



Universiteit
Leiden

The Netherlands

Boekbespreking van: New Public Management

Laver, M.

Citation

Laver, M. (2001). Boekbespreking van: New Public Management. *Acta Politica*, 36: 2001(4), 419-420.

Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3450827>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3450827>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

- Justel, M. (1995), 'Electoral abstention in Spain: characteristics and factors', in: J. Font and R. Virós (eds.), *Electoral Abstention in Europe*. Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials: Barcelona.
- Mouritzen, P.E. (1989), 'City size and citizens' satisfaction: two competing theories revisited', *European Journal of Political Research* 17, pp. 661-688.
- Sancton, A. (1996), 'Reducing costs by consolidating municipalities: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario', *Canadian Public Administration / Administration Publique du Canada* 39, pp. 267-289.
- Toonen, Th., M. van Dam, M. Glim and G. Wallagh (1998), *Gemeenten in ontwikkeling*. Van Gorkum: Assen.
- Verba, S., and N.H. Nie (1972), *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. Harper and Row: New York.

Book Reviews

Jan-Erik Lane, *New Public Management*. London: Routledge, 2000, 256 p., ISBN 0-415-21387-6, £ 19.99.

The basic conception of this book is a sound one and the author is a well-known academic and experienced writer. His essential premises are that there is something that is widely referred to as 'new public management'; that this has been of great interest to public sector policy professionals and has contributed in many systems to a comprehensive programme of public sector reform; and that political scientists have not tackled the topic systematically enough, particularly those concerned with public policy analysis. The premises are clearly valid and the author's aim is to produce a book on the subject that can serve the dual purposes of being a student text and a contribution to a higher-level intellectual debate. All of this is very promising.

The book begins with a review of traditional public administration theory and goes on to a series of chapters looking at recent criticisms of the theory and practice of public sector management. This part of the text includes discussions of matters such as X-inefficiency, the role of the public enterprise, the trade-off between efficiency and equity, and the distinction between welfare states and welfare societies. By the end of these chapters students will have a good grounding in the debates about the public sector that culminated in Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite attacks on the post-war welfare state in Europe. These discussions will be useful for both students and public sector professionals who are studying this topic academically for the first time. Indeed, the text reads very much like the write-up of a lecture series given by the author. It has something of a 'top-level' feel to it and thus, for example, we are likely to be referred to literature reviews rather than original sources during discussions of the origins of some of the modern movements in public sector governance.

Lane then moves on to discuss the various contractualist arguments and arrangements that have followed on the heels of this debate. Again the argument is put forward at what we might think of as a rather general level, and there are many points that would need to be more closely argued and documented before they could be taken as serious contributions to the research literature in this field. That, of course, is not the author's purpose, but the naïve reader will sometimes be left wondering how much of what he or she is reading is part of the mainstream literature, and how much is a product of a particular case being argued by the author. So there is thus something of

a missed opportunity in this book, which could have packed a heavier punch in front of a wider audience if more time and care had been spent on developing the central planks of the argument.

At a mundane but annoying level: either the manuscript was not copy-edited at all, or the publishers mistakenly printed a non copy-edited version. The text is disappointingly full of small errors that either a careful author or copy-editor should have picked up at some stage in the production process. Tables and figures often have obscure labels or column headings, essentially forcing the reader to guess what is going on in places. All of this needs correcting in any subsequent edition.

Notwithstanding this, however, the author is very much at ease with the material and clearly has the ambition to synthesize this into a broad overview. In this he is largely successful. Many readers will find the reviews of the main traditions in public sector governance a useful starting point for their own work, and those who are familiar with the field will engage with Lane's distinctive arguments about it. It thus provides an accessible first read in the field for someone who wants to find out quickly about new public management and locate this within the development of public sector governance over the course of the previous century. Since there is not a lot of competition, the idea of producing this book was a good one and it should find a ready market.

Michael Laver

Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso and Thomas Risse (eds.), *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001, ISBN 0-8014-8671-8 (paperback), USD 19.95.

The concept of 'Europeanization' is increasingly employed to assess the impact of European integration on domestic politics. A new research agenda is evolving which focuses on those changes in national political systems that can be attributed to processes of European integration. Analogous to earlier debates on the entanglement of domestic politics and international relations, the concept of Europeanization has provided European integration studies with a 'Second Image Reversed' focusing on the European sources of domestic politics. By measuring how 'adaptational pressures' caused by European integration affect domestic politics, students of Europeanization consciously take a top-down perspective, which contrasts with the bottom-up intergovernmentalist approach and its stress on the domestic sources of European politics.

Although a number of collections have appeared on the adaptation of member states to EU membership, during the past couple of years the focus has shifted away from such country-by-country work to more comparative work on specific policy areas and

institutional structures. This shift has, on the one hand, respected the same highly empirical character of early Europeanization work, and on the other hand, allowed for more theorizing on cross-country variation in the way Europe impacts on national politics. The edited volume *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change* is an excellent example of this combination of valuable empirical work driven by theoretical interests. Since 1997, when the contributors convened for the first time, there has been great anticipation regarding *Transforming Europe* and, because it was often referred to during preparatory stages, it became state of the art even before publication.

Besides introductory and concluding chapters, the book consists of ten empirical chapters on issues ranging from gender equality policy to telecommunications and nation-state identities. This wide variety of issues in itself makes the book a rich account of processes of political transformation (and stability) in contemporary Western Europe. The added value of bringing the studies together, however, derives from the framework of domestic adaptational change that each empirical chapter applies to its respective policy area. By pressing the contributors to work within the same framework, the editors have done a remarkable job in achieving a cohesive character in the book.

Characteristically for the research agenda of Europeanization, the framework set out by Risse, Cowles and Caporaso in the first chapter, centres around "the 'goodness of fit' between Europeanization processes, on the one hand, and national institutional settings, rules, and practices, on the other" (p. 6). When much domestic change is needed in order to comply with European rules and policies because of a strong 'misfit', the 'adaptational pressures' on domestic institutions are great, and strong Europeanization can be expected. The extent of domestic change – as dependent variable – and most importantly the variation in domestic change between countries, is explained from domestic variables which the editors term 'mediating factors': "In cases of high adaptational pressures, the presence or absence of mediating factors is crucial for the degree to which domestic change adjusting to Europeanization should be expected" (p. 9). Five such mediating factors are given: multiple veto points, mediating formal institutions, political and organizational cultures, differential empowerment of actors, and learning.

For example, in chapter three, Héritier argues that the Europe-induced liberalization of the transport sector has been successful in Germany and the Netherlands, but it has never gathered momentum in Italy because it was soon caught up in the multiple veto points of the Italian system where 'padroncini', or small hauliers, play an important role in regulation and administration, and often call for strikes in order to put the Ministry of Transport under pressure. The importance of mediating formal institutions, to proceed to another mediating factor, is pointed out by Caporaso and Jupille in chapter two. They argue that the British Equal Opportunities Commission was crucial in providing women's organizations with the means to use EU Equal Pay and Equal Treatment Directives in furthering gender equality, and the lack of a French counterpart