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**Edoardo Bressanelli *Europarties after Enlargement: Organization, Ideology and Competition*. Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2014. 220pp, £58.00 (h/b), ISBN 978-1137348852**

This book sets out to provide a detailed analysis of the impact of enlargement on the Europarties that exist in the European Parliament (EP). The coverage of the book is impressive ranging as it does from the impact on individual Europarties through to the EP as a whole. These parties structure the internal workings of the EP, whilst providing an ideological dimension to policy debates and legislation. The ideological spread ranges from far left to far right, with the Christian Democratic, the Social Democrats and the Liberals historically being the largest groups. The parties are governed by strict rules on their composition to ensure they reflect the transnational nature of the EP, thereby preventing groups made up of MEPs from just one country.

The enlargement of the European Union from 15 to 27 states between 2004 and 2007 resulted in many changes within the Union and the potential for this expansion to negatively impact on the Europarties was very high. It was not just a case of almost doubling the number of the national parties that contributed MEPS to the Europarties almost overnight. It also involved potentially increasing the ideological heterogeneity within the Europarties. Perhaps more of concern was about the relative youth of many of the parties from CEE and their lack of experience in democratic politics.

Using tools from comparative politics to understand the EU is not new but this book combines different aspects of the literature on parties and party systems well. I was most impressed by Bressanelli's adoption of the concept of party institutionalization to study the Europarties. The main works in this area tended to focus on party institutionalization in new democracies, especially in the developing world. This book cleverly adapts the model developed by Randall and Svåsand in 2002 and makes it 'travel' to the Europarties.

The mixed methods mean that the book is empirically rich. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies allows the reader to develop the fullest picture of how the enlargement process was managed by the Europarties. The book shows how the three main political parties in the EP, the Christian Democratic European Peoples' Party (EPP), the social democratic Party of European Socialists (PES) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) managed the enlargement process. The analysis shows how the necessity to manage party cohesion post enlargement prompted major organisational changes in both the PES and ALDE, resulting in strong roles for the party leadership. Bressanelli's analysis of the composition of the Europarties highlights that enlargement had relatively little impact on the EPP and the PES, whose memberships tended to remain stable, whilst the ALDE has found its membership stability challenged by frequent changes of allegiance by its post 2004 members. Interestingly the book shows that the 'fit' of the new parties from the former communist region into the existing party structures has been 'overall smooth'. Ideology rather than pragmatism was therefore shown to be the best predictor of which Europarty a national party would join.

These key indicators highlight that enlargement helped strengthen the organizational institutionalization of the Europarties. This was then linked to the study of voting cohesion within the Europarties. Bressanelli's analysis here shows that voting cohesion across the board was not affected by enlargement, although he does highlight that in some policy fields tensions could be identified between old and new members. In particular, he highlights the famous Bolkestein directive on the liberalization of services, elements of environmental legislation and relations with the Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia as areas where differences of opinion

exist. Despite these areas of disagreement, the book concludes that there was 'no political culture shock' in terms of integrating these new parties into the EP party system.

The book makes a compelling case for the application of concepts of party institutionalization to the Europarties. In relation to criticisms or omissions there is very little to note. My one small observation is that I felt that the links between the Europarties in the EP and their transnational parties merited slightly more discussion than contained in the book. The socialization role played by these transnational parties may have helped in relation to managing ideological tensions before MEPs were elected to the EP.

This book situates itself within three debates: enlargement studies; political parties; voting behaviour in the EP. The book is clearly aimed at academics interested in these three areas of study, although it will obviously also be of interest to scholars working on the EU more broadly given the links made between a party Europe and a more democratic Europe. Overall, Edoardo Bressanelli has compiled a remarkable and fascinating book that forms a major contribution to our knowledge around the impact of enlargement on the parties in the EP and the application of the concept of party institutionalization to Europarties.

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