

intergovernmentalism and institutionalism, while chapter four provides a detailed description of how the model was tested. Chapter five identifies the winners and losers in the Amsterdam Treaty negotiations, though the conclusions regarding the individual national positions are unlikely to surprise those who retain a watching brief over national politics and positions on matters of European integration. In fact, the conclusion that domestic politics matter in the international negotiations had already been demonstrated in previous IGC negotiations, and would do so again in the negotiations over the Nice and the Lisbon treaties. Appropriately to a study that supports the institutionalist explanation of European integration, chapter six reports on the bargaining among the member states over the voting weights in the EU Council of Ministers and the size of the European Commission. These two contentious issues remained unresolved in the lead up to the 2004/2007 enlargements, but the pressures from the smaller states to exercise their veto power and to retain the status quo against the demands from the larger states, notably France, Germany, Italy and the UK, to change the weighted voting system in the Council continued to resonate more than a decade after the Amsterdam Treaty was finally adopted. Chapter seven discusses the viability of veto power in intergovernmental negotiations, and draws on Albert Hirschman's work on the interaction of exit and voice to propose that where voluntary exit (or forced expulsion) is an option, there is less possibility for a state to exercise veto power and more likelihood that a state resistant to change may be forced to accept sub-optimal outcomes forced upon it by other states. Chapter eight reviews the exit threat/veto power options in the case of the British Labour government's threat to leave the European Community in 1974, and the debate over the British budget rebate under Margaret Thatcher in the course of the negotiations towards the Single European Act in the early 1980s. Slapin argues that Thatcher's use of veto power could be explained by the other states' calculations of the costs of not agreeing to her demands, in the calculation of possible missed institutional outcomes in the future if Britain was not there to support a Franco-German position. However, this discussion fails to consider the strong support by Thatcher for the market-widening strategy of the Single European Act, a policy that was very much in line with the neo-liberal policies launched by the UK Conservative government from the early 1980s. There was no need for the British prime minister to threaten exit from an expanding European market considered to be in line with national preferences by the government and domestic business interests.

The discussion of exit options offers some insight into the difficult situation facing the member states as the EU seeks to identify ways out of the financial and

sovereign debt crisis that escalated throughout 2011. Jonathan Slapin's view is that laggard states may be powerful in resisting change even without the ability to threaten exit from the union, but this depends, as he rightly recognises, on the reaction of the other states seeking change. If these states do not really want the laggard states, then exclusion may become an option – and indeed recent EU treaty revision now provides an exit clause. At the start of 2012, the uncertainty surrounding the status of several countries in the eurozone and the continued weaknesses across the European financial sector may prompt the German and French leaders to review the exit options more trenchantly.

This strength of this volume lies in the application of political science and a quantitative analysis to capture the inter-state bargaining and the use of veto power to shape negotiation outcomes, where Slapin's methodological approach occupies a central place in the work. However, the book is limited to a snapshot of inter-state politics in the negotiations over the Amsterdam Treaty, which the author admits fell short of expectations. IGCs are only one arena in which European politics are conducted, and recent experience points to the continued importance of a range of factors that shape European integration, ranging from power politics to domestic forces, institutional rules, and global pressures, all of which interact in very complex ways to shape the dynamics of European integration. This complexity that adheres to the interplay of European political forces demands that we continue to take account of the social and political context in which European actors engage at national and international levels, and that we consider the historical and temporal influences on preference formation, and interest determination. As the constructivist approach in international relations emphasises, national interests are not pre-determined or unchanging but can be socially constructed in the dialogue and communication of social actors. There may be scope in this approach to explore when and how veto power might change over time, and how veto power might vary in different interstate bargaining settings.

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Richard Corbett, Francis Jacobs, and Michael Shackleton. *The European Parliament. 8th Edition.* London: John Harper, 2011.

Now in its eighth edition, this seminal work on the organisation, working methods, and powers of the European Parliament (EP) is fully revised to take into account the changes resulting from the 2009 European elections and the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty. Similar to earlier editions, the book is divided into three parts.



Part 1 provides 'The Framework', describing the main features of the EP in comparison to other legislatures and how Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are being elected. It also discusses issues arising from the EP's commitment to multilingualism and the distribution of its work between Strasbourg, Luxembourg, and Brussels. Part 2 deals with 'The Actors and Working Structures', starting with the background, role, and motivations of individual MEPs. Subsequent chapters deal with the composition, organisation, and operation of political groups, the EP leadership, committees, inter-parliamentary delegations, the plenary, intergroups, and the secretariat, respectively. Finally, Part 3 covers 'The Powers of the Parliament'. This part includes chapters on the role and prerogatives of the EP in the legislative process, in the adoption of the budget, in the appointment and dismissal of the Commission and the leadership of other EU organisations and agencies, and in scrutinizing delegated and implementing acts of the Commission. Other chapters outline Parliaments connections and communication channels to other European Union (EU) institutions and its openness towards interest groups, media, and ordinary citizens, as well as the role of national parliaments in EU law-making and their relations to the EP before and after the Lisbon treaty. Finally, the book concludes with a discussion of how the EP affected constitutional change over the years through its influence on successive treaty reforms.

As the outline of the book's content indicates, it probably provides the most comprehensive and currently up-to-date description of the European Parliament. Given the breadth of material covered, ranging from rather minute administrative details to politically salient powers, readers with different backgrounds will inevitably find some topics more interesting or relevant than others. From a political science perspective, I found the discussion of issues involving the selection of a uniform electoral system, the evolution of the political group system, the composition and roles of intergroups, the advantages and disadvantages of informal trilogues under the ordinary legislative procedure, the operation of the new budgetary procedure, and the varying appointment powers regarding different EU agencies most stimulating, often suggesting interesting questions for further research.

A big strength of this book is that it presents a wealth of factual information that is useful for teaching and research. Amongst other things, it provides tables on the electoral systems in use in different member states, the national voter turnout in EP elections, the gender balance in Parliament, the current national party membership in political groups, previous political experience of MEPs and their subsequent uptake of positions in the Commission or national governments, the details of current and often also past occupants of leadership positions in party groups, committees, inter-parliamentary delega-

tions, and the EP as a whole, and the applicability of legislative procedures in different policy areas - including a reference to the relevant treaty article and an indication of which areas have been newly included in the scope of the ordinary legislative procedure by the Lisbon treaty. The book also includes lists of cases in which the EP used its right to formally request a Commission proposal and in which it tabled a motion of censure of the Commission. Finally, the appendix provides tables of all European elections results for member states since the first direct election in 1979. The value of the book as a source of statistics and qualitative information would have been even greater if it had provided direct references to primary sources. The appendix includes a general pointer to the EP's website and a bibliography of selected academic work on different aspects of the Parliament. However, to check the accuracy and possibly extend the information provided in the book, direct pointers to the relevant source material would have been useful.

In terms of substance, the book provides largely descriptive information and generally balanced discussions of the pros and cons of different features of the EP. Most of its claims are not controversial. The exception in that respect is Chapter 18 on the EP's influence on constitutional change in the European Union. After a description of the involvement and the positions taken by the EP with respect to treaty changes, the chapter concludes that the 'successive treaty revisions since Parliament became directly elected were all strongly influenced by the European Parliament'. This conclusion stands in stark contrast to most other academic work on the topic, which stresses the role of member states and possibly that of the Commission. Although the chapter succeeds in demonstrating that most constitutional changes successively agreed by member states in intergovernmental treaties were often also sought by the European Parliament, it provides little evidence for the claim that Parliament was able to convince 'at least some national governments to press its case'. Alternative theories of constitutional change and the possibility that the EP was just lucky rather than powerful - by holding the same position as the truly powerful actors - are not ruled out by the analysis.

However, these minor weaknesses cannot do away from the overall contribution of the book. As the current European Council President Herman van Rompuy puts it in his foreword, this is 'the authoritative guide to the European Parliament'. It is probably not a book to be read from cover to cover, but it is definitely a must-have reference work for anybody interested in the workings of the European Parliament and the political system of the EU in general.

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