

Book review: Schuppert, G.F. 2010, Staat als Prozess. Eine staatstheoretische Skizze in sieben Aufzügen

Heinz, Dominic

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Book Review

SCHUPPERT, G.F. 2010, *Staat als Prozess. Eine staatstheoretische Skizze in sieben Aufzügen Campus, Frankfurt.* 190 pp.

by Dominic Heinz

FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany

Email: dominic.heinz@fernuni-hagen.de

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Federal Governance is an online graduate journal on theory and politics of federalism and multi-level governance. Its mandate is to engage the global federalism community and reach out to outstanding graduate students interested in federalism and multi-level governance. By providing a platform for graduate students to have early success in their careers, Federal Governance seeks to promote and sustain interest in federalism and multi-level governance research among graduate students. Allied with the Forum of Federations and founding partner, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queen's University; Federal Governance aims to contribute to a global dialogue on federalism.

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G.F. Schuppert contends the state is the central point of reference in social and political science as well as in legal and economic studies. In devoting the central issue of this book to the state, the author makes it not only a work of central interest for the mentioned disciplines but also opens up the subject for a broad audience. More often than not the state is conceptualised as a static phenomenon that faces needs of narrow single changes in order to restore capabilities that try to become worse as a result of economic and societal evolution. Behind this notion stands the long history of ideas, philosophy and political theory grounded in ancient Greece, middle-age Italy and the Westphalian national state that tied authority to a certain territory. But Schuppert suggests an inverse view of the concept of the state by arguing that the state in general is a fluid phenomenon that is only exceptionally static. To explain recent changes of authority in states or how authority emerges apart from states, Schuppert sees it more appropriate to consider the state as a process. Instead of simply adding one more book to the vast amount of literature that already exists regarding this subject, Schuppert employs an innovative way of presenting the state as a process. He identifies keywords that are well known throughout academic and public discussions and arranges citations he considers as relevant for supporting his point of view. Critics might point out that the book consists of large parts of text not written by the author, but it is the aim of the author to develop his own theoretical perspective of the state out of existing theoretical works. From his perspective the state is not usually a fixed structure that exceptionally experiences an alteration of this structure, but instead he sees a state as a constantly changing process, that is hardly in an unaltered condition. It also might be argued that if the author relies heavily on existing literature then the idea of the *state as a process* might not come across as entirely new and original, however the arrangement of citations convinces the reader of Schupperts point of view.

The first chapter presents the state as an organisation that managed to overcome confessional splits, guaranteed security and order and solved distributive conflicts. The second chapter covers the legitimate authority of a state emerging only in a constant process of tying authority to the rule of law and democratic practices. In the subsequent five chapters Schuppert summarises different views on the unique process of the execution of key monopolies in a compatible way with the rule of law and democracy (metaphors of the state / de-territorialisation of the state / rating and ranking of the state / semantic shifts of the state / metamorphosis of the state). In consequence the state faces delegitimizing processes contesting the above mentioned democratic and lawful execution of monopolies. Schuppert's exhaustive examples are: If a state does not stick to its monopoly of power by employing Private Military Companies. If a state proclaims in general the rule of law, but withdraws in single cases from the rule of law (like in Guantanamo). Legitimacy suffers if the state can not avoid the selective application of the rule of law (like in case of the Mafia or drug cartels). States also may loose legitimacy if they abuse the resources of the state. All in all Schupperts book widens the scope for any reader interested in the state and advocates being open for new forms of authority beyond the nation state. In order to cope with the mentioned delegitimizing processes concepts of federalism or multi level governance offer alternative ways of conceptualising the *state as a process*.