

effort on the believable position that citizens are fully capable of understanding the consequences of electoral reforms, but at the end of the book concludes that all the considered changes have basically no effect on the behavior of the voters. This simply brings us back to the question of whether we can really be sure that voters simply ignore the strategic incentives generated by the freshly developed electoral arrangements because there are stronger ones, or whether there is a chance that their behavioral consistency and persistent dissatisfaction with the functioning of the political system are caused by a lack of awareness about the options and consequences resulting from the new rules.

Nevertheless, *The Limits of Electoral Reform* is still an important contribution to electoral studies which, forces us to evaluate our perception of electoral outcomes from a much more complex perspective. It emphasizes the necessity to take into account also a huge range of contextual variables that significantly affect the empirical consequences of electoral reforms inconsistent with the expectations based on current state of theoretical reasoning. If we want to be able to predict the effects of electoral systems, we need to think broadly about the generated incentives that are only a part of the complex system of factors which surrounds voters and affect not only their decision-making processes, but also the electoral outcomes.

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**Baun, Michael and Marek, Dan:**

## **COHESION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.**

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*Cohesion Policy in the European Union* is a publication from Michael Baun and Dan Marek. The author duo focused their attention on the up-to-date and often mentioned topic that is the cohesion policy of the European Union.

Both cohesion policy – the policy of economic, social and territorial cohesion – and common agricultural policy belong among the most important policies of the European Union. According to Article no. 174 of the Treaty of Lisbon (the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), the Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions. In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions to strengthen its economic, social and territorial cohesion. European structural and investment funds (hereafter ESI funds) which allow applicants to fund their projects from the EU budget are key instruments of the cohesion policy.

The programming 2014–2020 period suffered from an initial delay caused by factors that appeared at two levels. The first was a disagreement at the EU level about the future state of the 2014–2020 Multiannual Financial Framework. This disagreement postponed all the necessary preparations on both the community programs and subsequently the ESI funds. The second issue occurred at the individual EU

member state level. An ESI funds implementation was conditioned by adoption of Civil Service Act. However, subsequently there arranged objections on the Partnership Agreement. The disagreement occurred between the European Commission and individual member states mainly on issue of the thematic goals of subsidy.

Some estimates set the start date of the first projects in the second half 2015 which means that the date will have been postponed by more than 6 months. The Czech Republic is one of the EU member states that was not able to begin ESI funds' projects, even as late as 2015.

This situation is even more delicate when considering that the negotiations were held in an atmosphere of economic stagnation that struck the EU in 2008 and ended, according some scientists, in 2011. However, according to other scientists, the economic stagnation continues.

The publication of this book is timely. It deals not only with historical development, from negotiations about European Regional Development Fund to the present state of cohesion policy, but also stresses the fact that funds are intended to increase the support of poorer member states for further integration and the enlargement of the EU. Expenses in the 1980s are perceived by the authors as so-called "side payments" to poorer member states in order to ensure their consent with further economic liberalization and integration, e.g. the European Monetary Union.

Because the authors have spent their academic careers investigating different aspects of the EU cohesion policy, (Marek, Baun 2002; 2014; Baun, Marek 2008a; 2008b; 2008c) they are able to apply a combination of approaches, partial conclusions and methods (Baun 1995; 1996; Marek 2006).

The publication focuses on the origin of various types of programs, sources of funds, and aims of disbursement. They try to answer the main research question: "Why are there expenses of the cohesion policy during the

years on the rise and why has it been so difficult to reform the cohesion policy?"

The authors do not only state facts but also provide an explanation and thus answer the "why" question well. According to them, the informal compensation function of the cohesion policy enables simpler intergovernmental bargaining on serious topics. This informal function of the ESI funds also played a key role during the Multiannual Financial Framework bargaining.

Cohesion Policy is also a very sensitive issue that played a dominant role during the negotiations on the accession conditions that post-communist European countries should have fulfilled before entering the EU. The process of horizontal integration, as with the admission of ten new member states in 2004, had entirely changed the composition of net recipients as well as the position of net contributors.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book? The publication provides an explanation of the coalitions which emerged during the 1986 intergovernmental conference negotiations. Poorer member states were encouraged by the commissioner Delors into accepting a single market. In exchange for the support of a single European market, they received access to the structural funds in order to decrease pressure coming from the liberalization processes. The authors thus explain the political pressure and interests that were going through the Community at that time, and in this way they explain the consequences we may observe to a certain extent at present.

What should be appreciated in the book is a summarization of the positive and negative effects of cohesion policy implementation in the EU regions. Above all it is worth emphasizing the authors' provocative statement on zero progress in reaching the cohesion goals across the EU.

One problem in the book is the disjointed methodology that can be seen in tables 1.2

and 1.3 that provide the schemes of approved and applied instruments of the cohesion policy, the targets and the amount of allocation. This shortcoming is linked to the presence of data on Community Initiatives for the 2000–2006 programming period and the absence of the same data on Community Initiatives for programming period 1994–1999.

The chapter devoted to the 2014–2020 programming period is the least developed part of the publication. While the publication was written at the beginning of the 2014–2020 programming period implementation, the authors missed an opportunity to evaluate the data and guidelines which would have provided the reader a greater understanding of the period. There is only minimal space devoted to this topic, with brief mentions throughout all the chapters. On the other hand, it is necessary to state that these shortcomings are compensated for by the evaluation of factors that played a vital role in the new programming period negotiations.

There are other publications focused in detail on topics surrounding EU funds as well as program manuals and further practical instructions. Recent information about the programming period can be found on national ministries' websites whose task is the implementation of the EU cohesion policy targets. Descriptions of the targets applied on the EU level can be found in summarizing publications available on the EU Bookshop website or statistics provided on the Eurostat agency website. However, none of the available publications or statistics provide such deep insight into the programming period negotiations. None provide the insight into the European Commission plans, the change of the EC position in different periods of programming negotiation nor the programming period preparation as the presented publication does.

There are few case studies (randomly chosen Marek, Baun 2002; Schimmelfennig,

Sedelmeier 2005; Dočkal 2006) which deal with the comparison among chosen member states. Each of the existing publications is devoted to the functioning of a certain area of ESI funds, methods for attaining the funds and what the EU member states and other beneficiaries of the ESI funds receive. However, overall, this publication is one of the few of its kind, e.g. Budík (2009).

Despite the stated shortcomings, the presented authors' work can be considered to be a publication that should not be omitted from students' libraries nor of those of EU affairs experts interested in deepening their knowledge on cohesion policy. Above all, this publication can be recommended to those readers who are interested in the contemporary setting of the cohesion policy, the issues that this policy represents and the targets that this policy should fulfill. The authors compiled not only a comprehensive history of the cohesion targets but also enabled the reader to understand and link together the ESI funds, the EU enlargement and a single European market in a way that is not always obvious. This linkage shows the interdependence of sector integration (political arena), vertical integration (decision-making powers) and horizontal one (territory and boundaries) (categorized according to Schimmelfennig, Rittberger 2006: 74).

This publication provides an understanding of cohesion policy instruments, the means defined for accomplishing the cohesion aims and the evaluation of already achieved results. Last but not least, the publication is suitable for readers who long to understand behind the scenes European cohesion policy. It is a welcomed relief from the imprecise information provided by the popular media. The authors gathered a respectable amount of data, sorted it, successfully explained the data and prepared a publication that aspires to attract the attention of not only academic readers.

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Rosůlek, Přemysl:

## POLITICKÝ SECESIONISMUS A ETICKÉ TEORIE. ALLEN BUCHANAN A JEHO KRITICI.

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The organization of human society is a prominent question in the studies of philosophy, sociology, political science, international law etc. Approximately since the middle of the seventeenth century the sovereign (so called Westphalian) states have been constituting the basic units of political community division. Today there are around two hundred such entities around the world. In spite of the fact that they tend to be fairly precisely defined and are usually not of random or accidental formation we cannot assume they are necessarily perpetual and unchangeable. Even today we are confronted with the emergence of new states the birth of which often lies in secession from or dissolution of an original state.

Secession is no novelty in world politics, yet it is far from being systematically and fully researched. How can we exactly define this phenomenon, how can we approach it, what are the circumstances under which it occurs, what is its dynamism and when is it justifiable and when is it not? These questions and many more keep waiting to be satisfactorily answered, explored, examined and re-examined. In this context I welcome, especially in the Czech scholastic community, Přemysl Rosůlek's effort to contribute to this field of study.

In the introduction to his book, the author reveals that his work primarily deals with the research of secession, with the way it is reflected in Anglo-Saxon academic literature.