

despite the difficulties in making international comparisons, there is substantial data – the complex social polarization debate – but this is not dealt with in any depth in this volume.

Short and Kim also argue, rightly, that previous empirical work on globalization has an Anglo-American bias and is dominated by studies of New York and London. To compensate, they claim that they will 'outline the experience of the margins as well as the centre' (p. 8). Yet although many other cities figure in their rankings of data, apart from an extended discussion of Seoul, and snippets on cities including Auckland, Syracuse, Memphis and Milwaukee, this aim is not really satisfied in any depth. There is some discussion of the Olympics in Sydney but this is linked to a much more general discussion of Australian history and seems a little out of place (especially as a conclusion). The authors also claim in the introduction that not only will they focus upon the effects of globalization on cities but also the opposite process whereby urban dynamics affect the reproduction of globalization. However, this latter direction of causality does not appear to be explicitly addressed in the book and one has to struggle hard to see it in operation.

It should be clear then that this book is *not* the urban equivalent of the Dicken classic. Instead, it is a much slimmer volume of 169 pages aiming to provide undergraduates with an overview of a huge and complex field. In this respect the book succeeds admirably. To begin with, as desired by most undergraduates, the chapters consist of relatively small and easily digestible sections. Furthermore, it has a lively, engaging and accessible style. The conclusions relating to the many complex debates in the sphere of globalization seem balanced and sensible (e.g. the global economy is in the process of becoming rather than being; nation states have been undermined by globalization but are still important; Logan and Molotch's growth machine metaphor is too mechanistic, etc., etc.). In addition, there are many interesting photographs and tables. The book is especially interesting for the way in which it summarizes some of the key arguments and the diversity of concepts relating to globalization in tabular form. Finally, given the vast scope of writings on this topic, the bibliography is comprehensive and useful.

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References

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Subnational Democracy in the European Union: Challenges and Opportunities, J. LOUGHLIN (with the collaboration of E. AJA, U. BULLMANN, F. HENDRIKS, A. LIDSTRÖM and D.-L. SEILER), Oxford University Press, Oxford (2001). xiv + 422 pp. £40.00 (hbk). ISBN 0 19 829679 7.

This book derives from a report on the state of democracy at the subnational level in the Member States of the European Union prepared for the EU's Committee of the Regions. Its

main aim is to document and analyse, in a systematic manner, the impact on regional and local government systems in the EU of a set of recent developments which have been effecting profound change in the practice of liberal democracy and government in the nation states of Western Europe. These include the rise of neo-liberalism, growing popular alienation from traditional electoral and party politics, the emergence of new forms of political participation and governance, and the evolution of the European Union itself and its institutional structures.

The main body of the book consists of a set of 15 chapters setting out the position of subnational democracy in each of the EU Member States. These states are grouped in four sections representing what the principal author regards as four distinctive nation state 'traditions' viz. Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Napoleonic and Scandinavian. Each chapter follows a more-or-less standard format which addresses, in sequence, the historical evolution and current institutional configuration of democracy in each Member State and the position of subnational government within that configuration, the practice of democracy at regional and local levels, the challenges and opportunities facing democracy at these levels, and innovative approaches to improving regional and local democracy. With the exception of Aja and Seiler, each of the collaborating authors was responsible for at least two of the country studies, with six (as well as the introductory and concluding chapters) being accounted for by the principal author (John Loughlin).

The opening chapter outlines the theoretical and historical contexts from which have emerged the different democratic traditions of Western Europe identified above and defined, *inter alia*, by varying degrees of centralization and bureaucratization and/or politicization of decision-making processes. The country studies which follow are, predictably, a mixed bag in terms of length, depth, clarity, analytical insight and instructiveness. Greater editorial control should have been applied to the length of chapters which varies widely and bears no relation to country size. This reviewer was particularly taken by Bullmann's fascinating outline of the complex institutional structures and democratic processes of Germany's federal system, and by Lidström's chapters on Sweden, Denmark and Finland, for their well structured and written expositions of the most advanced forms of local democracy in Europe.

The particularistic focus and repetitive structure of the individual chapters do not make for gripping reading. Nonetheless, ultimately the book succeeds in building up a picture of remarkable variety in terms of the institutional forms and political practices which democracy embraces in the contemporary European Union. Yet, despite this complexity of detail, some regularly recurring themes still manage to emerge. The imprint of neoliberalism, although uneven, is evident everywhere, although the concomitant view of the individual as consumer rather than citizen has met with some stout resistance. There is a widespread (but not universal) trend towards greater delegation of responsibilities to subnational levels, giving rise to what Loughlin terms a new 'competitive regionalism' in the European Union.

Declining interest and involvement in traditional political processes have inspired a plethora of devices designed to enhance popular participation, such as referenda, petitions, opinion polls and surveys, user councils and advisory meetings and bodies. However, these have been limited both in

the extent of their application and in their effectiveness. Somewhat surprisingly, there are only a couple of passing references to the potential of new information technology in stimulating information flow between the organs of government and the general public. And, despite the significance attached to it in the opening chapter, the development of new forms of governance involving networks of politicians, bureaucrats and special interest groups which has become increasingly central to the functioning of modern liberal democracy is scarcely mentioned in a disappointingly brief concluding chapter.

Overall, this book will be a useful reference work for teachers and students of politics and political geography, and for those with an interest in the role of governance structures in regional and local development.

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Democracy in the European Union, C. LORD, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield (1998). 148 pp. £10.95 (pbk). ISBN 1 85075 868 9.

This book discusses the democratic deficit of the European Union (EU) and fits into the mainstream literature on EU democracy, legitimacy and constitutionalism. It is a theoretically informed analysis that gives an overview of, and some insight into, the functioning of the EU, its institutional structures and policy-making processes.

The main objective of the book is to identify the criteria against which to assess the democratic deficit in the EU and to relate them to the historical context. The book singles out four main criteria in order to evaluate democracy in the EU. These criteria, which coincide with the four main chapters of the book, are: authorization; representation; accountability; and identity. Briefly, political leaders should be authorized by people; decisions should be taken in

representative manners; decision makers should be accountable to the people; and, finally, the political system should be built on a sense of political identity, which makes possible the acceptance of collectively binding decisions. The concluding chapter pulls the different strings together in an assessment of the democratic politics of the EU and discusses proposals for reform. In so doing, it also feeds into the debate on intergovernmental versus supranational modes of governance.

Lord adopts an open-ended approach to the topic, and from the very beginning asks 'what if we take the view that it is equally important to analyse the shape of such democratic politics that do exist in the European Union as it is to probe the system for gaps, not least because it may be impossible to understand the one without the other? Most radically of all, what if we keep an open mind on whether there is a democratic deficit at all, until we have done more to identify criteria and relate them to historical context?' (pp. 11–12). He also argues that comparison with ideal tests or with examples drawn from the nation state can be illuminating but can never be sufficient. Throughout the book the author thoroughly teases out and thoughtfully develops a variety of interrelated arguments and, indeed, one of the great merits of the book is that it offers several different perspectives on each of the main issues. On the one hand, the book highlights the need to create 'demos' in the EU, which could be constructed around shared civic values. On the other hand, it argues that 'the Union would not be able to make a common attachment to liberal-democratic values the basis of its association without embedding those same values in its own practices' (p. 132).

Democracy in the European Union examines a very topical theme in the light of the recent EU developments, such as the European Convention. It stimulates the debate and provides material for some analytical thinking on these issues and, for these reasons, it is of great interest to EU scholars as well as to practitioners.

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