

Book Review

David Judge & David Earnshaw (2008) *The European Parliament (2nd Edition)*

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The general intention of this book is to produce a comprehensive insight into how the European Parliament (EP) works. More specific aims are to first to identify the characteristic features of a Legislature- (1) legitimation (2) linkage (3) decision-making, second to assess whether the EP conforms to those characteristics and third to analyse the relevance of these functions for the EP with reference to two different models of the EU: (1) the federal analogy and (2) multilevel governance. However, the basic structure of this edition remains the same as that of the first edition, purely because the reviewers of the first edition have been in favour of this structure (see preface p. xi).

This edition includes a comprehensive updating of data and information to take account of (1) the 2004 elections (2) the elections in Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 (3) internal organisational changes within the EP- to party-groups, committees, rules of procedure, leadership structures; and major changes to the EP's political powers- status incorporated in the Lisbon Treaty. Furthermore, it promises to provide the 2009 election results and information about changes in the EP's membership and in the composition of party groups on the Palgrave Macmillan website following the election in June.

Judge and Earnshaw's description of how the EP moved from a talking shop into a fully-fledged EP eloquently shows how the powers of the EP were increased by the introduction of the formal treaties: the Single European Act 1986, Maastricht Treaty 1992, Amsterdam Treaty 1997, Treaty of Nice 2001, Constitutional Treaty, and Lisbon Treaty 2007 (chap.2). It is useful to have this historical account at hand to see how the EP's powers were extended. However, it is descriptive, the authors do not ask why the EP was strengthened by these Treaties, and they do not question whether the evolution of the EP could be explained within a theoretical framework.

The chapter (5) on party-groups in the EP will be a great source of information for undergraduates on the issues of what a party group is, how a party group is formed, what structure they tend to have, and the recent changes in the party groups. One of the interesting findings was the increase in the number of non-attached MEPs. It was noted that after the disintegration of the *Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty Group* and the Romanian election there were 30 unattached MEPs by February 2008. However, the authors do not ask why the MEPs are gradually becoming unattached. Additionally, it is almost impossible to get a sense of what Judge and Earnshaw's views are on the very interesting topic of "the development of the left-right politics in the party-groups" (p.141-142) since they heavily rely on Hix's findings in *Executive Selection in the European Union*:

Does the Commission President Investiture Procedure Reduce the Democratic Deficit? (1997) and *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament* (2007).

Moving on to the discussions on the linkage role of the Legislatures, the authors begin by examining the electoral procedures structuring the 2004 European parliamentary elections. To build on this they develop the analysis by looking at how the EP acts as a representative body and how it links citizens and decision-makers in the periods between elections. Judge and Earnshaw conclude by saying that "the EP provides the only direct linkage between EU decision-makers and the 27 electorate of the EU" (p.111-112). Having done this in two separate chapters (3 and 4) they make it easier for the reader to comprehend the linkage role of the EP and its interconnected nature with legitimacy and representation, but it causes confusion as the title of the chapters are strikingly alike, and at times these chapters feel repetitious and oversimplified.

One of the interesting findings of the Chapter 4 was of female MEPs' position in the EP. It is noted that there is an upward trajectory of female representation, in particular it was found that there is an increase in female representation in EU-15 member states (in 2004 it was up to 32.5%, n=185) but the overall increase was moderated by the lower percentage of female representatives from the new member states (37 out of 162, 22.8%). With these evidences in hand the authors asked: why are there so few women in the Parliament? Why, in nearly three-quarters of member states are there more female representatives in the EP than in national parliaments? Is there European effect? (p.95).

While writing about women MEPs one cannot escape from mentioning that out of 12 MEPs the authors interviewed for this book only 1 of them was female. This could be used as a measurement of how representative the outcomes of these interviews were, and question why have the authors failed to interview an equal number of women MEPs in the light of the considerable increase in the female representatives.

The examination of the formal powers of the EP is carefully done by looking at the different decision-making mechanisms, and its role in appointment and dismissal of the Commission was assessed by the use of a case study on the appointment of the Barroso commission in 2004. The subsequent chapter (8) analyses the complexities around the legislative influence of the EP by questioning how influential the EP is in decision-making. Assessment of the EP's power of rejection with the use of case-studies- rejection under co-decision (1): "take over bids directive 2001"; and rejection under co-decision (2): "software patents 2005"- was one of the ways to show the EP's strength in decision-making.

The final chapter focuses on the question of "A Parliamentary Europe?" It aims to both monitor the normative debate about the deepening of legitimation through parliamentary institutions and to examine the practical steps taken to enhance legitimation through coordination of the activities of national parliaments and the EP. It suggests that if the "future of Europe" is "parliamentary, we need to understand what "parliamentarization" entails. And it concludes with same words as in the first edition: "In the study of the European Parliament, where you start from determines where you finish" (p.299).