both areas.

The collection of articles compiled within this edition not only represents the diverse nature of the European polity and policy-making, but also the significant contribution which doctoral candidates are making to the field. Doctoral study can often be a lonely and stressful experience, yet graduate journals such as *Political Perspectives* provide a supportive environment in which graduate students can publish their work. Articles are blind peer reviewed by other graduate students and the aim of the journal is to ensure that the procedure is as supportive and enjoyable as possible.

As with the first edition, all contributions to the journal were of the highest standard. This not only reflects the current talent within the contributors to this edition, but also within the broader graduate community within the field. A quick glance down the list of contributors to this edition reveals a vibrant mix of researchers from across Europe and North America.

The article by Maria Romana Allegri addresses the age-old 'democratic deficit' debate from a contemporary standpoint. The author first considers and reviews

the wider literature on legitimacy and the polity before questioning its relevance to the European Union of the 21st century. Next the author provides a highly prescient analysis of the Constitutional and Lisbon treaties, arguing that despite addressing some of the criticism levelled against the EU, the treaties remain deficient in a number of critical respects.

Continuing this fascinating theme, Valerie Dye provides a compelling analysis of competing sources of legitimacy and their relevance to the EU. Drawing in particular on the work of Jurgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib, Dye argues that an emphasis on input or procedural legitimacy remains inadequate, and that the EU must begin to address questions of output or substantive legitimacy more effectively.

Tanya Colclough assesses the importance of neutrality in Irish defence policy. Having provided a broad overview of the latest developments in the dynamic policy field of European security and defence policy (ESDP), the article considers how Irish defence policy has been shaped and adapted in response to the EU Security Strategy and its recent participation in the Nordic Battlegroup. The author argues convincingly that despite its continued neutrality and the legislative constraints that limit its participation in overseas operations, Ireland has not served as a barrier to ESDP's development and remains a firm supporter of closer defence cooperation.

The article on enhanced cooperation in the EU and its relationship with ASEAN offers a fascinating comparative analysis of regional economic integration. In particular the author, Per-Fei Chang, considers developments within the treaties of Amsterdam and Nice which permit greater flexibility or 'enhanced cooperation' between EU member states – exploring their theoretical basis and institutional manifestation, and employing direct comparison with similar initiatives within ASEAN to offer valuable insights for European policy makers.

Paul Copeland provides an analysis of developments within the European Social Model. The ESM debate is one of the most contested aspects of the European integration process. Firstly, the paper examines the ESM debate and provides an original definition as to its precise contents. According to Copeland the ESM can be understood as a mixture of hard law, soft law and underlying norms and values which is underpinned by the various models of welfare capitalism which exist in the EU. Accordingly, relative to the Single Market the ESM is more vulnerable to political change precisely because of its composition. At present EU enlargement, the neoliberal preferences of the Barroso Commission and a shift to the right in governments of the EU are weakening the ESM.

Leif Hoffmann provides a thought provoking article regarding public procurement and services in the EU and the USA. Hoffman points to the common mis-conception of the USA being a more homogenous single market

relative to the EU. By analysing developments within Public procurement and the Services sector, the paper argues that the EU aims to integrate the Single Market in a more centralised manner than the US. Furthermore, the EU also aims to establish much deeper integration within the Single Market relative to the USA. This paper will be of great significance to political economists, international political economists and academics that compared the political economies of the EU and the USA.

Continuing with the theme of the Single Market, Helen Dyrhaug provides an understanding of developments within EU railway policy. In doing so, Dyrhaug combines historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism in order to guide her analysis. The framework is tested by examining the path dependence which DG TREN created in establishing an EU Railway Policy. The identified long-term policy preferences are then used to explain the relationship of DG TREN with other Directorate Generals within the institutional setting, and how their preferences determine the policy outcome.

Finally, continuing with neo-institutionalism, although focusing upon developments within the member states, Sorin Stefan Denca analyses the impact of the European Union on foreign policy-making in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The paper is especially interested in the institutional change of the coordination of foreign policy-making at both the national and European levels, and on the process of learning and socialisation of national representatives participating and interacting with the EU system of foreign policy.

To end, we would once again like to acknowledge our great thanks to all those researchers who contributed papers for providing such a diverse range of high quality articles, and to the reviewers for sacrificing their time to make this edition possible. Finally, we also express our gratitude to Katherine Allison, Ilan Danjoux and Cristina Masters for their support in compiling this edition.

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