

**New perspectives on European governance:
energy security, policy instruments and integration dynamics**



The special issue is based on the 2nd JMCE Manchester conference for Postgraduate students in the field of European politics with the title ‘Building a PhD Community in the Northwest: Exits from the crisis- integration versus disintegration’. The conference was organised by PhD candidates from the Universities of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan and Salford and took place on 20th January 2012 at Manchester University. In addition to a wide number of presentation from PhD students from the UK, and in particular from the North West of England, the conference featured a round table discussion with the MEPs Arlene McCarthy and Jacqueline Foster, as well as with Professor Lee Miles from Loughborough University and Dr. Dimitrios Syrrakos from Manchester Metropolitan University.

In order to offer the participants an opportunity to draw a wider attention on their papers, and in turn to provide a wider audience with access to some innovative perspectives on recent developments within and outside the European Union; the organisers of the conference decided to develop six papers into an excellent special issue of *Political Perspectives*.

The first half of the special issue addresses highly relevant issues of energy provision security. Hence, the issue starts with a study of energy governance in the Caspian Sea region exploring concepts of regime complexity. The second article argues that the case of Poland’s energy security is also more an issue of regional energy security complexity rather than of purely bilateral Polish-Russian energy dependencies.

The second half of the special issues away from energy security and focuses on new trends and mechanisms of European governance. Thus, the fourth article of the issue presents an empirical study showing that in the field of social inclusion within the UK, one of the EU’s most innovative policy tools in the last decade, the Open Method of Coordination, has been successful in mobilising people in poverty as the primary stakeholders, but it has failed to create an awareness of the Method itself and of poverty as common European and not solely a national problem. The fifth article continues to look at the usage soft policy-instruments and law, and suggests that it has led to an incremental Europeanisation of national health policies. Finally, in the last article it is suggested that the interplay of top-down and bottom-up processes at the local level of government has modestly modified dynamics European integration; but

rather than understanding this as a system of multilevel governance, integration from a local government perspective is a matter of compound governance arrangements between actors and institutions from multiple levels.

We would like to thank all authors and all reviewers for their contribution to a strong issue, which enhanced our knowledge in the field of European studies and links emerging scholars of European politics together. As the guest editor for this issue, I have dearly enjoyed reading all articles and gaining insights from different perspectives and fields of research.

Thank you and all the best for your future career!

Sincerely,

Marius Guderjan (Guest editor) and Tomas Maltby (Chief editor)