

Globalization and Regional Integration

The Origins, Development and Impact of the Single European Aviation Market

How did the European airline market develop from an international system based on bilateral agreements into a single transnational aviation market? In 'Globalization and Regional Integration', Alan P. Dobson draws on an extensive collection of European documents - including interviews with officials and airline executives and some personal documentation - to answer the formative question behind this book. 'Globalization and Regional Integration' is most certainly a worthwhile read, but it will have to be used alongside other books if one wishes to obtain a refined picture of the evolutions in the European aviation market.

A book review by Lomme Devriendt

Alan P. Dobson examines how the European airline industry transformed from national fragmentation (1957) to a point where the European Commission could negotiate on behalf of its 25 member states with the United States for an Open Aviation Area (2006). Throughout the book, the author presents a thorough examination of the most important stakeholders that have influenced this sweeping evolution, i.e. the influence of airline companies, the relevance of the EU and US aviation policy, etc. The book takes a rather different approach than other contributions, in which researchers seek to explain why matters unfolded the way they did and pushed the European airline market steadily towards further integration.

This book, in contrast, offers a detailed and conscientious historical overview of how and when policy developments occurred in the European civil aviation system. The rationale behind this approach is quite simply that we can learn from history, and this book, therefore, basically presents a genealogy of the aviation policy in the European Union in the last half century. This historical sketch is framed around four (allegedly crucial) sets of actors and institutions, i.e. the member countries, European institutions, aviation interests, and market forces. The ever-changing interplay between these four forces has, according to Dobson, influenced the way in which the single European aviation market has developed.

The structure is straightforward. After a short introduction, Dobson begins his historical overview with a discussion of the consequences of the Treaty of Rome, which forms the early beginnings of the European Economic Community (25 March 1957). The following chapters follow a simple, linear path in time: each chapter deals with a crucial breaking point until Dobson reaches the discussion of the recent transformation of the European aviation market in an EU/US Open Aviation Area (Dec. 2006). The only exception to this straightforward structure is the final chapter, in which Dobson offers some concluding thoughts and perspectives on the future of aviation policy. This relatively short conclusion does not really live up to the broad historical picture offered in the remainder of the book, since the discussion of several anticipated policy developments is limited at best.

This third book of Dobson is, as the author states, his last full-length study in airline aviation. The evolution of European aviation regulation is, however, far from over. The airline industry is expanding quickly and is constantly changing, and it is therefore easy to see how such a historical sketch will quickly become outdated. Furthermore, current trends such as the Open Skies agreement between the European Union and the United States (signed on 30 April 2007) will affect the European aviation policy in no uncertain way, while the problems related to excessive greenhouse gas emissions, aircraft noise, and other environmental impacts will likely become of

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overriding importance for further policy decisions. All these key trends are not covered in the book. The author concedes this limitation in his conclusions: "after explaining how the single European aviation market came about, it is rather a sad note to end with predicting that it must all change again." (p. 189). Taken together, this implies that, in spite of its many merits, this extensive study will have to be read alongside other recent aviation policy information for obtaining a clear picture of the entire European civil aviation system.

In conclusion, the usefulness of this study lies in the extensive and well-researched background it offers. It provides a clear understanding of the origins and subsequent evolutions in European airline regulation. Any student or researcher interested in European aviation policy should read and turn to this book for future work.

About the Author

Alan P. Dobson is Professor of Politics and the Director of the Institute for Transatlantic European and American Studies at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He is also author of 'Peaceful Air Warfare' (Oxford) and 'Flying in the Face of Competition' (Avebury).

About the Reviewer

Lomme Devriendt is Aspirant of the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research. He is a member of the editorial review board of Airlines Magazine.

Book Information

Publisher: Routledge
Publishing date: June 2007
ISBN: 9780415373388
<http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk>