

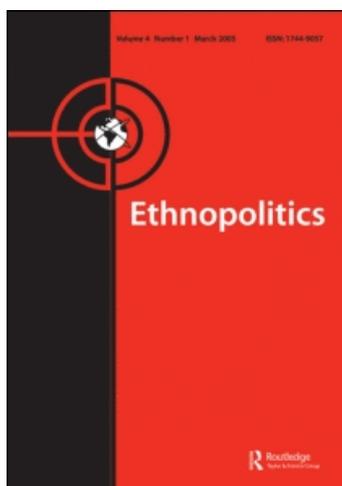
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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Reconciliation and Colonial Power: Indigenous Rights in Australia

Damien Short

Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2008, 222 pp., ISSN 978-0-7546-4938-0, £55.00

Indigenous Peoples: Self-determination, Knowledge, Indigeneity

Henry Minde (Ed.)

Delft, Eburon Publishing, 2008, 382 pp., ISSN 9789059722040, €30

Indigeneity has become increasingly recognized by the global community as an issue that should be rectified in terms of its colonial past and socio-economic present. The debate over what exactly will be changed, and how, is a prescient one that has no clear resolution. It can, however, become part of a fuller discussion and process with regards to how humanity should better approach the issue of indigeneity.

Two recent books do exactly that. The first, Damien Short's book, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power: Indigenous Rights in Australia*, is remarkably insightful in its command of historical and contemporary grievances of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in Australia. This book engages the literature in both sociology and political science, but remains focused on the issue of indigenous reconciliation in Australia. As concise and focused as Short's book is, the second book, an edited volume by Henry Minde, *Indigenous Peoples: Self-determination, Knowledge, Indigeneity*, is vast and expansive, showcasing the scope of indigenous claims around the world. It transcends modern political issues and philosophical debates and presents a wide range of case studies on numerous global indigenous movements.

Minde's edited volume is perhaps best suited for those interested in studying indigenous populations from a non-North American perspective. The majority of its authors are based in Norwegian institutions, but also come from a myriad of universities across the world. This, in some ways, increases the focus on Sami identity in the book, but this is not a major drawback. In fact, this emphasis on Sami identity does much to educate the reader of the plight of the Sami in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. It also makes important contributions to the literature on the Sami and helps to place this indigenous group within the broader spectrum of indigenous groups throughout the world.

This book builds on its 2003 predecessor edited by Svein Jentoft, Henry Minde and Ragnar Nilsen, *Indigenous Peoples: Resource Management and Global Rights*. It is clear, therefore, that Minde continues to carry the torch on indigenous studies and has done a great deal to promote the importance of indigeneity and to further the modern dialogue. The most recent 2008 volume was the result of a workshop held in Tromsø, Norway, in 2005. Unfortunately, the chapters were all written before the groundbreaking United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in

September 2007. Although the timing is unfortunate, this book may serve as an important contribution to the literature and could well become the benchmark for discussion on indigenous rights before the UN declaration.

Whenever a book results from a conference or workshop, categorizing can be a major, potentially debilitating issue. However, this volume is well compiled into three enjoyable and sensible parts. Part 1 describes indigenous movements and their opposition, utilizing case studies from around the world. Some of them are very narrowly focused on one group, whereas others attempt more broadly to weave together trends either in the UN or throughout a whole continent. Part 2 melds together the themes of self-determination, social justice and natural resources, which is, perhaps, the broadest section of the book. The chapters found within are both intriguing and thought-provoking with regards to their implications for the indigenous. Part 3, 'The Politics of Knowledge', draws on the struggle to codify indigenous knowledge through higher education. It focuses on: opportunities for the indigenous; and epistemological approaches that better satisfy the varying needs of indigenous peoples. Within each section, Sami identity is discussed in great detail, but there are also significant sections on the Mayans in Guatemala, Aboriginals in Australia and Native Americans in the USA and Canada.

Short's book is similarly drawn together from various component parts, being a smooth compilation of five journal articles. He successfully harmonizes the different topics and creates a sense of flow and direction. His major focus is on reconciliation and land rights, citing various important concerns and legal cases as the grounding to the current situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people in Australia. Short best addresses the idiosyncratic legacy of 1788 with regards to the specific nature of the Australian colonial experience. Only in the case of Australia did the colonizers not sign any form of treaty with the existing indigenous peoples. From this historical stance, Short examines more contemporary concerns such as the Mabo (1992) and Wik (1996) cases against the State of Queensland, the Stolen Generation and its subsequent report, 'Bringing them Home', and the reconciliation march over Sydney Harbour in 2000. These contemporary cases, issues and events are all part of the modern discourse on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person rights in Australia.

More importantly, Short retains a broad, comparative eye even in the midst of a focused and concise examination of the plight of the Aboriginals in Australia. He often refers to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission to draw parallels with the Australian case. In the classroom, this book would also serve as a useful point of discussion to compare Rigby's (2001) work on cases such as Spain, where public amnesia triumphed over investigations in past Franco-era abuses. Furthermore, Short could be studied alongside Hayner's (2001) chapter on Cambodia and Mozambique, in which the past is effectively left alone and untouched.

In fact, Short's book could work well with other transitional justice cases in Hayner's aforementioned book, where 21 cases are discussed. Short cited Hayner's (1994) article on 15 prominent truth commissions, but this volume may best benefit from a fuller discussion alongside known cases in which the concepts of transitional justice were at least attempted, a point that Hayner elucidates well.

Another potential area of comparison is how Short's book examines in significant depth the Keating and Howard administrations. Similar comparisons could be drawn with Presidents and Prime Ministers in the USA, Canada, Guatemala and elsewhere. He asks

valuable questions about current leadership and how they are reacting to indigenous issues and concerns. A shortcoming of Short's otherwise impressive work, however, is that the majority of his research was completed between 2000 and 2003. This does not take away from his expert contribution, but makes the reader wonder exactly where and how things have changed. By way of epilogue, what does the election of Kevin Rudd mean for the issues raised in this book?

One area in which both books require some clarification is in the discussion of nationalism and concepts surrounding nation, state and nation-state. A nation can be thought of in terms of shared culture, religion, language or historical memory. By contrast, a state is a political territory replete with international recognition, a form of government and a permanent population. A nation-state, therefore, is the overlap of the two; a homogenous nation that fulfils the requirements of a state and has *de jure* international recognition. As land claims are so important to the rights of the indigenous, both books require some clarification and focus on this subject.

Short is quite knowledgeable in this area, but needs to clarify his wording. He expertly traverses this terrain on p. 162 but does not clarify enough in the rest of the text, instead using terms as they were used by political leaders. To be fair, he is dealing with the notion of a constructed Australian polity that does not want to delineate between nation and state. Nonetheless, a section on this issue would have helped extrapolate upon and zero in on one of the most contentious parts of indigenous claims. Minde's volume also requires similar clarification on this issue. Throughout Minde's volume, the encumbering term 'nation-state' is used to describe too much. There are relatively few homogenous nation-states in the world, none of which actually has indigenous land claims. A more nuanced approach to self-determination and land claims issues is called for. Delineating terminology is extremely important when discussing indigenous rights because it adds a significant nuance to the issue of land rights. This right might include, for example, outright secession as an independent state, recognition as a distinct nation within the state, or simply greater autonomy for the group.

Another shortcoming of Minde's book is that it requires some harmonization of punctuation, style and terminology. This can be a difficult thing to accomplish with regards to terminology, but in other areas should be cleaner. Otherwise, there are some very strong chapters that are well worth studying and comparing. Some chapters ably traverse the aforementioned discussion of nation and state and illuminate some of the most important issues of indigenous populations worldwide.

Despite the noted shortcomings, these new entries have brought some rejuvenation to the idea of indigenous claims. They are most suitable for upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level studies. Both books could work well together or alongside other works. Minde's volume could, in many respects, constitute a course in and of itself simply through the scope of the work. Both books provide some valuable additions to the literature, Short in Australia and Minde specifically among the Sami, but also to the myriad of other claims across the world. The scholarly community, in these two works, continues to promote issues important to indigenous peoples and for that they should be congratulated.

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The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU

Jef Huysmans

London, Routledge, 2006, 191 pp., ISBN 0 415 36125 7

The main argument is that security framing modulates a *relation* between freedom and security rather than one of the terms of this relation, i.e. security. This conceptual move implies that security rationality is always also a rationality of the practical realisation of freedom. The political construction of existential contexts thus does not consist simply in modulating and governing dangers. It actually consists in structuring and administering the practical realization of freedom by governing its dangerous excesses. (p. 148)

Fans of this kind of Foucaultian phraseology will enjoy reading this book. The rest of us will struggle; but it is worth persevering because Huysmans provides a thought-provoking approach to what is sometimes referred to as the securitization of migration in the EU.

The Politics of Insecurity provides a provocative intervention into contemporary security studies. From its inception as a Cold War discipline, security studies tended to assume that security meant national security, and that it was primarily a policy area for the military and intelligence services. With the end of the Cold War, these assumptions have been opened up to scrutiny, in academic analysis and policy practice. Since the 1990s no single logic of security has been able to gain institutional dominance in the way that national security did during the Cold War, so that we now have a proliferation of actors, initiatives and analyses around issues such as human security, environmental security, and migration and security. Huysmans makes a key contribution to this ‘widening debate’ through his argument that at its heart are a range of different competing security logics that attempt to give shape to the field of security practice. Or as Huysmans puts it: ‘[t]he politics of security studies have thus been a politics of insecurity framing rather than the more often explicitly visible politics of expanding security sectors’ (p. 29). *The Politics of Insecurity* focuses on the politics of in/security framing.

Huysmans criticizes Foucaultian accounts that narrowly understand framing as a linguistic issue. He recognizes that there is a linguistic dimension. A discourse of security, for example, involves defining a threat (a source of insecurity) and constituting an imagined community that is threatened. In doing so security framing paradoxically generates insecurity, or as Huysmans puts it, ‘securitisation . . . is a peculiar process of constituting a political community of the established that seeks to secure unity and identity by institutionalising existential insecurity’ (p. 47). Security discourses present security measures as the practical means through which the freedom of the community is secured. The reader will be familiar with the idea that heavy security, long queues and elaborate checks at airports

are necessary restrictions on individual freedoms because through these measures we gain some freedom from terrorist attacks. Huysmans argues that civil liberties groups, in as far as they entertain the idea that there is a trade-off between freedom and security, are also involved in security framing (modulating 'relation between freedom and security').

Huysmans, however, differs from many Foucaultian analyses in arguing that security practice is not simply derived from security discourse. Security discourse does have its logics, which help to set in train certain practices. The process of initiating and developing security practices is, however, also shaped by other factors. This is where his study of the securitization of migration in the EU comes into the analysis. The process of Europeanization has attempted to remove barriers between EU member states. As part of this process, the right of free movement between member states and the removal of restrictions such as the need for a work permit for foreign-born EU nationals have been negotiated between the EU member states. Alongside this process, which raised the issue of migration in the EU, there was a distinct discussion about renegotiating ideas of political community. The Europeanization process has raised a number of questions (such as 'Who is eligible to be a members of the political community?' and 'How do we identify who belongs and who does not?') that then became linked to the issue of migration. It was the process of Europeanization that raised the issue of migration, it was only later that this became securitized. 'Security studies focuses on understanding security questions . . . [and thus] tends to reproduce a security focused understanding of politics and policies' (p. 123). One of the great benefits of Huysmans' analysis has been to argue against focusing on narrow security questions and instead locate the issue of migration and security in a wider context.

Huysmans identifies a number of institutional elements in the securitization of migration in the EU. One of these is the location of migration policy within Justice and Home Affairs, the policy area in which security policy is also located. Another is the importance given to expert knowledge in the development of policy. These factors helped to turn what was initially a discussion about free movement of workers within the EU, an issue without any immediately obvious link to security, into a wider discussion about migration and security. 'Security knowledge and professional routines as well as political struggles of security professionals that largely take place in the more secluded technocratic arenas have played a central role in the securitization of migration and asylum' (p. 123).

There are many insights to be gained from Huysmans' sophisticated and thought-provoking analysis. Ultimately, however, I found *The Politics of Insecurity* a frustrating read. The issue of fear and insecurity, which is an important element of the analysis, is treated in an ahistorical fashion. When Huysmans says that critics of the securitization of migration do not challenge the linking of security and freedom, but merely make a case for or against one of these terms, he makes a very important point, with significant implications for civil liberties activists. He never, however, asks how these two came to be linked, not just institutionally but, far more importantly, in the popular imagination. As a consequence, it appears as if they have always been linked. The failure to ground the linking of security and freedom historically also means that, unfortunately, much of the analysis seems abstract, de-linked from actual events and people's lives.

Chris Gilligan © 2009
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An Endless War: The Russian–Chechen Conflict in Perspective

Emil Souleimanov

Berlin, New York and Oxford, Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften Frankfurt am Main, 2007, 366 pp., ISBN 10: 3 631 56040 0, ISBN 13: 978 3 631 56040 2, US-ISBN 0 8204 8765 1

Souleimanov's book offers familiar facts and perspectives on the Russian–Chechen conflict. Its first three chapters identify the historical roots of Chechen–Russian confrontation. Other books do this just as well, or even better. Similarly, subsequent chapters on the independence movement and the first Russo–Chechen war add few new facts or insights. Still, for readers unfamiliar with the conflict the book offers as good an introduction as any. It contains, however, a wealth of new information on post-1996 developments (chapter 6 onwards). Souleimanov's description of the incursion of Salafi-Jihadist fighters into Dagestan in late 1999 (especially pp. 144–150), for example, covers a neglected episode.

Souleimanov provides us with a window on the Chechen soul, one that he argues is conditioned by the taboo on showing or even feeling fear. Chechens occasionally admitted that their daring exploits do not constitute natural courage, but a face-saving device. Beybulat Taymiyev, leader of the 1825–1827 Greater Chechnya revolt, to Russian poet Alexander Pushkin: 'I am afraid of shame and that is why I am always on guard. No, I am not bold' (p. 27). In traditional-patriarchal Chechen society one has little room for personal freedom: youngsters are pressured to obey their parents, kinsmen, elders and councils, to implement unconditionally the social and moral code. Yet the brutalizing effects of war and crime, rather than 'excessive' individualism, have weakened age-old bonds of kinship, hospitality and honour. Souleimanov tells us that many—especially from minor or 'impure' clans—felt compelled to prove their valour in spectacular acts that led to terrorism, war crimes and other violations. Youngsters came to adore intimidation and brute strength, and reject old customary principles (pp. 24–26). Souleimanov unravels a tangle of fluid, contrary and ambiguous alliances and enmities. Families, clans and tribes may have diminished as entities offering protection. Loyalties to those groups, however, are as strong as ever and still supersede political orientations: 'separatists are informed about imminent operations by their relatives or their "former" fellow combatants working in pro-Moscow government bureaus' (p. 214). Chapter 9 ('Normalisation') dissects the motivations behind the decision of Ahmad Kadyrov, his two sons Zelimkhan and Ramzan and other members of the Benoy tribe to oppose Maskhadov's 'Ichkeria republic'—which they once supported and defended in the 1994–1996 war—and throw in their lot with Putin's Russia. They were horrified by the 'Wahhabi' takeover of the separatist movement, and sought to reinvigorate traditional Sufi Islam. Putin, who wanted to 'normalize' Chechnya by co-opting local groups ('Chechenization'), orchestrated Ahmad's election as Chechen President on 5 October 2003. Jihadist separatists killed him in a bomb explosion in Grozny on 9 May 2004.

Souleimanov's long chapter 10 (especially pp. 272–276) explains how the obligation to avenge cruelties, injustices or 'mere' insults can endanger rather than safeguard one's kin, particularly if the target is (pro-)Russian: 'If a man takes up arms and joins the separatists... he leaves his wife, children and family without a protector... If, however, he decides to... give up revenge and dedicate himself to his family, he ceases to be a "Chechen"' (p. 273). Many Chechens are thus caught in a catch-22 between Russian brutality and local custom. Souleimanov suggests that this pressure-cooker may

explode into orgiastic violence, 'the commission of desperate, even unfathomable acts' (p. 274), whenever Chechens see 'appropriate' targets to vent their rage. Souleimanov affirms that both warring sides commit atrocities due to ruthless mindsets and interethnic enmities and grievances. The author's exposition of the genealogy behind this 'degeneration' is highly relevant. The brutalization is apparent from the separatists' seizures of the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre in October 2002 and the Beslan School in September 2004, and the authorities' ruthless and clumsy responses to 'resolve' them, resulting in hundreds of fatalities among hostages and nearly all terrorists.

The appointment of Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev as President after the violent death of Maskhadov—his predecessor—in March 2005 'brought a sharp decline in . . . terrorist attacks within Russian territory' (p. 263). It is unclear though whether this decline was due to Sadulayev. Souleimanov cautions that new-generation 'freedom fighters' condone and embrace terrorism as a justifiable and effective means to continue the struggle or exact personal revenge. Nevertheless, 'rebel' attacks on civilians have been rare since 2004. The insurgents are down but not out, despite the killing of Sadulayev in June 2006. Conflicting interests between Ramzan Kadyrov (the current President, at the time of writing this review) and Putin help them to survive. Moscow's policy of Chechenization has narrowed into Kadyrovization, a move in which, Souleimanov suggests, the Kremlin has 'unthinkably limited its own manoeuvring room' (p. 225).

The book has some unfortunate shortcomings. The entire work looks and feels like a pre-final draft. There is no separate introduction setting out aim and approach. Repetitiveness, long-windedness and overabundance of factual detail mar the work's readability and clarity. Texts are made overlong by ample quotations of observer and participant views, opinion polls and detailed descriptions of (violent) incidents and (military) operations. Criss-crossing themes compel the author to revisit incidents, personalities and trends. Some recapitulations are superfluous. The shortcomings concern style rather than content. Fortunately, these hardly dent Souleimanov's groundbreaking analysis, fine argumentation and astute observation. His exposition of Chechnya's cycle of violence, an all-or-nothing, no-holds-barred struggle for security, power and retribution, exacerbated by war trauma, brutalization, cross-cutting loyalties and Kremlin machinations, makes his book special. It is a crucial addition to the wider literature of conflict studies, not just one more specialist treatment of Chechnya. Hopefully a new edition will come out in the near future, preferably with a glossary of terms, index, some maps—and a better formulation of the 'endless war' thesis as resulting from fateful interactions between deprivation, honour and revenge.

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Human Rights and Religion: The Islamic Headscarf Debate in Europe

Dominic McGoldrick

Oxford, Hart Publishing, 2006, 320 pp., ISBN 10: 1 84113 652 2

The proliferation of controversies over religiously symbolic dress is by no means confined to the adherents of Islam. However, this religion has without doubt been the primary focus

of recent debate, and the author's ambitious book is well served by confining analysis to the management of the hijab controversy in France, and comparing other, mainly European, states.

This fascinating social conflict is examined through a human rights (HR) approach over the course of ten chapters. The study begins with the challenges posed by the hijab and the background, operationalization and impact of the controversial French law enacted in 2004 banning the display of religious symbols in state schools. Thereafter, comparative state controversies and responses are explored before the study concludes with a discussion of the instrumental potential of the HR approach and the wider perspectives implied by the debate. The author makes an explicit effort to get to the 'real debates behind the debates' (p. 4), expanding his treatment from a purely legalistic perspective to account for the complexity of his subject matter. Lying behind the hijab controversy, the author contends, are other issues: the oppression of women, fear of extremism, politicized Islam and the putative failure of integration. It is a worthy, informative and informed volume, offering solid elucidation of a complex set of issues, which draws attention to other relevant pressures beyond a legal framework. The HR perspective usefully grounds a comparative exploration of legal judgments pertinent to the hijab debate.

Notwithstanding the normative stance implicit in the advocacy of HR, the author avoids any overt evaluation of the principal objective of analysis, the French law of 2004. A strong case is constructed to demonstrate the fragility of several premises underpinning the law, while accounting for the national conditions of the law's emergence. The comparative studies are particularly illuminating, highlighting the diverse national approaches relative to this issue.

The author's contentions about the value of human rights thinking are, on the face of it, self-evident. The book's central thesis is that: 'human rights thinking can provide a language, discourse and . . . institutional structures for mediating and resolving hijab disputes' (p. 308). He asserts—with good reason—that human rights thinking has become the 'dominant mode . . . of discourse' and that many actors 'justify their positions using the language and concepts of human rights' (p. 32). But it is precisely this obviousness that demands closer scrutiny. Although the author is conscious of the limitations and criticisms of HR, there is little overt appreciation about what the normative hegemony of HR implies. There is, for example, little treatment of HR discourse as a strategy for political claims-making. Such claims-making is perfectly within the acceptable scope of politics in a democratic society. The author draws our attention to an emerging feminism within Islam that views the hijab as emancipatory. The difficulty with the hijab issue is discerning whether the objective claim is being made on the basis of such an emancipatory motive, or whether it is, as Bowen (2004, pp. 885–886) highlights, a strategy by some Islamic associations to ensure internal—and arguably illiberal—cultural conformity. Important question marks hang over the susceptibility of the HR approach to less liberal objectives that may have indirect but important implications for other citizens. The author does draw attention to concerns about patriarchal influences on women adherents of Islam (such as the role of men in organizing a protest against the French law in Paris, and the concern expressed about the role of Ms Begum's brother in her case against Denbigh school in the UK). Yet these points about underlying power strategies, which have important implications for the instrumentality of HR, do require elaboration.

This highlights the presence of other key assumptions. The author writes: ‘... for French Muslims the facial equality of French law is not enough. It ignores the quest for group recognition of its identity’ (p. 244). But who defined this ‘quest’ and the form of identity claiming recognition? Assuming the premise of a Muslim ‘community’ and an ‘Islamic identity’ fails to take account of the difficulty that ‘Islam’ has in publicly coordinating its many varieties, even in a single national context. The recent paralysis of the CFCM (an umbrella Islamic body) in France owing to internal differences is a case in point. It also exposes the limited capacity of the HR approach to tackle embedded asymmetries of power within ‘communities’. For example, when he claims that the acquiescence of young girls to patriarchal pressures to wear the hijab still allows them valuable access to an education (p. 63), he too readily accepts the inevitability of such pressures. Admitting the problem of ‘male dominance’ and patriarchy within minorities should instead prompt greater caution about according uncritical ‘respect’ to cultural claims-making. The proper HR issue here is the question of parental interference in their children’s education—in whole or part—on the pretext of not conforming to their culture, and whether the state has an obligation to intervene. In short, importing second-order judgements about the intrinsic value of cultural difference does present different problems.

This implicit fusing of HR discourse with a stress on—and respect for—cultural identity can be inverted. Identity claims are not the preserve of minorities, and states are not anodyne arenas. *Human Rights and Religion* outlines how several of Germany’s sub-national legislatures (pp. 116–118) and Italian political actors (pp. 207–210) have reconciled the banning of the headscarf while simultaneously upholding the retention of Christian symbolism in schools (and elsewhere). This inequality is justified by the same logical rationale of ‘cultural identity’.

Ironically, what is not highlighted sufficiently, given the book’s sensitivity to the symbolic significance of the hijab, is the obvious symbolism of the French law itself. Arguably, it too is an instrument of cultural and identitarian assertion, albeit with an underlying secular epistemology. The HR approach certainly is an invaluable instrument in protecting individual autonomy. However, its increasing fusion with cultural recognition and identity claims will continue to render it vulnerable to strategic misuse.

These points notwithstanding, there is much in *Human Rights and Religion* that recommends it to a wide variety of researchers. The study is pertinent to Human Rights law students, but also to students of cultural studies, gender studies, conflict studies, migration studies and European integration. Doubtless the implicit normative stance framing the analysis will find ready readers who share this perspective, but a debate is still required.

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From Soviet Republics to EU Member States: A Legal and Political Assessment of the Baltic States' Accession to the EU

Peter van Elsuwege

Leiden and Boston, Martinus Nijhoff, 2008, 584 pp. (includes bibliography and index), ISBN 13: 978 9004169456 (hbk), £176.52/€212.99

The understanding of political and legal changes in the Baltic States during the period of EU accession is essential for understanding this region's politics. van Elsuwege argues that the EU accession re-enforced the Baltic States' perception as being a part of Europe, as much as it supported their diversion from the Soviet past. van Elsuwege's line of reasoning follows three steps. First, he puts forward a political argument suggesting that the Baltic return to Europe resulted not just in the redefinition of what constituted 'Europe'; during that time, the place of the Baltic States in the enlarged Europe was also renegotiated and redefined. Second, van Elsuwege suggests that in the process broader issues of state sovereignty were at stake. Finally, he addresses the issues tangent to geopolitical location and historical experience of the Baltic States. The author makes sense out of the Baltic States' relations with the Soviet past and their peripheral geopolitical location, suggesting that the past political experience will be likely to determine the issues, means and successes of their engagement in current European politics.

All these themes reoccur throughout the book, which comprises six sections that are of different length and vary in their depth of analysis of the political and legal developments. Part 1 of the book provides a brief overview of the three countries' relations with Western and Eastern neighbours from a diachronic perspective. Here van Elsuwege establishes some points of reference to the earlier regional history, but provides too little detail of the Soviet impact on the Baltic legal system, politics and societies. The debate on the statehood restoration after the Soviet occupation explicates the consequences of the state continuity thesis for EU–Baltic relations. The discussion makes clear that the following parts of the book will address only legally tight, rather than normatively laden, categories, diverging significantly from the growing corpus of literature on European/institutional conditionality of Baltic transition.

Parts 2–4 present a detailed outline of EU–Baltic negotiations on the issues of political salience for accession. Here van Elsuwege makes clear that not only did the Baltic political and legal settings change in the process, but also the European states and organizations had to alter some of their geopolitical presumptions and correct their expectations *vis-à-vis* various actors on the ground. In the second section he suggests that the European Commission, as well as the EU, had been developing their approach to the region on the fly, while coping with the emergent differences across the region and devising bearable solutions. Although the author compellingly argues that the Baltic States were treated by the European organizations differently from other former Soviet states, he points out that this was only possible owing to vocal advocacy of Nordic countries. This latter factor, van Elsuwege underlines, demonstrates the importance of internal dynamics of the EU during the period of enlargement. Parts 3 and 4 discuss the EU pre-accession strategies and analyse the legal background of the negotiations. Although van Elsuwege inspects accession strategies in detail, he also dwells on the differentiating dilemma faced by the EU when assessing the candidate countries' progress during accession (pp. 231–233). The debate highlights the complexity of the EU's approaches to enlargement. In the case of the Baltic States, the European security organizations reconciled their normative pressure

on the countries to fulfil the directives, while at the same time continuously providing incentives for candidates to pursue changes in the legal and political framework. Descriptions of the negotiations, their implementation in practice and the rationale embedded in the draft treaty allow van Elsuwege to come to the conclusion that the EU enlargement was increasing the breadth of normative space at the expense of deepening EU integration.

The gravity of this implication is clearly visible in Part 5 of the book, where the author focuses on the triangular relations between the EU, Russia and the Baltic States after enlargement. van Elsuwege argues that EU enlargement, although largely perceived in the Baltic States as the ultimate solution to regional security dilemmas, had failed to produce any tangible results and only aggravated the perception of Baltic vulnerability over time. Both the lack of a coherent position in the EU towards Russia and the latter's growing assertiveness in the face of EU expansion increased references to the region's Soviet past, and only marginally reduced mistrust in the EU's Eastern neighbour. Taking these conclusions as the basis for discussion in the final part of the book, the prospects for perceptions of regional security, for beliefs in the benefits of enlargement and future expansion, as well as for the role of the EU as a guardian of stability appear to be dim. In the discussion of the adaptation of the Baltic States' legal systems and the Baltic role in the process of the EU constitutionalization, van Elsuwege returns to the points made throughout the book: EU enlargement failed to provide the Baltic States with ultimate security guarantees, while at the same time circumscribing Baltic States' sense of political sovereignty. These issues are likely to perpetuate the sense of regional vulnerability and dependence on external actors even if legal, political and economic balance between the states and European organizations were to be found. In his 'General Conclusions', van Elsuwege further suggests that the limited depth of EU integration in the case of the Baltic States is likely to hollow out the future enlargement initiatives. One could also read van Elsuwege's conclusions in a broader context: the European membership is likely to lose attractiveness for the aspiring members unless European organizations learn to prioritize quality over quantity of EU co-operation.

This account of legal instruments deployed during the EU integration of the Baltic States is likely to become a standard reference for all students of Baltic politics. van Elsuwege lays a solid base for any further comparative work of the EU influence on legal and political processes across the accession countries. The impact of the EU on the national, regional and European politics, the balance between the state sovereignty and the EU regulatory intervention, as well as the change of the European organizations themselves during the period of accession are all addressed in this book. Most certainly, *From Soviet Republics to EU Member States* will find readership among the students of politics and international relations, and all those interested in the European integration process.

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