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Book Review: Theorizing European Space Policy

In this book "Theorizing European Space Policy" the editors, Thomas Hoerber and Emmanuel Sigalas, have brought together a range of authors from across the EU. Those authors, from both academic and practitioner organisations, have come together to think about a new era for Space – where is it going, how will it be used, what is the role of the EU, for example. That new era is also considered in terms of European Studies Theory and Political Theory, to show how these theories can explain European space policy in areas such as the framing of the Galileo space project by the European Commission, for example. It takes a long term approach, examining how the space sector has changed from an area where nation states competed for power in the 1960s to an area which can and has reinforced a European identity since the 2000s, and at the same time illustrates how the European Parliament has taken on greater authority in the field of space policy in recent years.

In a White Paper of 2003, the European Commission indicated that multilateral action and cooperation in the area of space policy would garner respect for Europe as a global partner, raise the EUs political standing in the world, improve EU economic competitiveness and also enhance its scientific reputation (European Commission, 2003, pp 6-7). The European Commission, in setting out preliminary requirements for an EU space policy, emphasized the vital role space can play in EU policies such as transport, environment and security, and integration of space and terrestrial components in areas such as monitoring and communication (European Commission, 2005, p 5). Space policy is therefore a good case study when examining European integration theory, and has relevance across many areas of European policy more broadly.

Within its chapters this book has sought to answer a number of broader questions: What can different political theories tell us about European Space Policy? What can these theoretical approaches tell us about the role of European space policy in European integration? Can the different theories help predict future developments in European space policy? What, if any, are the parallels between past and current developments in European space policy? What lessons can be learned from historical examples? In answering these questions contributing authors have critically thought about the nature and role that the EU and its institutions historically, currently and potentially play in space policy. They have provided insights into how space policy can play a significant role in the economic well-being of Europe and its citizens, with Vaudo and Lahcen for example (Chapter 12) highlighting that space technologies can contribute to long-term and sustainable economic growth, while Kenneder (Chapter 5), illustrates and how collaboration rather than competition between nation states can promote peace, security and new scientific endeavours in the future.

While Siglas (Chapter 10) identifies that the EU has only had an official competence as a space power since 2009, Europe has had its own space policy for many years, for example through its global navigation satellite system, Galileo, a programme operated by the European Space Agency (ESA) but funded and owned by the EU with the European Commission having responsibility for managing and overseeing implementation of all programme activities. ESA, founded in May 1975, has a membership that is made up of a large number of EU member states, with Canada also participating in some of its projects under a cooperation agreement. For further information on ESA membership see: http://www.esa.int/About_Us/Welcome_to_ESA/What_is_ESA. Therefore, despite the 2009 date for EU official competence as a space power, Europe has, through ESA, developed competencies in areas as diverse as earth observation (environmental monitoring over land and sea, for example) through programmes such as European Remote Sensing Satellites, first launched in 1991, to the recent (January 2017) launch of a small telecommunication platform (SmallGEO). For

details of more than 30 years of European space activities see:
http://www.esa.int/ESA/Our_Missions

A novel approach taken in this volume is the way in which a specific policy area – space – is considered within the broader contexts of European studies, international relations, political science, legal studies (both 'hard' and 'soft' law) and other social science disciplines. By doing so they have sought to provide a theoretical underpinning to how European space policy has developed to the current time, and how it can potentially develop into the future. Those theoretical underpinnings can help the EU develop an institutional framework that will support space policy in practice through the operational activities of the ESA in areas such as environmental monitoring, technological development, links between the civilian and military sectors, new industrial enterprises, jobs, and economic prosperity for Europe and its citizens. At the same time, it gives hope for forward-looking, exploratory activities and innovations, beyond purely technical activities, which will attract and retain the attention and participation of the general public, and also engender a desire to search for new knowledge and experiences beyond the purely practical.

This book should be of interest to social scientists across a broad range of sectors within academia, as well as policy makers and policy actors within the EU. It should also be of interest to students and scholars in areas such as common foreign policy, security policy, and EU institutional studies, with its range of very different but cross-cutting themes and questions.

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