

BOOK REVIEWS

Steven P. McGiffen. *The European Union: A Critical Guide.* 2nd Ed: Pluto Press, London and Ann Arbor, MI. 2005. xvii + 222 pp. Includes bibliography, index, and recommended readings.

Author: Noah Browne
Central European University
Master in Public Policy
noahbrowne@yahoo.com

There is no shortage of books critical of the European Union and its policies. There are few, however, which question the overall *raison d'être* of EU by attempting to criticize it across almost all of its policy competencies. McGiffen, self-described as “left-minded” [p.179] and with almost two decades of experience working for the European Parliament, has sought to fill this gap. The book’s 18 chapters are devoted to critiquing—at a fundamental level—the European Union from the inside-out. In the process, McGiffen takes aim at a host of individual EU policies as well as the institutions and interests that produce them.

Taking this discursive, rather than in-depth approach, McGiffen links his various and sundry critiques when he writes that the EU “is a neoliberal project and an antidemocratic one” [p.177]. He argues that the only agenda served by European integration is the agenda of multinational firms. As integration proceeds, ordinary citizens are left out; their health and well-being

is increasingly put at risk as more and more decisions are made by European institutions that they do not understand, let alone influence. From EU energy policy (“militating against conservation measures”) [p.59] to environmental policy (“driven by commercial considerations”) [p.122] to the common fisheries policy (a “spectacular and persistent failure”) [p.137], the interests of business eclipse those of ordinary citizens.

McGiffen reserves some of his most serious criticism for the European Monetary Union (EMU). According to the EMU, member states that adopt the euro are required to hand control of their macroeconomic policymaking to the independent European Central Bank (ECB). The author cautions that a one-size fits all approach to monetary policy is misguided: what may be a good interest rate for Portugal may not be good for Germany. McGiffen then goes further by calling the inability of citizens and their governments to set macroeconomic policy “the biggest single act of subversion of democracy committed in the name of the European Union” [p.185]. Yet the author fails to note that many national banks, prior to joining the eurozone, were just as independent of political control as is the ECB (most notably the German Bundesbank, after which the ECB is modeled). Nonetheless, criticizing the independence of central banks puts McGiffen in the comfortable company of Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz, and criticizing the euro aligns him with a majority of German, French, and

Italian nationals, among whom the currency is increasingly unpopular.

What irks the author continually throughout the work is the blind embrace of the EU integrationist project. Liberalization, deregulation, privatization and a general drive for “competitiveness” are the unchallenged and defining features of European integration, rather than the lines upon which genuine public debate can occur. It has become taken for granted that private enterprise, for example, is better suited than public enterprise in all cases; no demand is made that evidence be presented of the tradeoffs inherent with private ownership.

Towards the end of his work, McGiffen includes a concise explanation of the major provisions of the proposed Constitution, as well as an analysis of its failure. He sees the negative referenda results in France and Holland as partial evidence of the success of leftist arguments—namely, that signing the Constitution would weaken public services and impinge upon citizens’ autonomy. He also sees this failure as affirming his claims that integration is an elitist project that has mistakenly proceeded without demonstrating its benefits to its mass of citizens.

McGiffen does at times indulge in excessive or unsupported rhetoric, such as when he claims that life in developed parts of the EU is “simply much better” [p.99] than in the United States. He makes the common mistake of treating the United States as monolithic—a

misstep obvious to anyone who is familiar with the wide variation in living standards across America. And, in claiming that “the most internationally-minded people see globalisation as a threat” [p.95], the author unjustifiably presumes that those who are less skeptical of globalization are by default less globally conscious.

In general, however, the McGiffen puts forth a strong and well-supported critique of the EU, one informed by experience and expressed in a clear, accessible style. The author also includes a list of carefully compiled recommended readings, helpful to anyone who is interested in topics ranging from fisheries to foreign policy. Despite its title, the book is not best read as an introduction to the EU, as descriptions of the EU institutions themselves are quick and dense. Readers with at least some background on how policy is created and implemented by European institutions will be better positioned not only to understand McGiffen’s arguments, but also to question them.

Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, London: Atlantic Books, 2003, pp. 112.

Author: Saban Kardas
PhD Student, University of Utah, USA
saban.kardas@poli-sci.utah.edu

In *Paradise and Power*, Robert Kagan presents a controversial argument on

transatlantic relations. He asserts that: “it is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world.”(p.3) Kagan traces the roots of the fundamental divergence between Europe and America, explores the implications of this rift, and offers some suggestions to adjust to new reality.

The growing divergence between American and European approaches to the all-important question of power lies at the heart of the problem. Whereas Europe has entered into a post-historical *Kantian paradise*, where rules, negotiation, and multilateralism are valued, and military might is denounced, the U.S. remains ‘stuck in history,’ i.e., in the *Hobbesian world*, where international norms and multilateralism are unreliable and concerns for true security and a liberal order require commitment to power politics. He challenges those claiming that the rift stems from the *national characters* of Americans and Europeans. Kagan reminds us that historically the European continent was the playground for power politics, and Americans are not unfamiliar with idealistic discourse. They traded places because “especially in the recent decades, the power equation has shifted dramatically,” (p.10) which inevitably led to two opposing perceptions of world: While Europeans view the world through the eyes of the weak and develop a discourse fitting to their situation, Americans are approaching

international relations from the position of strength.

Kagan is not fully content with a sole power-based analysis, and seeks to bring other factors into analysis. He argues that the historical experience of Europe in the past century, coupled with the transatlantic disparity of power, led Europeans to develop a unique philosophy of power, which in turn created a broad *ideological gap*. The interplay between these material and ideological differences pits Europe and America against each other. To Kagan, the divergence dates back even to the Cold War era; he therefore maintains that 9/11 and ensuing developments crystallized, rather than generated, the transatlantic divergence. His policy recommendations are equally provocative. He advises Europeans to expand their military capabilities if they want to have their voice heard, though he is not optimistic about their willingness to follow this course. Therefore, as the price for their holiday in paradise, Europeans could at least appreciate the need for a powerful America fighting the dangers of the Hobbesian world. He reminds Americans that Europeans are neither capable of contributing to American power, nor able to restrain it. Americans no longer need to rely on the *nostalgia* that they need Europeans to meet the challenges around the world. Rather, as it currently does, America can manage NWO alone.

Kagan’s assessments and conclusions about the NWO are largely driven by

realist teachings. By defining the main problem as one about the approaches to *the perennial issue of power*, and explaining the current divergence primarily on the basis of *power disparity*, and underlining the utility of *the language of military power*, Kagan asserts basic realist premises about international affairs.

His discussion about *ideological differences* seems to contradict with his realist outlook. However, he still argues heavily from a realist standpoint. Rather than giving a balanced account of *material* and *ideological* gaps, he focuses mainly on power asymmetry. In the final analysis, moreover, he reduces ideological differences to power disparity. He devotes a section to *psychologies of power and weakness*, where he argues that different endowments of power shape the way states develop their strategic culture. Europeans denounce power politics because they cannot bring force to bear on world affairs. Because Americans are capable of doing so, they are content with staying in Hobbesian world. Here, he denies the possibility of an idealist approach to international relations, and prefers to treat references to idealist/liberal principles as tactical/rhetorical tools used in power politics to conceal an underlying gap.

Moreover, although Kagan repeatedly claims that power disparity is only one part of the explanation, his alternative explanations are barely independent of power. For instance, other than psychology of power and weakness, he

claims that “different threat perceptions are also grounded in a practical reality that is another product of the disparity of power.” (p.33) In short, power is at the center of Kagan’s arguments.

If power is the *ultima ratio*, the puzzle is why Europeans are shunning away from balancing American power, which Kagan is aware of. When he engages it, he parts company with a power-based analysis and seeks refuge in ideology: “the answer lies somewhere in the realm of ideology in European attitudes not just toward defense spending but toward power itself.”(p.53) He argues that it is technically easy for Europeans to increase military spending and fix the gap, but the problem is the lack of political will. This is where snake bites its tail. He starts with power analysis, and goes as far as claiming that European attempts to emphasize international norms and multilateralism are weapons of weak; thus reduces Europeans’ *ideological* discourse to power disparity. But, in explaining their denunciation of power, he appears to assign ideology an explanatory power of its own. We are left wondering whether ideas enter into his analysis as an independent variable. Similarly, his claim that American national character has always been to expand territory and influence for realizing the transcendent role of America in the world (pp.86-88) adds to the ambiguity around his position on the role of non-power factors.

His exploration of the sources of *new European ideology on power* is equally

provocative. He argues that it is the product of unique European historical experience since the end of the World War II. But, he at the same time argues that this European paradise was made possible only because the U.S. provided security from outside –solved the Kantian dilemma for Europeans (p. 58). By highlighting this paradox, he denies independent ontological existence of Kantian paradise, and treats it as an anomaly within Hobbesian world. The emphasis on external security provision mirrors another realist assault on democratic peace, or civilian power Europe arguments.

To the dismay of the reader, Kagan does not discuss why this postmodern paradise and Europeans' denouncement of power politics could not be permanent. Why cannot the European continent give birth to a new organizing principle for international system after Westphalian order? He characterizes European paradise with such phrases as 'geopolitical fantasy', 'miracle', or 'sacred mystique' (p.58). He is cynical of 'Europe's new *mission civilisatrice*' of transmitting the European miracle to the rest of the world 'with the evangelic zeal of converts.' (pp.60,61) Similarly, like Mearsheimer, he keeps reminding Europeans of 'the fear of sliding backward' or 'the fear of Germany,' which supposedly still hangs over them (p.63). This suggests that Kantian paradise is bound to remain exceptional. He reemphasizes this point boldly by maintaining that "global security and a liberal order –as well as Europe's 'postmodern' paradise- cannot

long survive unless the United States does use its power in the dangerous Hobbesian world that still flourishes outside Europe."(pp. 75-76) His faith in the logic of power is the primary reason for his controversial treatment of 'post-modern European paradise' as a temporary phenomenon, and his failure to discuss possible transformation of world order.

The book is still one of the required readings to those who want to grasp the future of transatlantic relations in the NWO. It provides hints about the underlying rationale of neo-con approach to American foreign policy. It at the same times presents limitations of an exclusively power-based inquiry into international relations.

Thomas Faist and Andreas Ette (eds.), *The Europeanization of National Policies and Politics of Immigration. Between Autonomy and the European Union.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Author: Andrea Petres
MA Student in Sociology
Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,
Romania
andreapetres@yahoo.com

In the current context of global insecurity, with the increase of the perceived terror-threat, questions regarding security arise worldwide. These concerns are closely connected to that of migration and influence policies regarding the movement of people.

Already in the late 1990s – as countries recognized it was an issue of their common interest – migration has become a supranational policy area of the European Union.

As integration of member-states advances and processes become more institutionalized, the attention of researchers turns from the European level back to the national level. In this context, the book belongs to the third generation of studies about the EU: the question now is not how particular states can contribute to a common European policy and how policies are made on the European level, but rather the Europeanization of national policies and politics, i.e. the impact of European policy and politics on the domestic level.

The Europeanization of National Policies and Politics of Immigration comprises 12 studies written by 16 authors, and is organized into three chapters. The first chapter deals mainly with theoretical concerns regarding migration policies and politics, as well as their analysis, whereas the next two chapters include 9 case studies. The case studies in Chapter 2 concentrate upon EU core member states and include the detailed analysis of Germany, Britain, Sweden, Spain and Greece, whereas Chapter 3 focuses on new-, non-member and respectively peripheral states including the detailed analysis of Poland, Turkey, and Albania and some aspects regarding Russia, Ukraine, Morocco, Belarus, Lithuania etc. After delving into concepts, levels

of analysis and problematic questions of interpretation in the first chapter, the studies that are to come are easy to follow and compare with each other, while recognizing the importance of each country's uniqueness.

The introductory study of the editors in the first chapter sets the frame for the whole book, and it assesses some of the findings of the research carried out in the above mentioned states. By identifying the structure and the main questions to be answered, the study makes the case-studies presented in further chapters easily comparable, which is one of the virtues of the book.

The process of Europeanization is analyzed according to the three-step approach ((1) there are particular policies on a European level that cause pressure on national governments/policies, (2) policies are influenced in the process of implementation by the national circumstances, which (3) finally lead to country-specific outcomes), the studies make use of the concept of *goodness of fit* (the larger the differences between the national and European levels, the higher the pressure for change on the domestic level) and explain the extent of Europeanization along this concept. Having different institutional structures and also different past and present goals, it is shown that EU states are highly differentiated with respect to the Europeanization of immigration policies and politics. One of the main conclusions is that being embedded into national institutional frameworks,

politics proves to be harder to Europeanize, thus changes are mainly recognized on policy-levels.

There are many aspects of the book that make it a valuable piece among the volumes on Europeanization: discussing debatable issues, and identifying points of interest are only some of these aspects: being of special interest for those preparing case-studies in different states, the study of Andrew Geddes identifies concepts that come into question when analyzing the situation of different countries in the context of Europeanization. It is discussed whether the responses given by the EU concerning immigration policy are unique or some issues have already been similarly addressed in other parts of the world. Also, regarding the interpretation of results, the question of causality and coincidence is raised. He focuses on the ways EU can influence domestic systems of governance, examines the relationship between European integration and Europeanization and distinguishes between the Europeanization of policy and the politics of Europeanization. He also touches the issue of the so-called liberal paradox, where mobility of capital, goods and also labor are encouraged and at the same time countries strengthen their borders and keep them closed to *unwanted* migration flows.

Regarding methodology it has to be noted that even if Europeanization is defined as a top-down process for purposes of clarity, (i.e. the way the

European level influences the national), the authors manage to deal with the complexity of the impacts among the European and domestic levels. To name one example, in the case of Germany Kathrin Prümm and Stefan Alscher note that the easiness to adapt to EU “standards” and the *generally small degree of misfit had been connected to Germany’s role as agenda-setter*. This is said about a country that has been a leader in European integration in the past, but nowadays reluctance and resistance to European influence even in the question of immigration can be noted and proved with the increasing influence of the *Länder* in the political field.

The book deals with timely issues, such as exercising pressure on the migration policies of countries that lack accession perspectives. This is of high importance from the perspective of the EU, because after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania the EU is surrounded by states that lack accession perspectives. Sandra Lavenex identifies three possible ways to influence such countries, and namely: using positive incentives in intergovernmental negotiations, promoting transgovernmental networks, and mobilizing international organizations.

Supporting the argument about the timeliness of the book, the study of Petra Bendel places the question of immigration policy and politics into the actual international political setting, by showing how the policies implemented on EU level have proved to be

inadequate, since alternative channels of irregular migration have appeared and challenged the image of *Fortress Europe*. Thus, the case studies appear in this wider context of the policymaking agenda. It is stated that even though the Tampere guidelines set forth in 1999 represent a change of paradigms concerning immigration and asylum policies (i.e. they present immigration as a chance and not a threat), recent changes in EU member states (more conservative governments coming to power) and security issues raised after 9/11 have led again to the strong presence of restriction and control in immigration policies, while other aspects have been neglected (such as the protection of refugees, the prevention of refugee movements, the integration of migrants, and the attraction of special groups of immigrants), a process that led to inefficiencies.

The above mentioned aspects are only a few of those discussed in the book. The differences among countries regarding immigration policies draw a picture about European diversity that is explained in the context of Europeanization. The book is of special interest for those looking for easily comparable studies about the effects of European immigration policies and politics on both EU-countries and the neighboring ones. Also, dealing with timely issues, it may prove to be useful for policy-makers and for all those interested in pursuing research of the same kind, while it contributes to the list of studies that analyze the effect of

common European politics and policy on domestic issues.

Ronald Dworkin, *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles of a new political debate*. Princeton, London: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Author: Filiz Kartal
PhD, Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East, Turkey
fkartal@todaie.gov.tr

Throughout the last few decades, political philosophers have been trying to form a background to make political debate possible among differing worldviews. Under the attack of strong communitarian and republican criticisms of liberalism, liberal philosophers attempt to rescue liberalism from instability and dissociation. John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice* (1971) introduced the concept of justice as a means of narrowing the range of public disagreement. With the concept of 'justice as fairness', he aims to find a political agreement that supports the good of all citizens as free and equal persons. Rawls appeals to this practical conception since he believes that philosophy (or morality or religion) cannot provide a shared basis. His aim of avoiding disputed philosophical question is not for the sake of neutrality (as most liberals do) but he thinks that there is no way to resolve them politically. Contrary to Rawlsian *political liberalism*, legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin thinks that a genuine political debate can be achieved within

civil society without insulating political convictions from deeper moral, ethical, and religious convictions.

In his book *Is Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate*, Dworkin's point of departure is the polarization and trivialization problem among Democrats and Republicans in American politics. He argues that there is no decent argument among them. He suggests two principles that would make a national political debate possible among two conflicting cultures. After clarifying the principles that any American would accept (common ground) in the first chapter, he tries to show the force of these shared principles on concrete policies that divide Americans in each of the following chapters: issues about human rights, the place of religion in public life, social justice, and the character of democracy. In the first instance, he describes two principles of human dignity as the basis of common ground: according to the first principle (*the principle of intrinsic value*) each human life has a special kind of objective value; the second principle (*the principle of personal responsibility*) holds that each person has a responsibility for realizing that value in his/her own life. These principles are those same principles of ethical individualism he introduced in *Sovereign Virtue* (2000). As one of the specific cases, Dworkin takes the issues of terrorism and human rights that have been on top of the agenda of American politics since September 11, 2001. He gives the examples of torture and

capital punishment as cases that violate human rights as a baseline matter. And he argues that the US's policy of imprisoning suspected terrorists indefinitely violates human rights. Then, Dworkin speaks about the issues through which religion engages in American public life. By elaborating some matters of controversy among liberals and conservatives case by case such as abortion, gay marriages, and pledge of allegiance, he tries to set the boundaries between the religion and the government. Another issue Dworkin tackles is about tax reductions and their impact on the increased gap between rich and poor. Dworkin's aim is to propose a connection between tax levels and fairness through determining a tax policy in the light of his foundational principles. He claims that a theory of just taxation must include both a theory of equal concern and a conception of the consequences of personal responsibility. Finally, Dworkin deals with two rival views of democracy in the US: the *majoritarian* view that considers democracy as government by will of majority expressed in elections; and *partnership* view of democracy according to which people govern themselves each as a full partner in a collective political enterprise. In designing a sketch of partnership democracy, he emphasizes the importance of procedures in reaching a collective decision in situations of disagreements.

Dworkin tries to find a common ground upon the principles of a certain level of abstraction and apply them on concrete

policies. In order to be a coherent alternative, both the principles and their application should be sound. His principles reflect the two competing political values of Western political theory: equality and liberty respectively. These main principles of Western liberal thought have been challenged by communitarian scholars: the principle of liberty ignores the fact that personal choices are determined by the culture. On the other hand, treating each individual equal is universalizing in its nature, and equal access is an illusion (the myth of equal opportunity denies the social reality of unequal treatment). Furthermore, liberal conception of the self is an 'unencumbered' self (Michael Sandel's critique) that is not constituted within a community and does not permit a constitutive community to develop. It only allows for an 'instrumental community' in which individuals promote their self-interest. Dworkin's principles do not offer 'a radical alternative' to classical construction of a liberal individual which is necessary for establishing a common ground within a constitutive community.

On the issues concerning religion, Dworkin seems not to take conservative counterarguments seriously enough (especially on same-sex marriages). And by stressing 'scientific explanation' and questioning the reasonableness of theological hypothesis in evolution-creation debate, he actually wants to suppress religion as 'irrational' and 'unreasonable'. This is an illiberal attitude from the Rawlsian

perspective. Political liberalism proposed by Rawls, as a viable alternative, does not question the correctness or truth of comprehensive doctrines because a constitutional regime does not require an agreement on comprehensive doctrine.

Dworkin's endeavor is worthwhile in the sense that it questions the legitimacy of democracy in America in a time when the US administration is set on exporting democracy throughout the globe. The strongest point he made is the democratic character of procedural conception—which is widely accepted within contemporary liberalism. In Rawlsian liberalism, too, the procedures for public policy are based on fairness without any implication of ethical, moral or religious convictions. However, this aspiration to neutrality criticized by communitarians as being too thin to maintain a genuine civic engagement in public life. Dworkin's principles would work well only in a hypothetical ideal situation where people really behave as rational and free individuals in a free-market economy. The model of liberalism he defends is one committed exclusively to economic liberalism. This is because personal responsibility—for him—can only be realized in a free-market economy. In spite of the deepness of the philosophical arguments raised for fairness in a market society, it would be continue to be disputable. Thus it seems still hard to make substantial political argument possible at least in the issues of fairness. Set aside the ideal situation,

his philosophical arguments do not bring a fresh inspiration to liberalism. Since he ignores personhood and bondedness, people would not be able to form cohesive solidarities and stable movements in liberal politics –as stated by Michael Walzer. Thus, Dworkin’s principles bear the deficiencies of liberalism in general. Their application to specific cases is even more problematic in terms of the coherence of his proposal. At many points, Dworkin is caricaturizing the conservative counterarguments and trying to prove the accuracy of liberal views –as if to impose them upon his fellow citizens. This attitude would not seem to enable a ‘descent’ political debate possible.