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Crines, Andrew

Book review: The Europeanisation of Whitehall: UK Central Government and the European Union
- By Simon Bulmer and Martin Burch

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Simon Bulmer & Martin Burch, 2009, *The Europeanisation of Whitehall: UK Central Government and the European Union*, Manchester University Press, 978 0 7190 5516 4

Andrew Scott Crines

Bulmer and Burch provide an authoritative account regarding the impacts of UK membership of the European Union (EU) upon the Westminster Model of British governance. Centrally, how has the Westminster Model changed since UK-European economic and political integration?

Britain's relationship towards EU membership has loosely been characterised as reactive rather than proactive. This reactive approach prevented the UK from being able to shape EU structural development, thereby creating an early structural incompatibility between EU and Westminster styles of governance.

As an institution, the confrontational style of Parliament contrasts with those of several proactive European nations who are more familiar with coalition governments and policy compromise. This incompatibility is partly accounted for by British and French hesitations towards early UK membership of the Common Market, leading to a prevailing 'us and them' mentality across the British political spectrum.

Bulmer and Burch reveal a permanent and significant shift in the UK executive style that has become favourable towards continued integration with the EU. This thesis argues the Westminster Model became too large to govern affairs locally across the UK, yet too small to fully manage the economy in a globalised world. This suggests devolved government in two directions. The hollowing out of powers from Westminster towards the EU to enable UK markets to remain economically competitive whilst simultaneously devolving power towards Scottish and Welsh executives to maintain national identities.

The authors present the results of a sustained period of primary and investigative research vis-a-vis the practical and theoretic changes in the governing methods of the British government. Their research included in excess of 200 elite interviews of UK and European political figures, who provide significant insights into the changing nature of British and European politics. Their authoritative analysis also garners its significance from the breadth and depth of its primary research, which is extensive.

Undoubtedly this book will be of significant interest to scholars of the European Union; however, it should also be of interest to students of British Politics given its scope and clear domestic relevance. This is a valuable work given the arguments explain how UK membership of the EU has significantly pushed the Westminster Model positively approach relations with the EU despite political arguments over UK membership.

Name of reviewer (CAPITALS) ANDREW SCOTT CRINES
Institution (Underline) University of Huddersfield