experimental survey research that models the political effects of online engagement. The methodological individualism inherent to these research approaches does not pay attention to the corporatized structures and organizations that constrain and enable individual online engagement, nor look at the particular and atypical experiences of some community members.

Chapter 3 focuses on the increasing predominance of a small group of U.S.-based corporations that own and control most of the world's Web-based goods and services: Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Yahoo, and Amazon. In particular focus is the case brought against Microsoft's monopoly over global consumer software and Web browsers. This chapter takes everyday things that we use, like Microsoft Word and Microsoft Explorer and also Google Search, to think through how powerful companies create and maintain a monopoly by means of their aggressive competiveness and lawsuits, making it nearly impossible for new entrants to obtain market share. Most ordinary citizens are unaware of the limited choice in provider that they face every day. This is irresistible macro-level power at work, shaping our experience of the Internet.

Chapter 4 provides a counterpoint to the bleakness for citizen agency in the previous chapter by looking at how access to Internet services helps homeless people. Franklin shows that micro practices of the most disadvantaged in society demonstrates agency, and sheds light on nuances within assumptions about the digital divide. Digital inclusion is produced by accessing online information, on cell phones and fixed lines in public institutions, for accommodation, services, and supportive community links via street media. She conducted ethnographic work with homeless street-media vendors in New York and Amsterdam and found that these networks have a strong online presence, enabling the voices and stories of those least likely to be heard in traditional media formats.

Chapter 5 uses a different macro power level of analysis by examining the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and its attempt to regulate and establish policy priorities for the future of the Internet. Franklin unpacks the ambivalence that many states have about UN-led attempts at global consensus building for Internet governance. From a more critical position, she focuses on how these high-level discussions provide meta-level narratives about attempts to govern and regulate the ostensibly ungovernable: the Internet. Following from Michel Foucault, she recognizes this as the "governmentality paradox": Both big power and organized citizens want to shape the dominant narratives for regulating the Internet. This has implications for who has access, freedom, and security online. Franklin is particularly concerned about the protection of human rights, and how advocacy organizations were included in the IGF multistakeholder participation embedded into the process. She reveals the power dynamic at play where civil society advocacy organizations are one of three official stakeholder groups, but are themselves diverse in ideological makeup and priorities. They also have significantly less resources, lobbying experience, and traction within the international diplomatic space. The Internet Rights and Principles Coalition, a cross-stakeholder group (similar to a UN working group), devised an Internet Rights and Principles Charter to protect online human rights. The author notes that it has no chance of ever being ratified by the UN General Assembly.

Many were concerned by the attempt to enshrine new rights when "old" standard human rights were still being systematically abused by many states. Agreement for the governance of Internet freedoms is also not straightforward: "Freedom construed as 'freedom from' (e.g. censorship or prosecution under defamation laws) and 'freedom of' (e.g. markets, expression, choice)" (p. 175). Franklin writes that this tension of the governmentality paradox is near impossible to reconcile. The paradox of power/freedom, and resistance to power, ought to remain a central concern to all those who write on the politics inherent to our use of the Internet.

From Convergence to Crisis: Labor Markets and the Instability of the Euro. By Alison Johnston. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016. 248p. $39.95.
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— Matthias Matthijs, *Johns Hopkins University*

The debt crisis that struck Europe's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in the spring of 2010 has been both overdetermined and often deliberately misunderstood by scholars and policymakers alike. What began as a manageable fiscal problem in Greece soon morphed into a full-blown sovereign debt crisis of the Eurozone periphery. Indeed, the future of the euro itself was put in doubt. While the causes of the run on Greek bond markets in 2010 were undeniably of a budgetary nature—the inevitable outcome of years of excessive public spending and a deficient system of tax collection—the contagion to Ireland and Portugal, and then to Italy and Spain, was less obviously the result of fiscal profligacy on the part of those countries. Scholars have advanced multiple competing explanations for the crisis, many of them focused on the unsustainability of the buildup of intra-EMU macroeconomic imbalances during the economic boom years from 2003 to 2008. The main question, therefore, is what caused those balance-of-payments crises in the euro periphery in the first place? Were they the foreseeable result of the behavior of the individual member states, or were they the result of largely systemic forces deriving from an institutional design flaw in the single currency?

In *From Convergence to Crisis*, Alison Johnston manages to synthesize both strands of literature and advances the thesis that a “lack of competitiveness” on the part of the periphery was not just built into the euro’s design but was gradually made worse by rational decisions taken in the individual countries within their national institutional contexts. Johnston identifies the systematic divergence in the evolution of unit labor costs between the Eurozone’s northern “coordinated market economies” (CMEs) and southern “mixed market economies” (MMEs) in the run-up to the crisis as the main cause of the periphery’s large current account deficits. In her brilliantly argued and meticulously researched book, Johnston offers a rational institutionalist account of how the EMU went from an initial period of economic and financial convergence in the 1990s to a growing divergence in the 2000s, eventually triggering a continent-wide crisis of sovereign debt. For the author, the North’s advantage vis-à-vis the South lay in its corporatist wage-setting institutions and highly coordinated collective-bargaining mechanisms that allowed countries like Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands to systematically outperform their southern partners like Greece, Italy, and Spain in achieving lower levels of inflation. Lacking similar corporatist arrangements, and with domestic levels of inflation no longer checked by national central banks after the European Central Bank took over monetary policy for the Eurozone as a whole, the euro periphery gradually lost competitiveness and found itself with growing current account deficits. It was, therefore, only a matter of time before the bond market vigilantes judged those external imbalances to be unsustainable, and for a crisis to ensue.

In order to make her case, Johnston relies on a mixed-methods approach. Sound and robust econometric tests are enriched with multiple qualitative case studies—of Denmark and the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, as well as Ireland and Spain. She marshals a vast amount of evidence and data to bolster her central argument, which results in an innovative account of the way in which the Eurozone got itself into its sovereign debt mess. She also suggests that rather than focusing on European Union budgetary monitoring mechanisms—six-packs, two-packs, and fiscal compacts—EU officials in Brussels should turn their collective energy toward supranational wage setting. This is especially true for wage setting in the sheltered services sector that is mostly nontradable, rather than focusing chiefly on so-called structural reforms that mainly lead to wage suppression in the tradable manufacturing industry.

From Convergence to Crisis is bound to become required reading for anyone interested in understanding the causes of (and potential solutions to) the Eurozone’s seemingly never-ending crisis. Johnston’s mixed-methods approach shows, once again, why books are and should be very much alive in the field of international political economy, even though the pressure toward publishing articles in high-impact journals (with their unforgivingly strict word limits) has only increased over the past decade.

This book, and the author’s overall argument, will not be without its critics, however. While there is great merit to Johnston’s version of events—she masterfully describes the mechanisms behind economic and labor market convergence in the 1990s and divergence in the 2000s—her account is somewhat less convincing as an actual *causal* explanation of the euro crisis. As Erik Jones has forcefully argued, the sovereign debt crisis did not stem so much from a loss of competitiveness in the southern periphery as it did from massive capital inflows in search of higher yields coming mostly from northern Europe starting in the mid-1990s, that is, well before the euro had actually been introduced (see Erik Jones, “Competitiveness and the European Financial Crisis,” in James A. Caporaso and Martin Rhodes, eds., *The Political and Economic Dynamics of the Eurozone Crisis*, 2016). While pressures on unit labor costs in the North were indeed mitigated by strong corporatist institutions that were nonexistent in the South, historically low interest rates meant that southern European countries could easily finance their current account deficits. The problem therefore lay not with the current account but with the financial account, where the euro periphery built up large surpluses. A sudden stop to capital flows from North to South, which is exactly what happened during the Greek spring of 2010, was enough to bring the machine to a halt.

Jones underscores the often-forgotten observation that Greece actually *gained* in manufacturing employment during the pre-2008 boom, while Germany was systematically shedding manufacturing jobs. Furthermore, if the tradable manufacturing sectors in the periphery were much less affected by wage inflation than the nontradable services sectors during the boom years, how and why would periphery countries have lost a significant share in their export markets? What ended up triggering the euro crisis was a missing financial union (with joint banking supervision and resolution powers) and the stubborn refusal of Germany to embrace a common debt instrument (a safe asset that could have averted a liquidity crisis during the flight to safety). This meant that in a moment of financial market panic, capital would quickly flow out of the periphery and could only be replaced by emergency lending assistance of the ECB, which was itself subject to very strict *ordoliberal* rules. Finally, the lack of a common economic government and a legitimizing political union made the euro crisis into a more chronic crisis of EU governance (see Matthias Matthijs and Mark Blyth, eds., *The Future of the Euro*, 2016).

Where Johnston’s account is more convincing is in explaining the painful years of postcrisis asymmetrical adjustment, where the North flourished while the South remained mired in recession and stagnation. The EU policy response in the periphery wrongly focused on fiscal austerity and structural reforms to improve competitiveness. The fact that the MMEs of the southern periphery saw a collapse in demand caused by budgetary austerity measures and across-the-board wage cuts meant that their growth model was no longer compatible with Eurozone membership. The export-driven growth models of northern CMEs benefited both from a weaker euro and corporatist arrangements to keep wage growth in line with productivity. The result has been widening standards of living between the North and South, making a mockery out of the EU's lofty ideal of "ever closer union."

Bargaining for Women's Rights: Activism in an Aspiring Muslim Democracy. By Alice J. Kang. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. 264p. $94.50 cloth, $27.00 paper.
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— Maria Holt, *University of Westminster*

In the Western imagination, Muslim women are perceived as victims of discrimination and the worst of patriarchal practices. Allegedly, they do not have the power to change their lives or reform their societies; they are subject to male control and lack any form of agency. Yet as anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod forcefully argued in 2002 ("Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist*. 104(3): 783–790), "Muslim women do not need saving." In this book, Alice J Kang builds on Abu-Lughod's claim, thus challenging Western assumptions about Muslim women. She does so by taking an illuminating case study and a relatively unfamiliar area of activity in Muslim-majority states. When they hear the words "Muslim women," many in the West think of women in the Middle East and North Africa. However, despite the diversity of Arab women's experiences, they represent a minority of Muslim women worldwide. Kang has chosen to focus on women's political activism in Niger, a Muslim-majority democracy in West Africa. The argument she seeks to make concerns "both how civil society and the domestic political context are central to understanding Niger's seemingly inconsistent record of women's rights policy adoption" (p. 3).

More than 90% of Niger's 13.7 million population are Muslim. Following independence from France in 1960, Niger, one of the poorest countries in Africa, embarked on its postcolonial existence as a secular state. Progress was not easy, and the country endured instability and authoritarian rule, eventually emerging as a democracy in 1999. This rather turbulent history affected women's rights in several ways, but as Kang demonstrates, these were not entirely predictable. This is where the fascination of her book lies, in charting the somewhat complex and unexpected ways in which Nigerien women "bargained" for their rights. Just as we think we understand who Muslim women are, the female activists of Niger forcefully remind us that politics are negotiable and often surprising.

Bargaining for Women's Rights, which "offers an analytic framework for understanding the adoption, and rejection, of women's rights politics" (p. 26), is structured around four proposed reforms in Niger between 1960 and 2008, two of which were successful and two of which were not. They are, first, family law reform, which was rejected; second, the gender quota law, which was adopted with amendments; third, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified with reservations; and, finally, the Maputo Protocol, which was rejected. Kang examines all of these reforms very carefully, with reference to mobilization by a wide range of actors, from women's rights activists and civil society groups to conservative religious organizations and state officials. To gain the necessary information, she conducted 14 months of fieldwork in Niger. The result is a testament to her ability to balance strongly conflicting views and to do so within a framework of appropriate theoretical literature.

In Muslim-majority Niger, according to Kang, a tension can be observed between claims of being a "secular" and a "democratic" state, on the one hand, and on the other, a partial reliance "on religious authorities and so-called Islamic law to regulate family matters" (p. 30). This debate is also present in other states in which Muslims form the majority, both in the Middle East and elsewhere, and it pertains to matters affecting the family and women in particular. In Niger, as the author explains, the debate on family law can be traced back to independence in 1960; during the early postcolonial period, "women mobilized several times to reform the country's family laws" (p. 47). One of the arguments made by women was that a reform of the family code "would help promote democracy" (p. 58); however, democratization also enabled the rise of Islamic associations, which mobilized against the proposed code. The process by which women's rights activists tried to make the new family code "thinkable" and how its opponents sought to render it "unthinkable," including the issuing of a curse against three activists, is explored in great detail. In the end, the family code was rejected by the National Assembly.

The rejection of a measure considered fundamental to Nigerien women's progress, though a setback, did not deter women's rights activists. Their next battle was to bargain for greater women's representation in political life, through the adoption of a gender quota. Kang reports that between 1960 and 1988, "the presence of women in Niger's formal halls of power was close to nil" (p. 82). As with the family code, activists mobilized through "naming, blaming, and claiming the problem of women's absence from formal politics" (p. 91), but unlike the previous battle, there was a relative absence of countermobilization by conservative religious activists, and therefore, in 2010 "Niger became one of the first Muslim-majority democracies in the world, to adopt a gender-based affirmative action law for elected positions in politics" (p. 81).

The final two examples explored in this book are international ones. In this part of her research, Kang