
Western Europe

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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 MATACHE. 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.