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Sins of Parents: The Politics of National Apologies in the United States by **Brian A. Weiner**. Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 2005. 246pp., \$19.95, ISBN 1 59213 318 5

Centering on two cases where American courts or Congress have faced claims for compensation for historic injustices, Weiner investigates how debates about restitution have been framed. He relates the issues in the debates to opposed views in American history about the relevance of the past to present obligations, as embodied in the pronouncements of Jefferson and Lincoln. Supporting Lincoln's position, he argues that citizens, by being part of an intergenerational political society, acquire a historical identity and a collective responsibility for remembering and rectifying its past wrongs.

Weiner's main thesis is that in understanding and dealing with historic injustices, we should adopt a political framework, rather than a juridical, theological or therapeutic approach. This means that efforts to make amends should be forward rather than backward looking. Acts of rectification should aim to overcome the alienation of victims or descendants, to make trust possible, to re-establish ties sundered by the injustice or to make it possible for bonds between groups to exist. Rectification should be a political process involving public discussion and symbolic acts of national significance. Inspired by Arendt's writings on forgiveness, Weiner thinks that a public apology for past wrongs, as in the case of the apology of the American government to Japanese-Americans incarcerated during the Second World War, can transform political identity. It can encourage citizens to recognize the relevance of history and see themselves as belonging to a nation that takes responsibility for its past so that it can act more effectively and responsibly in the future.

Weiner's framework requires that citizens identify with their nation in a way that makes them open to accepting responsibility for the past. Whether they do, or should, is a matter of contention, and he has to deal with the views of those who believe that national identity means adherence to present institutions, or who think that national allegiances are disappearing, are divisive rather than uniting or are the breeding ground of

chauvinistic attitudes. The ways in which history is manipulated by interest groups, and often by governments, do not augur well for a political transformation that is supposed to unite citizens in accepting responsibility for the past.

However, Weiner's book is well written and generally persuasive. It combines a well-researched examination of debates about particular claims, along with a plausible account of how facing up to dark episodes in a nation's history could transform its political life for the better.

Janna Thompson Cace
(La Trobe University)

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Europe

What's the Beef? The Contested Governance of European Food Safety by **Christopher Ansell and David Vogel (eds)**. London: MIT Press, 2006. 389pp., £17.95, ISBN 0 262 51192 4

This collection draws together contributions from authors in nine countries united in agreement that European food regulation has seen the emergence of contested governance: 'a more pervasive and fundamental form of conflict, one in which contestation spills beyond policy outcomes to who should make decisions and where, how, and on what basis they should be made' (p. 10). The single largest impetus for contested governance, they argue, was the discovery of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), the reaction to which embodies 'the kinds of dilemmas in the relations between science and regulation, market promotion and consumer protection, public authority and public opinion that riddle contemporary governance' (p. 3) and therefore forms the focus of this volume. However, readers expecting an analysis of

the political legacy of BSE are likely to be disappointed. Most contributors refer to the crisis only as one element of 'a wave of contested governance which slapped Europe at the end of the 1990s' (p. 257), resulting in a high degree of repetition as many chapters outline this 'litany of food scares' which forms the basis of their argument.

The first section comprises general accounts of the social and economic context of food regulation in Europe, which again suffer from some replication of material, particularly the example of changing attitudes towards biotechnology in France. References to the 'cultural differences' between European states are occasionally rather vague and supported by little substantive evidence, but an interesting contrast is provided by Kjaernes, Dulsrud and Poppe whose regression modelling of trust in food safety concludes that cultural factors do affect the legitimacy of national regulatory systems, so that increasing the accountability and transparency of food policy will have a non-uniform effect on levels of consumer trust (ch. 3). Following national studies of regulatory reform, the remainder of the book is devoted to the European Union and its ability to comply with international trade agreements. Much of the content is descriptive, but there are some refreshing insights to be found; Buonanno's interpretation of events counters the general thrust of the book, suggesting that food crises have strengthened, rather than undermined, the credibility and legitimacy of the European Parliament by affording it the opportunity to act as a 'fearless watchdog' on behalf of consumers (ch. 11). In striving for cohesion between chapters, such alternative views are regrettably downplayed by the editors.

As a handbook of European food safety regulation, this volume combines accessibility with detailed and diverse studies of the many issues which have prompted a range of recent reforms. It is unfortunate, then, that a text which neither speaks convincingly to the governance literature nor offers fresh perspectives on BSE should be misleadingly packaged and run the risk of missing its target audience.

Katy Wilkinson
(University of Newcastle)

Cleft Countries: Regional Political Divisions and Cultures in Post-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova by Ivan Katchanovskii. Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006. 286pp., £19.43, ISBN 3 89821 558 X

Katchanovskii's book is a fine attempt to reckon with the ambiguous variable of political culture in the post-communist arena. Starting from the assumption that political culture plays a significant role in understanding lingering political divisions within each of these countries, the author sets out to prove two hypotheses: that these divergent political cultures – extant in either half of both Moldova and Ukraine – explain both the long-held differences in political preferences between these countries' divided regions, and secondly, why Moldova succumbed to violent conflict, whereas Ukraine has not.

While I believe Katchanovskii was more persuasive in arguing the former rather than the latter, the author does bring to bear an impressive amount of data from opinion surveys and electoral polls to support his main research hypothesis. His multi-method quantitative analysis demonstrates that political culture – emerging from differing historical experiences under divergent colonial institutions and varying educational and associational policies – has indeed contributed more to the regional divide that exists in both Ukraine and Moldova than any other variable.

Besides these important conclusions, *Cleft Countries* is also generously sprinkled with many intriguing and consequential findings, e.g. the fact that the *propiska* system, used by Soviet authorities to control and limit population movements, had the unintended and unwelcome consequence of conserving regional and nationalist divisions that would eventually work to undo the Soviet system itself.

At the same time, the research does not adequately address how one may distinguish or disassemble that portion of today's regional political distinctiveness in Ukraine and Moldova that is attributable to more distant, 'ancient hatreds' rather than that occurring from the colonially imposed territorial divisions of more recent time, i.e. those that Katchanovskii argues are most weighty in

determining the continuing division. This study could have benefited by expanded sections detailing specific policies and experiences that encouraged regional cultures to develop, as well as historical maps referencing the territories that occurred between rival empires.

In the end, however, the author is crafting a convincing and well-structured argument and his research certainly takes a step forward in dealing with this thorny concept of political culture.

Katchanovskii's research also suggests that additional work is needed to understand not only how such historical experiences have changed over time, from one generation to the next. More pragmatically, the author's analysis provokes one to ask what the implications of regional divisions mean for the stability of governing coalitions, particularly in the case now that parliamentary politics in both countries has greatly strengthened? Also, what are the implications of the nature of these two countries' political structures? Most importantly, what steps do these countries do now to help heal territorial divisions? Although Katchanovskii does not offer many substantive clues to the answers of such weighty questions, it does take a step the way forward.

The
(Southern Polytechnic)

Europe After the 'No' Votes: A New Economic Path by Peter Messerlin. London: Institute for European Affairs, 2006. 96pp., £10.00, ISBN 1 85196 600 0

Assessing the future of European integration in the aftermath of referendum defeats and the question of membership expansion is a daunting task. Is the European project unravelling? Is it time to continue adding members? Is Europe going? For those absorbed by these questions this is a welcome volume. Messerlin offers a clear perspective for shaping new policies. His answer is for the European Union to return to its economic roots and seek fre-

Regional Political Divisions in Post-Soviet Ukraine by Ivan Katchanovskii. Stur-
 96, 286pp., £19.43, ISBN 3

book is a fine attempt to reckon on the variable of political culture in the post arena. Starting from the political culture plays a significant role in emerging political divisions in the countries, the author sets out hypotheses: that these divergent elements are extant in either half of both Ukraine – explain both the long-term political preferences between divided regions, and secondly, succumbed to violent conflict, has not.

Katchanovskii was more perceptive than the former rather than the latter in bringing to bear an impressive range of opinion surveys and electoral quantitative analysis demonstrating an emerging from a culture of divergent experiences under educational and political divides that exists in both Moldova than any other variable. Important conclusions, *Left* enthusiastically sprinkled with many sequential findings, e.g. the fact that population movements, had and unwelcome consequence of work to undo the Soviet system

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determining the continuing divide. In addition, the study could have benefited by the inclusion of expanded sections detailing specific colonial policies and experiences that encouraged distinct regional cultures to develop, as well as some historical maps referencing the territorial changes that occurred between rival empires or states.

In the end, however, the author succeeds in crafting a convincing and well-supported set of arguments and his research certainly constitutes a step forward in dealing with the notoriously thorny concept of political culture.

Katchanovskii's research also makes clear that additional work is needed to understand specifically how such historical experiences are transmitted over time, from one generation to the next. More pragmatically, the author's research provokes one to ask what these continuing regional divisions mean for the stability of potential governing coalitions, particularly in Ukraine's case now that parliamentary powers have been greatly strengthened? Also, what does the 'clef' nature of these two countries mean for their chances of joining Western economic or military structures? Most importantly, what can either country do now to help heal these long-held divisions? Although Katchanovskii's work does not offer many substantive clues to the resolution of such weighty questions, it does help to point the way forward.

Thomas E. Ruten
 (Southern Polytechnic State University)

Europe After the 'No' Votes: Mapping a New Economic Path by Patrick A. Messerlin. London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 2006, 96pp., £10.00, ISBN 0 255 36580 2

Assessing the future of European unity in the aftermath of referendum defeats and debates over membership expansion is a daunting task. Is the European project unravelling? Is there momentum to continue adding members? Where is Europe going? For those absorbed in such questions this is a welcome volume. Messerlin offers a clear perspective for shaping renewed discussion. His answer is for the European Union to return to its economic roots and seek freer trade and

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investment. Many may criticise this focus as being too narrow. Others may chafe the attempt to bring attention back to fundamental bread and butter economics. Whatever the case, Messerlin's commentary provides a spirited vision.

This volume is the text of the 35th Wincont Lecture published under the auspices of the Institute for Economic Affairs. Short commentaries on the lecture by Pedro Schwartz, Leon Brittan and John Gillingham are included following the lecture text. Messerlin argues that the 'no' votes in France and the Netherlands should have been anticipated.

The time, he suggests, is now ripe to bring debate back to an earlier emphasis on economics. Instead of absorbing time in reworking the defeated proposals of the 2005 referendum, effort should be aimed at trade irritants, revision of the CAP and lessening of economic barriers to trade. It is interesting to take stock of how many early European economic aspirations remain problematic.

The volume's value is in the strong statement of a defined pro-market position. The limitations lie in the natural brevity of a speech and the limited room to expound on the implications of his view for issues such as human rights and social concerns, Turkey's political sensitivities and the membership expansion debate. Consequently, some may question the highly economic tenor of the discussion here.

James G. Mellon
 (University of Western Ontario)

Adapting to EU Multi-Level Governance: Regional and Environmental Policies in Cohesion and CEE Countries by Christos J. Paraskovopoulos, Panagiotis Getimis and Nicholas Rees (eds). Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 320pp., £55.00, ISBN 0 7546 4533 9

The book is a comparative study intending to scrutinise the Europeanisation effects in three Cohesion countries (i.e. Greece, Ireland and Portugal) and two Central and Eastern European countries (Hungary and Poland) in regional and environmental (waste management) policies. It is aimed at readers interested in issues of governance and Europeanisation in general and at people

seeking specialised knowledge in the fields of regional and environmental policies of the countries concerned in particular. The main argument put forward is that Europeanisation plays an important role in changing policy-making in these countries and promoting multi-level governance. However, the pre-existing institutional and policy-making environment does matter. The capacity to learn is a mediating factor of great importance. A major finding is that the learning capacity and subsequent transformation of governance due to Europeanisation are greater in Ireland and to a lesser extent in Portugal than in Hungary, Poland and Greece. The authors have adopted a theoretical framework that is based on a combination of rational choice and sociological institutionalism, where the main methodological tool that has been used is Social Network Analysis (SNA).

A major strength of the book is that the research has been guided by a clear rationale. There is a solid theoretical and methodological framework in place that has effectively bound together the research carried out by several scholars in five different countries regarding two different policies. The study has also sought to achieve methodological and theoretical triangulation. Furthermore, by treating the capacity to learn as a major mediating factor, the authors attempt to shed light on an important aspect of Europeanisation that has received relatively little attention up to now. The national case studies (chs 2–6) have been compiled in a truly comparative manner, which makes it easy to compare and contrast them. However, a major shortcoming is that sections of the book are rather repetitive. In particular, the comparative assessment of regional and waste management policies in chapters 7 and 8, respectively, could have been omitted, since the final chapters (9 and 10) provide an extensive evaluation of the fieldwork research findings. Overall, this is an interesting and well-researched piece of work, even with some flaws in the comparative presentation of the findings in the final parts of the book.

Vasilis Leontitis
(University of Sheffield)

Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-communist Europe by **Geoffrey Pridham**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 284pp., £55.00, ISBN 1 4039 0318 2

This recent book from Geoffrey Pridham builds on his considerable body of research in the area of democracy studies. Drawing on his previous work on the Southern enlargement of the European Union (EU), it explores the recent expansion of the EU into Central and Eastern Europe in 2004. The book opens with two contextual chapters which provide a framework for the research. Chapter 1 presents a detailed overview of the theoretical approaches to enlargement and democratisation, while chapter 2 explores the dynamics of the relationship between the EU and potential accession countries. It describes the development of EU policy in relation to democracy promotion and democratic conditionality. Pridham identifies a push-and-pull dynamic to the democratic promotion and conditionality efforts of the EU towards aspiring member states. Ultimately, he points to the commitment of national governments to the process of EU membership as a decisive factor in achieving membership and the four central chapters of the book explore the context of national politics in the new member states. He identifies four key elements of the domestic political environment and these are examined in turn. Chapter 3 outlines the factors which motivated countries to seek membership of the EU. It opens with insights from the early enlargements before focusing on the recent accession states. Chapter 4 explores issues of governance, examining both policy approaches and institutional factors, while chapter 5 looks at the political arena, including parties, the media and their role in influencing public opinion. The socio-economic environment is the last aspect to be examined in this section. The final chapter brings together a number of the themes explored in the book but could do more to tie the research into the broader literature outlined in chapter 1. The book is very well researched with extensive notes and source materials. It is comprehensive in its approach but the language is at times

inaccessible. It would also benefit from an extensive introductory chapter to clarify the structure of the book and the issues it is addressing. The book would be more useful for researchers in the area of comparative studies as it explores the recent enlargement in a comparative context and provides more insights into the new member states. It would have broader appeal as the book is more readable and the material is presented in a more engaging manner.

(University of Sheffield)

The Eurogroup: How a Secretive Group of Finance Ministers Shape Economic Governance by **Uwe Gellert**. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. 194pp., £55.00, ISBN 0 7190 7418 1

As EMU is one of the most significant achievements of European integration it is paradoxical that its main governing bodies, the Eurozone Council and the Eurogroup, have attracted any attention from scholars. Uwe Gellert's book tries to solve this puzzle by exploring the relevance of such an institution in describing what its role in EU economic governance is. What this work reveals is that the powers on economic policy at the EU level, which were officially conferred to the ECOFIN Council, are in a relatively unknown circle of financial institutions. The Eurogroup (which the Commission and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) regard as the main decision-making body in the field).

In order to understand how such a small body can have so much influence on EU economic issues, the book firstly analyses the role of the Eurogroup. It describes how the Eurogroup has been created and how it works and what the content of its work is (ch. 4). It has also included an analysis of how the members of the Eurogroup have met and deliberated in four cases related to the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact, the warning procedure (ch. 5). Finally, it describes the group's working method is also described, referring to the previously detailed theories of economic governance theories (ch. 1). This method

Democracy: EU Enlargement
by Geoffrey Pridham. Basingstoke:
Palgrave, 2006. 284pp., £55.00, ISBN
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from Geoffrey Pridham builds a body of research in the area of enlargement on his previous work on the recent expansion of Europe in 2004. Drawing on his previous work on enlargement of the European Union and Eastern Europe in 2004, Pridham provides a detailed overview of the relationship between the EU and other countries. It describes the impact of policy in relation to democratic and conditionalities, a push-and-pull dynamic to accession and conditionalities towards aspiring member states. Pridham's book is an extremely valuable input to the debate on European governance, mainly because it has opened the doors of a restricted and opaque institutional framework as the Eurogroup is, but also because its multidisciplinary approach has detected the existence of a new paradigm of governance, 'deliberative intergovernmentalism' – which may be further developed with reference to the EU's foreign and security policies. In sum, it is highly recommended reading.

As EMU is one of the most studied fields of European integration it is paradoxical that one of its main governing bodies, the Eurogroup, had not attracted any attention from scholars until now. Pueter's book tries to solve this deficit, explaining the relevance of such an informal body by describing what its role in EU economic governance is. What this work reveals is that, despite all the powers on economic policy at EU level being officially conferred to the ECOFIN Council, this relatively unknown circle of finance ministers (in which the Commission and the ECB also participate) is the main decision-making body in the field. In order to understand how such an informal body can have so much influence on economic issues, the book firstly analyses the reasons why the Eurogroup has been created (ch. 2). Then it describes its main institutional features (ch. 3), how it works and what the content of its meetings is (ch. 4). It has also included an empirical analysis of how the members of the Eurogroup argued and deliberated in four cases related to the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact's early warning procedure (ch. 5). Finally, the Eurogroup's working method is assessed (ch. 6), referring to the previously detailed informal governance theories (ch. 1). This multidisciplinary

The Eurogroup: How a Secretive Circle of Finance Ministers Shape European Economic Governance by Uwe Pueter. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. 194pp., £55.00, ISBN 0 7190 7403 7

Theresa Reidy
(University College Cork)

inaccessible. It would also benefit from a more extensive introductory chapter outlining the structure of the book and the overall question which it is addressing. The book will be most useful for researchers in the area of democracy studies as it explores the recent enlargement in a comparative context and provides valuable insights into the new member states. It is unlikely to have broader appeal as the book is difficult to read and the material is presented in an unappealing manner.

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approach to the Eurogroup will allow social scientists as well as lawyers to find this book stimulating – mainly those interested in European integration, EMU and economic governance, (informal) governance theories, institutional aspects of the EU or even in EU constitutional studies. All of them will consider extremely interesting the description and assessment of what Pueter, adapting Jørges and Neyer's well-known concept of 'deliberative supranationalism', calls 'deliberative intergovernmentalism' (ch. 7). This new paradigm of governance would apply to those fields in which competences are mainly national, and is based on the informality and confidentiality of the meetings in which a very restricted number of participants with high technical knowledge and decision-making authority (ministers) commit to the solution found there to common problems.

Pueter's book is an extremely valuable input to the debate on European governance, mainly because it has opened the doors of a restricted and opaque institutional framework as the Eurogroup is, but also because its multidisciplinary approach has detected the existence of a new paradigm of governance, 'deliberative intergovernmentalism' – which may be further developed with reference to the EU's foreign and security policies. In sum, it is highly recommended reading.

Fernando Losada Fraga
(Universidad de León)

Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo by Sabine R. Ramet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 328pp., £17.99, ISBN 0 521 61690 5

and Yugoslavs as well as the memoirs and biographies of the key players. The volume is organised thematically, starting with debates about the war and reasons for Yugoslavia's collapse and ending with accounts of NATO's intervention in Kosovo, general works on the lands and peoples of former Yugoslavia and a note on the smaller number of works on Macedonia and Montenegro. Each chapter is organised as a series of interrelated discussions of individual works, which helpfully results in an excellent source book for both the newcomer to the field and those who have studied ex-Yugoslav politics for longer. Although Ramet avoids articulating her own position, she is clearly hostile to works that obscured (either for deliberate political or for more academic reasons) the role of Serb nationalism and articulates the case for a multivariable account of Yugoslavia's demise. Rather than viewing the collapse as either the product of pernicious individuals or faceless structures (e.g. the Yugoslav political system, the economy), Ramet's account stresses the importance of both types of factor and the relationship between them. Any single factor, she argues, would not have caused the collapse and the war. It was the combination of so many factors which came together at the same time, including nationalists, psychopaths, economic decline, the delegitimisation of the communist regime and the 'lack of will' among the great powers, among others, that proved to be Yugoslavia's tragedy.

Although by her own choosing focusing on English-language works, Ramet also covers some German and Serbian/Croatian language books. As with any endeavour such as this, there are bound to be works that one would want to see covered that are not. This reviewer, for example, would have been interested to read Ramet's comments on both the academic and more political writings of Ibrahim Rugova and maybe Tudjman as well, and sharing Ramet's interest in the cultural dimension I would have been very interested to read a chapter on post-Yugoslav literature. Nevertheless, this is an interesting and important book.

Alex Bellamy
(University of Queensland)

Policy Horizons and Parliamentary Government by Paul V. Warwick. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 242pp., £50.00, ISBN 1 4039 9779 9

Paul Warwick's study focuses on two central aspects of coalition politics: government formation and government survival. The key point of his theoretical account is that each political party has a limited range in which it accepts policy compromises and, therefore, accepts to participate in a coalition government. This argument – called the 'Policy Horizon Hypothesis' – is tested with data on position, saliency and the lower and upper compromise bound of each single party on three policy dimensions in West European parliamentary democracies. The results of the study show that even when controlling for various other factors the degree of ideological intersection between parliamentary parties indeed influences coalition formation, while a significant impact on government survival is measurable only for minority governments. Due to its country sample and focus on empirical analysis on coalition politics, the book is addressed to scholars with their research field in comparative politics and political economy. While formation and survival of coalition governments are widely researched in political science, Warwick's contribution presents a theoretical as well as an empirical improvement. From a theoretical perspective, the 'Policy Horizon' theory relaxes the assumptions of rational choice approaches on coalition formation by arguing plausibly that parties accept not every policy proposal that is in their winset of the status quo. It therefore provides a more realistic account of how parties behave in coalition politics. Empirically, besides offering new data on party competition in thirteen West European states, the study also provides an introduction and application on how to use the software Horizons3D, which was developed specially for testing the 'Policy Horizon' approach. By also including data on the programmatic positions of political parties from other sources, the author shows – in a well-written and understandable way – that there is empirical evidence for his argument. Further, the data on party positions, saliencies and program-

matic boundaries, given in the appendix of the book, invite for a reinterpreting of party constellations identified in earlier surveys. In sum, Warwick's study adds a new perspective to the analysis on coalition politics. It combines rational choice and behavioural perspectives.

(Konstantin)

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Asia

Challenges for China's Development: An Enterprise Perspective by David B. Collier and Alasdair MacBean (eds). Basingstoke: Routledge, 2005. 180pp., £80.00, ISBN 0 230 234133 7

China's present reforms have been undertaken against the backdrop of rapid economic growth and social change. Tangibly, this means that state-owned enterprises must likewise quicken to the pace of reform. Set in this background, B. Collier and Alasdair MacBean bring together practitioners and scholars to examine present and future trends in Chinese enterprise reform from a management perspective. Based on contributions from a 2003 conference, the book consists of eleven chapters, topics such as State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) reforms, corporate governance, and the relationship between creation and organisation culture are discussed in depth.

The first few chapters highlight issues such as corporate governance and the subsequent challenges of achieving an adequate level. W. Lawton's chapter on SOE reform and governance is particularly useful in clarifying the main problems, but also suggesting practical approaches to reforms within the domestic framework.

dy focuses on two central politics: government formation survival. The key point of it is that each political party in which it accepts policy therefore, accepts to participate. This argument – called Hypothesis – is tested with agency and the lower and upper of each single party on three West European parliamen- the results of the study show controlling for various other of ideological intersection party parties indeed influences while a significant impact on al is measurable only for ms. Due to its country sample cal analysis on coalition poli- addressed to scholars with their comparative politics and political e widely researched in politi- ck's contribution presents a as an empirical improvement. al perspective, the Policy axes the assumptions of ratio- es on coalition formation by that parties accept not every is in their winner of the status vides a more realistic account behave in coalition politics. offering new data on party- even West European states, the an introduction and applica- e the software Horizons3D, specially for testing the approach. By also including data positions of political parties – in a well- the author shows – that there is for his argument. Further, the ions, saliences and program- tion © 2007 Political Studies Association
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Marc Debus
(Konstanz University)

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Asia
Challenges for China's Development: An Enterprise Perspective by David H. Brown and Alasdair MacBean (eds). Abingdon: Routledge, 2005. 180pp., £80.00, ISBN 0 415 34133 7

China's present reforms have been conducted against the backdrop of rapid economic growth and social change. Tangibly, this means Chinese enterprises must likewise quicken to the pace of reform. Set in this background, Brown and MacBean bring together practitioners and scholars to examine present and future trends in China from a management perspective. Based on contributions from a 2003 conference, throughout eleven chapters, topics such as State Own Enterprise (SOE) reform, corporate governance, value creation and organisation culture are discussed in depth. The first few chapters highlight issues of corporate governance and the subsequent problems of achieving an adequate level. Wei-qi and Lawton's chapter on SOE reform and governance is particularly useful in clarifying the main problems, but also suggesting practical and realistic reforms within the domestic framework. In fact,

many of the chapters do not shy away from presenting social and historical reasoning to explain the difficulties in using foreign models in the Chinese context – which often is the fault of many books of this kind. The latter chapters deal with approaches to strategic management. The Li *et al.* chapter is very instructive in discussing the practicalities of utilising *guanxi* as a structured marketing approach. Williamson, on the other hand, attempts to tease out a comparison between China and the UK, with respect to examining the interaction of managers who seek to gain control assurances. The chapter has the potential to be useful, but falls short in the presentation of materials and, at times, argument. This shortcoming is balanced by the final chapter, written by Fang, who lucidly discusses differences in domestic business styles in three major centres, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The sheer pace of change in China's management and regulatory environment means that the high degree of specificity drawn from this edited book may not be relevant in the near future. Yet, there are important and useful dialogues, tangible advice and, for many chapters, insightful domestic perspectives, which will be beneficial for academics and businesspeople who want to be immersed in the dialogue of China's development from a public and private enterprise standpoint.

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China Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia by Kathleen Collins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 376pp., £50.00, \$90.00, ISBN 0 521 83950 5

The post-communist trajectories of Central Asian states have befuddled a number of commentators. The reason for such confusion has more often than not been associated with the difficulty of conceptualizing the informal political actors pervading the regional, economic and political relations. In this respect, Collins has provided probably the most sophisticated account to date of