
Western Europe

Andrew Moravcsik

Tangled Governance: International Regime Complexity, the Troika, and the Euro Crisis
BY C. RANDALL HENNING. Oxford University Press, 2017, 312 pp.

This book uncovers the cold, hard realities that lurk beneath the technical complexity of modern financial diplomacy. Many commentators on both the left and the right insist that powerful officials in international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the EU dominate global finance. Yet such institutions rarely act independently. Instead, just like domestic political institutions, they are arenas of political conflict. Henning analyzes the European financial crisis of the last decade, focusing on seven debt-restructuring programs that pitted creditors against debtor nations. He explores why oversight of such programs lies with the so-called troika formed by the European Central Bank, the European Commission, and the IMF—a cumbersome arrangement that increases complexity, reduces efficiency, and undermines European integration. The reason, Henning argues, is that parliaments in powerful creditor countries, notably Germany, will only approve institutional arrangements designed to do their bidding to the greatest extent possible. Ironically, given the widespread belief that the EU suffers from a “democratic deficit,” creditors rejected an EU-based solution—a proposed European

Monetary Fund—because it would have diluted their power and restricted the imposed austerity that benefits them.

Realizing Roma Rights

EDITED BY JACQUELINE BHABHA, ANDRZEJ MIRGA, AND MARGARETA MATAACHE. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017, 320 pp.

The estimated 14 million Roma people—“gypsies,” in old-fashioned parlance—compose Europe’s hidden minority. This book introduces readers to their plight, focusing especially on legal remedies for human rights violations. Like African Americans, the Roma suffer from a legacy of slavery, discrimination, and economic marginalization. Yet over the past century, the Roma have not benefited from the type of broad legal revolution that has improved the lot of minorities in the United States. Governments, especially in eastern Europe, continue to slight the Roma, often informally, in the provision of housing, education, and employment and frequently fail to protect them from violence and violations of family rights, including the unjustified forcible removal of children. Although a significant literature on Roma rights exists in Europe, this book seeks to bring the Roma’s plight to the attention of Americans. Insofar as policies toward the Roma have improved, it is largely because western European countries use the EU to impose policy changes on eastern European governments. The authors blame the Roma’s continued second-class status in Europe on a weak social and governmental commitment to the cause of equality, but they also note that the Roma have failed to organize effectively.

After Europe

BY IVAN KRASDEV. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017, 128 pp.

The multiple crises washing over Europe—Brexit, the rise of right-wing populism, mass migration, the resurgence of Russia, simmering financial crises, the uncertainty introduced by the Trump administration—have produced overblown, opportunistic warnings about “the end of Europe.” But some Euro-pessimists sincerely believe that Europe’s travails reflect an epochal transformation in Western societies. So argues Krastev, an uncommonly literate, reflective, and engaging observer of European affairs who is also a trained philosopher with a penchant for grand historical visions. He argues that in the wake of Franco-German reconciliation, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the stagnation of the European economic model, the movement for further European integration lacks big ideas to push it forward. Moreover, Krastev believes that the refugee crisis poses a genuine threat to European identity by spawning populism, which in turn threatens Europe’s established political compromises, cultural cosmopolitanism, commitment to human rights, and social solidarity. Still, a realistic analysis of these crises might suggest a more sanguine conclusion. Consider that in the past two years, European governments have worked together to cut third-country immigration by more than 80 percent. The United Kingdom has manifestly failed to outline a workable plan for leaving the EU. And although economic malaise may be the most serious of all the crises, the eurozone seems to be stable and recovering for the moment. Even without

great ideas or popular optimism, Europe muddles through.

Out of the Shadows: Portugal From Revolution to the Present Day

BY NEILL LOCHERY. Bloomsbury, 2017, 384 pp.

Although it has ten million citizens, a strategic location, and a crisis-prone economy, Portugal receives little international academic or media attention. Lochery has written a useful introduction to an underappreciated corner of Europe, tracing the country’s history from the fall of authoritarian rule in the so-called Carnation Revolution of 1974 to the present. Most of his story covers the early years. It recounts how Portugal established democracy, a tale that involves U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s curious intervention in Portuguese domestic politics to bolster moderates against Communists. Lochery also narrates Portugal’s joining the EU in 1986 and the 2004 elevation of a Portuguese politician, José Manuel Barroso, to head the European Commission. Short chapters on recent years focus on the political fallout of the financial crisis, which posed as dire a threat to Portuguese democracy as communism had a quarter century earlier.