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Book Reviews

The Europeanization of British Politics, edited by I. Bache and A. Jordan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, ISBN 9780230204898); xix+311 pp., £21.99 pb.

In *The Europeanization of British Politics*, the impact of EU membership for Britain's politics is seen as a cyclical process, involving constant interactions between national and European arenas and linking actors across different sectors and levels. This impact has been significant but is not always recognized – as can be deduced from the EU implications in virtually all pivotal events in British national politics in recent history, including Labour's opposition period, the fall of both Thatcher and Major, the crisis within the Conservative Party, the emergence and substance of the New Labour project and the developments in Northern Ireland.

The volume satisfyingly succeeds in its aim not only to report on and better appreciate Europeanization in Britain, but also to add to and strengthen the existing building blocks of our theoretical understanding of Europeanization more generally.

Perhaps the most interesting theoretical findings of this volume are the analytical limitations of two of the much-used taxonomies in the field of Europeanization when applied to the British case. Firstly, the neat concurrence between *dimensions* of Europeanization (polity, politics and policies) and *intensities* of Europeanization (semi-Europeanization, largely non-Europeanization and progressive Europeanization, respectively) that have been reported elsewhere for Germany, simply does not follow for the British case. Secondly, the categorization that is repeatedly used to analyse the degree of domestic change (inertia, retrenchment, absorption, accommodation and transformation) is proved to be overly restrictive for the British case, since it leaves little room for gradual change that over time amounts to transformation. In the volume, such change is found in Burch and Gomez's study on the English regions and in Bulmer and Burch's study of central government.

The editors propose that the Europeanization literature is relatively underdeveloped due to the lack of attention to its 'political' dimension. While their concern is by all means justified, it is therefore surprising that the volume does not devote a separate case study to *Parliament*, and that there is a single case study on the dynamics within the political *and* administrative executive, without differentiating between the two spheres of central government.

The Europeanization literature may not have come of age yet, but *The Europeanization of British Politics* certainly pushes it into adolescence, both in empirical and theoretical terms. Besides its emphasis on the cyclical nature of Europeanization, it helpfully recognizes first- and second-generation Europeanization, in

which the former connotes the direct, formal, readily observable consequences of EU membership and the latter focuses on indirect, diffuse or knock-on effects of EU membership.

Although the volume is a single-country study, in their introductory and concluding chapters the editors draw several insightful comparisons with a similar study of Germany by Dyson and Goetz (2003). This adds meaning to the British findings and the Europeanization process in general. For Europeanization scholarship to mature into adulthood, the completion of a full series of comparable studies per Member State, the one building on the other's findings and theoretical contributions, as Bache and Jordan do, may just be the sufficient condition.

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