

*Transnationalization of Public Spheres*, by H. Wessler, B. Peters, M. Brüggemann, K. Kleinen-von Königslöw and S. Sift (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, ISBN 9780008373); 269pp., £55.00 hb.

This book will go straight to my working shelf on European integration and on to my reading lists for undergraduate and especially postgraduate students. Moving on from the thrust of the more polemical Weymouth and Anderson, *Insulting the Public* (1999), who by the way are not mentioned in an otherwise comprehensive and useful bibliography, this work focuses on news media content and how it reflects the development of the 'European project'.

More than looking at just a national press, this publication looks comparatively across frontiers into different quality presses (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Le Monde, The Times, Die Presse* and *Politiken*). Other media are mentioned with comments on television and radio and, most importantly in research terms, they research an extended period (1982–2003). The case studies ask the question of how to measure Europeanization in what they refer to as the possible making of a 'Pan-European Public Sphere'. The studies include commentaries on press handling of military interventions and the public debate on genetically modified food. All of which is bountiful for student and researchers alike. Instead of being lost in a vague, undefined sense of 'discourse' analysis, they specify their research parameter through a careful juxtaposition between discourse and political alignment. They carefully argue that transnationalization is not only multidimensional but must be seen as a process where perhaps Europe is reaching a point where argument transcends frontiers. They distinctly point not just to 'Europeanization' but a more useful term 'EU-ization'. They argue that the segmented nature of public discourse hampers the potential legitimacy of the EU, yet the signs and trends show movement and not just specifically in the realm of political commentary but in a wider concept which they embrace in the term 'Differential Europeanization'.

The style and language are at times dense, but the work is powerful. Why it is powerful is due to the prolonged effort and concentration as much on method as evidential content. Moreover, the work has a striking quality of honesty and throughout, particularly in the conclusion, the difficulties of interpretation and approach are

fully questioned, illustrated and explored. I look forward to the next promised work which hopefully will extend and widen the argument into the local and regional presses. Equally, no matter the complexities this may represent to them, I hope they embrace even more than they already have the impact of growing technological media convergence in the EU that the new, 21st-century, digital communication age brings to this field of research.

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