

REVIEW OF H. ZIMMERMANN AND A. DÜR (EDS.),
KEY CONTROVERSIES IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, BASINGSTOKE,
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2ND ED., 2016.

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Only four years have passed between the first two editions of Hubert Zimmermann and Andreas Dür's well-received collection of essays. Much has happened in Europe in the meantime: the risk of Grexit and the shock of Brexit, repeated terrorist attacks, humanitarian catastrophe in the Mediterranean rim, the lingering effect of the Eurozone and the Ukrainian crises... The need to make sense of these developments is urgent and widely felt. Should the heat of the moment not be enough to justify an update, the book, now about one-sixth longer, has been extensively rewritten and restructured, increasing its quality and scope. Sixteen thematic chapters, structured as pairs of short essays on a particular 'controversy', put forward clashing arguments on European integration, one favourable and one opposed to its direction and achievements.

The volume discusses in-depth the fortunes of the EU, understood as a political community (or polity). John McCormick and Jan Zielonka in Chapter 1 and Desmond Dinan and Mats Persson in Chapter 2 debate whether it is a success or a failure. While McCormick and Dinan describe it as an unexpectedly effective global role model, Zielonka and Persson lament its overreaching ambitions and scant adaptive capacity. In Chapter 4, Richard Bellamy and Christopher Lord examine the vexed question of the EU's democratic deficit, both concluding that the EU can only approximate the ideal of government of the people by the people and for the people. Chapter 6 sees Ulrike Liebert and Jonathan White assessing the viability of a common European identity and public sphere, whereas Rachel Epstein and Christopher Bickerton weigh the long-term pros and cons of the 2004 enlargement in Chapter 13.

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In this first group of essays, one notices two recurring points. On the one hand, the EU's political and geo-political results are not just remarkable, but ones of a sort once deemed impossible. This applies as much to unification itself as to the pursuit of European democracy, identity and geographical expansion. Although such polity-building achievements were not solely the result of explicit Europeanist ambitions, the institutionalisation of a supranational political order was a precondition for them, often a necessary one. On the other, burdened by its own successes, integration is losing momentum. Not only is the EU increasingly fatigued by the provision of new political and economic goods; it also fails to learn from its mistakes and to redress the side effects of its initiatives in a timely manner. The cumulation of past shortcomings is evolving into a chronic politico-institutional malaise, which may lead the project into irrelevance or a sudden, USSR-style, break-up. Even worse, European policymakers rarely stop short of reiterating their old mistake of subordinating the resolution of specific problems – the democratic deficit, for instance – to the achievement of 'some more Europe', whatever that might mean. So, with varying emphases, the four critical essays all touch upon the measure of obliquity and pretension that characterise – and eventually undermine – supranational problem-solving. Zielonka and Lord enrich this discussion by considering the potential advantage of refocusing the EU's priorities away from its old federal ambition and closer to the challenges at hand.

Other chapters deal with controversial aspects of European policy-making. Chapter 3 by Derek Beach and Uwe Puetter deals with the historical tension between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, proposing an empirically informed re-articulation of both concepts. Closer in their diagnosis than in their analyses, the two essays affirm the novel emergence of a distinctive form of EU governance. Neither supranational nor purely intergovernmental, the latter is characterised by a wider policy scope and by deeper politicisation than the old 'permissive consensus'; moreover, it proves irreducible to the traditional lines of conflict opposing the left and the right or national authorities to the ones in Brussels. Beyond integration fatigue, the chapter acknowledges a systematic disconnect between political innovations and polity dynamics in today's EU. Chapter 5 on the Court of Justice provides further food for thought on the topic. Here, Karen J. Alter and R. Daniel Kelemen contend that the supranational judiciary managed to fill a leadership vacuum that even the member states deemed damaging for integration: a development, Jeremy Rabkin replies, that risks fostering political radicalism within the EU. Thus, if only superficially, the chapter tackles the fundamental question of whether constitutionalism should constrain or empower government in its representative and policy-making functions.

Against the backdrop of the previous discussion, one may be tempted to conclude that the growing politicisation of constitutional principles, in the absence of a firm normative order, is as much a source of dynamism as of hindrance for polity-building in today's EU. A similar reasoning can be applied to expertise, a topic that the book indirectly addresses in Chapter 7, on lobbying, and Chapter 10, on financial regulation. In the former, not one of the best in the book, Laura Horn and Angela Wigger detail the danger and fears of interest groups 'capturing' the supranational government, while David Marshall frames lobbying in a historical perspective, against the changing ambitions of EU institutions. In the latter, Daniel Mügge and Jörn-Carsten Gottwald furnish a dense and informative account of EU decision-making on financial and banking regulation – a highly technical policy sector – focusing on what has changed since the global crisis, and how. Both agree that the EU's approach has been incremental, opaque and overall inconsistent. However, what Gottwald calls 'experimental' and 'adaptive', Mügge finds 'irreflexive' and driven by the external leverage of corporate interests and of the US model of financialised economy. The two perspectives are complementary: while Mügge brings back politics where Gottwald mainly sees policy-learning, the latter is more of a realist when it comes to assessing the role of democracy in financial regulation.

Yet another set of chapters deal with EU policies. Chapters 8 and 9 shed light on the achievements and shortcomings of the single currency. Henrik Enderlein and Waltraud Schelkle see it as a minimalist response to strong market rigidities and as an incomplete but desirable risk-sharing mechanism. Their analyses are well-reasoned and enable the readers to come up with their own evaluations. Andreas Nölke and Tel Sadeh look favourably at "differentiated monetary integration", with options ranging from assisted exit to reinforced supranational oversight on national budgets. Unfortunately, their far-reaching policy suggestions suffer from a rather vague account of the inevitable transition phase. The book addresses two more policies characterised by strong adaptive pressures and transnational public-private networks: the Common Agricultural Policy (Chapter 11) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (Chapter 14). Besides the specific merits of their contrasting evaluations, the four essays provide neat accounts of the long-term interplay between policy problems and entrenched social and political interests, enriching the methodological panoply of the book with their enjoyable pluralist accounts. The EU's foreign policy and its normative value is discussed in Chapter 12. Here, Daniela Sicurelli concisely presents the common wisdom that European foreign policy revolves around 'soft power' and the sponsoring of principles and norms. In turn, Mark A. Pollack's well-documented essay defends the thought-provoking

perspective that the EU is an inconsistent advocate of its own values and, in fact, a power player on the international stage.

Finally, two brand-new chapters (15 and 16) address the topics of Brexit and of the resurfacing 'German question' in Europe. Matthias Matthijs contends that Germany's geo-economic power has offered the wrong kind of leadership and a wrong understanding of responsibility throughout the recent crises faced by the EU. In one of the most convincing essays in the book, Miguel Otero Iglesias and editor Hubert Zimmermann conversely characterise Germany's as a "stabilising leadership" set on "passive mode". Over the last decades, and so much more under Angela Merkel, Germany has granted the EU stability without assertiveness, mustering enduring internal consensus even on domestically sensitive issues. Martin Rhodes and Alan Sked debate instead the new role of the UK, looking at its concern for multi-lateral free trade and its special relation with the US. Confident that, under the umbrella of the WTO, the UK will be able to agree a unique and beneficial trade deal with the EU, Sked advances a few interesting points, but eventually loses out to Rhodes' substantive arguments.

Beyond the value of the individual essays, the editing work is also to be complimented. Each chapter is opened by a short introduction, where the editors identify the main points of contention, provide some factual and theoretical background and suggest thematic links to other chapters in the book. With just a little effort, the editors have taken care to make the book more accessible and reader-friendly, averting the risk of dispersion with a nice 'hyper-textual' approach.

There are, however, some minor flaws. The heterogeneity among the essays may leave some readers confused. Some contributors let their final evaluation stem from a careful examination of their sources; others sharpen their arguments, taking an uncompromising position. Some works are richer and more up-to-date in their bibliography; others mostly refer to their author's own publications. These inconsistencies risk misguiding the casual reader into thinking that some topics are inherently less controversial or less well researched than others. Teachers assigning the book to their students should be mindful of this perspective trick. In view of a third edition, further improvements should be considered. The analytical index could easily be made thicker and more detailed, catering to researchers and doctoral students interested in specific topics. The bibliography could also be better structured, presenting court judgements and newspaper articles in dedicated lists. More homogeneity should also be achieved among the quality and scope of the empirical and scholarly sources of the various essays, which would increase the worth of the book as coursework material.

In sum, thanks to its uncommon balance between accessibility and depth, the book manages to address a wide and varied audience. Interested

just in single sections or in the entire volume, readers will find a wealth of well-discussed arguments, supported by rich and up-to-date bibliographical indications. Scholars glancing beyond their field of expertise, teachers designing an undergraduate course or doctoral students looking for a dissertation topic will find the writing enjoyable, the debates engaging and the discussion informative. Citizens interested in European politics may also profit from this collection as a solid starting point for their own personal research, to broaden their views and even call into question some of their assumptions. In times like ours, of political and intellectual polarisation, there is great need of exercises in reasonableness and pluralism as thorough and enjoyable as Zimmermann and Dür's.