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Contributors

Katja Biedenkopf, *University of Leuven*

Federico Fabbrini, *Dublin City University*

Russell Foster, *King's College London*

Brigid Laffan, *European University Institute*

Kenneth McDonagh, *Dublin City University*

Marco Morini, *European University Institute*

Elisa Pascucci, *University of Helsinki*

Emma Patchett, *University of Helsinki*

Michael Smith, *University of Warwick*

Fanny Tittel-Mosser, *University of Minho*

Nathalie Tocci, ***I****stituto Affari Internazionali, Rome*

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Preface

The Next European Century?

Kenneth McDonagh, *Dublin City University*

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Abstract

This Special Section uses the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War One as an opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future of Europe in a global context. In this preface the section editor, Dr Kenneth McDonagh, introduces the contributions and places them in the context of the section as whole.

Keywords

EU; Europe; World order; Armistice

PREFACE

November 2018 marked the centenary of the end of World War I. The hundred years since the Armistice have been the most turbulent and destructive in European history. From the rise of fascism to the Holocaust, from the wars of decolonisation to the Balkan Wars, to terrorism old and new, few parts of Europe or indeed the world have remained untouched by violence and turmoil over the past century.

But that is only part of the story, after the Second World War, Europe embarked on a remarkable transformation in both domestic and foreign policies. The welfare state, the spread of liberal democratic institutions and the construction of an innovative and stable international legal order are as much a part of the legacy of Europe's last hundred years as the violence and turmoil mentioned above. Having survived the financial crisis of the last decade but faced with the ongoing challenges of an unpredictable Brexit process, an ongoing refugee crisis that challenges Europe's normative self-image, and the return to government of far-right parties, nativist politics and illiberal democracy, Europe in 2018 faces an uncertain future.

This special section asked experts across a number of disciplines to outline what they see as the key challenges Europe faces and to assess how well Europe is prepared to deal with them. The contributions reflect on the challenges facing the European legal order, the historical processes playing themselves out in Europe's current crises, the resilience of European economies to future shocks, and the philosophical question of what it means to be European in the twenty-first century. Is Europe bound together by geography, culture and norms? Or were the fractures in European society merely papered over by the cooperative structures of the last 70 years and are they now returning to the fore? In 1918, European leaders looked forward to a return to the normality of peace that had been a feature of the long nineteenth century; in 2018 are European leaders sleepwalking into another period of crisis and destruction or can the hard won stability of the last 70 years be preserved for the next 70?

Before outlining the contributions to the special section, this introduction begins by reflecting on the parallels between the current challenges facing Europe and those that beset Europe in the interwar

period. It then discusses the agency of actors in contemporary global politics to avoid history repeating.

REFLECTING ON EUROPE AFTER THE ARMISTICE

In August 1914, Sir Edward Grey, working in his Whitehall office on the day Britain and Germany went to war, remarked "The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime" (as quoted in Hobsbawm 1998: 327) Even then he could not have imagined the destructive forces unleashed on the continent in the 31 years that bookended the two World Wars. Already by 1918, around 16 million had been killed, the Romanov dynasty was over-thrown and both the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires consigned to the ash-heap of history. In their place a patch-work of nation states would emerge under an ambitious but ill-fated global architecture for peace and security in the guise of the League of Nations. One hundred years after the Armistice, can we reflect on the lessons of post-World War One Europe to learn about our present?

In one important way, our present is markedly different. Europe in 2018, rocked though it may be by crises and uncertainty, remains on a long run streak of relative peace and stability unseen since 1914. As often noted, the history of Europe is a history of warfare (Cottey 2007) but the project of European integration post-1945 appears to have inoculated the continent against this virus, at least in relation to major power wars. In that respect despite the attractiveness of an Anniversary as round as 100, Europe in 2018 still more closely resembles 1914 than it does 1918. However, it is worth reflecting on how the period between the wars may hold lessons for the present. Retrospectively, we box off the period from 1918-1939 as the 'inter-war period', however as Steiner (2013) notes "It is crucial to realise…that whatever the damage done, the reconstruction of the 1920's was not inevitably doomed to collapse by the start of the 1930's" (1043). The descent into World War Two was not the automatic working out of historical processes set in motion in 1918 but rather the outcome of a series of choices and (mis)calculations by leaders in that period, from Hitler's ideological drive to war, to the consistent underestimation of the nature of the Nazi threat by other leaders who "like so many of the old élites, belonged to a world where statesmen made sensible choices, where rules and conventions were observed, and where men avoided bluff and reckless behaviour" (Ibid.: 1051). The lessons then are to identify what parallels can be drawn between the challenges of the present from immigration, to a changing world order, to a re-definition of the fault-lines in domestic politics and those of the post-1918 European order.

One important lesson is the fragility of the liberal democratic order. During the interwar period, Europe saw an unprecedented return of authoritarian forms of constitutional order. By the outbreak of the Second World War, elected assemblies had been dissolved in no fewer than 17 European states with German occupation ending a further 5. The only European countries to maintain electoral democracy for the entire period were Britain, Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland. (Hobsbawm 1998: 111) That many of these transitions to authoritarianism were achieved in the first instance through electoral means only serves to highlight the contingent nature of a constitutional order which many would have taken for granted in the post-war period. Similarly, the Post-Cold War European order was marked by optimism if not outright complacency regarding the democratic futures of the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Recent events both inside the EU, Hungary and Poland, and outside, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, have highlighted the problems with such a perspective. Even within established European democracies the rise of populists from UKIP, to the Front National, to AfD, to the Five Star Movement and the Liga in Italy may be warning signs that

the constitutional orders we take for granted are no more secure than they were in the interwar period.

A second parallel with the interwar period, is that in 1918 European leaders found themselves engaging with an unfamiliar geopolitical landscape. The Great War had shaken many of the certainties of European realpolitik but also had announced once and for all the arrival of at least one new great power, the United States of America. Though some parallels might be drawn with the rise of China in the present day a more pressing parallel lies in the USA's view of its own role in the global order in the aftermath of the war. Although the architecture of the League of Nations owed much to the influence of the US President Woodrow Wilson, the same forces that delayed US entry into the war blocked US participation in the new international organisation. As Senator Henry Cabot Lodge put it "I can never be anything else but an American, and I must think of the United States first, and when I think of the United States first in an arrangement like this, I am thinking what is best for the world" (as quoted in Drezner 2018) In the absence of US membership and with the exclusion of the Soviet Union, the League failed to evolve into a functioning architecture for managing global politics in the period that followed. That the US also pursued a crackdown on immigration and protectionist economic policies in the period that follows only serves to underline the parallels with the current administration. What is different in 2018 though is that the US since 1945 has been deeply embedded in Europe's security and economy. A return to America First in the twenty-first century presents a much more structurally difficult and politically significant challenge to Europe than it did in the 1920's.

A final dynamic reflecting Europe's changing status in the world order in 2018 over 1918 is found in migration. In the aftermath of the war, millions of people found themselves on the wrong side of new political boundaries and were pushed out for reasons of ethnic identity or pulled due to economic necessity to move across the continent and onwards to the United States. The Immigration Acts in 1921 and 1924 in the US were largely targeted at limiting what were viewed as undesirable European economic migrants, particularly from South and Eastern Europe. (Ward 1924) Although new US restrictions on migration are not targeted against Europe in 2018, it is worth Europe considering how it wants to respond to migration into the continent in the context of unequal global development and a declining European population. Can we learn the lessons of the interwar period that attempts to restrict migration in either the name of economics or cultural identity can lead to undesirable and in some cases dire consequences? And if we do what are the alternative configurations of citizenship and residency that can be created to manage these flows?

Each of the contributions to this special section grapple with these questions from different perspectives. But what is clear is that political leadership is needed to gain and maintain popular support for the many difficult challenges that face Europe in the years to come.

INTRODUCING THE COMMENTARIES

The first two commentaries in this special section, by Professor Brigid Laffan, European University Institute, and Professor Michael H. Smith, University of Warwick, grapple with the big questions of what Europe's role in the world is and the capacity of Europe's ability to adapt and respond to the various challenges of a resurgent Russia, a rising China, an unreliable United States and a challenging domestic political environment. Both paint equivocal pictures of where they see Europe's future. Professor Smith outlines two possible futures for the EU in this context: a 'reformed EU in a pluralist order' or a 'paralysed EU in a fragmented order.' He believes that while a positive outcome is possible it will take decisive action by European leaders in the present to ward off failure in the

future. Professor Laffan similarly sets out three alternatives for Europe's future – failing forward (Jones, Keleman & Meurier 2016), failing better (Beckett 1983) or the growing pains of a new strategic actor. As with Smith, which of these options proves to be the future of the EU depends very much on the interaction between leadership, institutions and the external environment. The only thing that is certain is that the future is uncertain, perhaps more so now than at any time since the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

Dr Elisa Pascucci and Dr Emma Patchett, University of Helsinki, zoom in on a very specific set of border practices, the use of 'hotspots' to manage incoming asylum seekers, by the EU to examine the implications for the EU's role in the world in the 21st century. This focus on the micro-politics of border management allows them to highlight the 'pensée d'État' [state-thinking] implicit in the manner in which the EU has attempted to inscribe its political subjectivity on the bodies of migrants and in managing migrant flows. Ironically, as Pascucci and Patchett outline, this attempt to police the boundaries of Europe has produced tensions between member-states, friction at borders and acts of solidarity and resistance from refugees and citizens alike. Instead, they challenge the EU to reimagine the concept of political space and subjectivity to respond to the refugee issue and migration more broadly in a way that fulfils the EU's promise as something beyond the nation-state.

Dr Russell Foster's contribution moves us from discussion of the micro-politics of borders to the symbolic politics of identity. Using the conflict between Ukraine and Russia as a site to explore the complexity of identity, politics and emotion through the medium of symbolic exchange. Critically, he focuses on how a contestation over European identity can produce a divisive narrative of self/other, forcing Ukraine to choose between two artificially stabilised senses of self - pro-EU or pro-Russia - and erasing or silencing the complex and fluid identities of its people. Using Goethe's Dr Faustus as a parable for what happens when we unleash powers which we do not fully comprehend, Dr Foster's commentary highlights the dangers of framing political disputes within the symbolic frames of fixed identities and argues for recognising the unfixed, fluid and dynamic aspects of ourselves to allow for dialogue and compromise in the future.

The final two contributions to the Special Section take the form of conversations; the videos are available at the end of the section. The first conversation is with Professor Nathalie Tocci whose professional experience bridges the gap between academic specialists in European Security and practitioners at the highest level, in her role as special adviser to EU HRVP Federica Mogherini. Professor Tocci focuses on the importance of recognising what has changed both within the EU and in the challenges it faces both internally as an institution and externally in terms of the broader geopolitical and security environment. Part of this shift is the recognition that individually European states are small and therefore the EU has become a collective necessity to influence global politics. She discusses the challenge of Brexit to EU security cooperation including PESCO and E2I, and what 'principled pragmatism' means in practice for EU foreign and security policy. A key insight was her insistence on the necessity for the EU to live up to its own democratic principles before it can influence the external environment in a positive way. Critically she argues that Europe needs to wake up to the reality represented by Donald Trump's America, which she describes as a symptom of a broader underlying change in the US role in the world. The post-World War two world is no longer there, and it cannot be retrieved. Europe needs to adapt and manage this transition to a fundamentally different world order.

The second conversation is with Professor Federico Fabbrini, Full Professor of European Law in the School of Law and Government, DCU and founding Director of the D.C.U Brexit Institute. He begins by highlighting the rising challenge of nationalism in the context of both 2018 and 1918, underlining how European integration represented an attempt to diffuse that challenge that is now increasingly under threat. In response to this new challenge, Professor Fabbrini argues for a reaffirmation of the

founding values of the European project and to have the confidence to build more Europe not less in response to those who would seek to pull the continent apart, but in so doing recognising the different sets of visions and interests guiding member states. Rather than a two-speed or multi-speed Europe, he argues for a Europe of concentric circles that recognises the different end-points member states want to reach in their engagement with integration.

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CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Kenneth McDonagh, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, Glasnevin Campus, Collins Avenue, Dublin 9, Ireland[Kenneth.mcdonagh@dcu.ie].

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Commentary

Testing the Boundaries of Order? Europe, the European Union and a Changing World Arena

Michael Smith, *University of Warwick*

Citation

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Abstract

Beginning with the emergence of a new European and international order after the end of the Cold War, this commentary examines how the interplay of the EU as a 'market power', a 'realist power', an 'institutional power' and a 'normative power' with the dynamics of a world based on shifting rules and roles for the EU, its partners and potential adversaries presents key challenges for the next European century. It identifies two alternative futures for the EU as a 'reformed EU in a pluralist order' or a 'paralysed EU in a fragmented order', and highlights the critical issues Europe must address to navigate this uncertain future.

Keywords

Europe; European Union; International order; Power; Institutions; Negotiation

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Since the end of the Cold War there have been four key strands of thinking about Europe, the European Union and the generation of international order. One has concerned the relationship between old states, new states and the European order: how far have the changes since the early 1990s revived or transformed the role of states in generating and maintaining order? A second relates to the links between order and stability: how far have new mechanisms of order created stable boundaries and institutions both in Europe and beyond? A third gives a central role to the place of negotiation and the establishment of negotiated order: how far have negotiations provided a robust foundation for the accommodation of change and challenges, and what role has diplomacy played in consolidating and developing order? A final question centres on the role(s) played by the European Union in generating, consolidating and developing order: to what extent has the EU become the centre of a stable European order, and how has this related to the challenge of change both inside and outside the continent?

This article focuses on these four questions. Specifically, it starts from the emergence of an apparently new international and European order after the end of the Cold War, based on new forms of institutions, rules, negotiation and boundary-making and on new roles for key actors including states and the EU. It goes on to examine the key mechanisms underpinning this order, including the interactions between power structures, market structures, institutional structures and normative structures and the impact of the EU as a 'realist power', a 'market power', an 'institutional power' and a 'normative power'. The article then explores the challenges to this conception of European and international order emerging from power shifts at the domestic and European levels, the impact of economic crisis, the contestability of existing institutions and norms and the resulting emergence of a multipolar or 'interpolar' world arena. Finally, it assesses the capacity of European actors, and specifically the EU, to absorb, divert or capitalise upon these challenges over the next decade, and explores the implications of two scenarios: on the one hand, the emergence of a pluralistic yet resilient European and international order in which a reformed EU would be a central component, and on the other hand the development of a fragmented order in which the EU might be paralyzed or marginalised.

THE EU AND ORDER

The EU has a foundational relationship with issues of European and international order. But how does this help us to think about the resources that the EU brings to those issues, and the extent to which the Union can hope to exercise leverage over them? I argue that ideas of international order rely on four central structural attributes: power structure, market structure, institutional structure and normative structure. Each of these is important in its own right, but equally important are the linkages and balances between the different pillars of order. Equally important also are the implications of these components for the roles that might be played by the EU.

First, power structures rely upon the balance of material capabilities and the ability to apply these in specific contexts. The end of the Cold War led to major shifts in the balance of material capabilities, both inside and outside Europe – but these shifts were not unidirectional, cumulative or permanent. In the case of Europe, they had the effect of highlighting the structural power of the EU, but also of drawing attention to the fact that the Union simply did not possess the classical instruments of 'hard power'. In a sense, the period since 1990 has been one of successive attempts by the EU to equip itself with more instruments of 'hard power' and to become a 'realist power' (Zimmerman 2007), in the face of resistance from some member states, competition from other bodies such as NATO and the resurgence of Russia. Internally, it is to some extent appropriate to see the EU as exercising structural power even without the key components of 'hard power', but this tension remains to be resolved.

Second, the importance of market structure privileges the EU's role as a 'market power' (Damro 2012,2015), driven by market imperatives and seeking both economic security and economic leverage. There is no doubt that in this domain, the EU exercises both structural power and power in specific policy domains, not only in Europe but also beyond. But this simple statement of itself raises questions about the ways in which market power is exercised by and through the Union. As a 'trading state', the EU centres its international activity on multilateral rules and institutions, but is itself a dense 'community of law' centred on the generation of economic benefits for its member states and citizens. Not surprisingly, the internal distribution of these benefits, and the external response to the EU's search for appropriate mechanisms of stability and growth, create tensions and contradictions. Most obviously, the internal prosperity of the Union and the need for multilateral cooperation in order to create stable and open trading conditions can come into conflict, and indeed can lead to questioning of the EU's roles when these internal and external imperatives collide.

Third, the generation and consolidation of the international order, both at European and at global levels, has come to rely upon the generation of institutional density and the production of forms of multilevel governance in the European and world arenas. As noted above, the EU is at one and the same time an example of a dense system of rules and institutional processes, and a distinctive sub-system in the broader arena. This is not just a question of the 'Brussels institutions', though – the EU generates and encompasses transnational, transgovernmental and intergovernmental networks that add to the robustness – and some would say, the impenetrability – of its internal order. This is turn provides the basis for claims of legitimacy in multilateral institutions at the continental and global levels, in some cases superseding the claims of EU member states themselves. There is of course a contradiction between the generation of ever-increasing institutional density at the EU level and the residual claims of member states and others to autonomy, and this in turn is linked to the ways in which EU institutions in the broadest sense are seen as providing collective and more specific goods – economic, political and normative.

Finally, the normative structure of the European and broader world orders demands consideration, shaping as it does the ideational contexts and challenges faced not only by the EU but also by a host of other internationally acting bodies. The 'reigning ideas' of European and international order are

strongly linked to the notion of 'normative power Europe' (Manners 2002, Whitman 2010) and the associated assumption that the EU is a 'force for good' in the world arena because of the ideas that it encompasses. This is turn reflects in part the search during the immediate post-Cold War period for forms of European identity and normative order at a time of normative confusion and contention. The EU has represented for many a central repository and key expression of ideas associated with liberal international order. Not only this, but the ideas themselves – rule of law, good governance, human rights and others – have been given concrete expression in a host of the EU's international agreements and institutional engagements. A central issue in this area, inevitably, is the extent to which these normative commitments can survive engagement with material political, security and economic imperatives – and with the emergence of competing normative orders in the global arena.

CHALLENGES

It is clear that the current period poses major challenges to each and all of the components of European and international order as outlined above. Not only this, but there are major challenges to the EU itself as a form and focus of international order – a potent combination. Whilst it may be convenient to lump together the period since 1990 as the 'post-Cold War era', international order has moved through several phases over the past twenty-five or more years, and each of them has posed challenges and opportunities for the EU.

In terms of power structure, we have already seen that the EU's position in Europe has changed markedly over the period since 1990. But the broader international arena has arguably changed more profoundly and continues to change in fundamental ways (Alcaro et al 2016). From a period in which US hegemony appeared not only complete but also assured for the foreseeable future, there have emerged major and persistent challenges, not only from outside but also from inside the USA. The power shift in the world arena is incomplete and certainly inconclusive, but it has also played into a US domestic context in which a curious mixture of 'declinism', victimhood and the desire still to dominate has permeated US politics. This is not a new combination, but it has been given a new and radical twist by the politics of the Trump administration. From a European perspective, the US remains the continent's most significant other, but the combination of Trumpism with Russian revanchism under Vladimir Putin (not to mention a more assertive Chinese stance on world order issues) has proven disruptive. When this is combined further with challenges to the existing power structure within the EU, both at Brussels level and in national contexts, the level of uncertainty and potential division only increases.

Simultaneously, there have been persistent challenges in the area of market structure – a core aspect of the EU's engagement with issues of European and world order. The impact of the financial and sovereign debt crises over the past decade has been corrosive at a number of levels. In the global arena, it has created conditions in which the existing structures of market power have been partly if not largely overturned – linked to the emergence of 'rising powers' and especially China in the global political economy, it has subverted expectations about the future shape of the world economy and the viability of international economic institutions. This subversion has been compounded by the actions of the Trump administration in either ignoring or confronting the rules-based order in trade and related areas, and it has been transmitted broadly in the global economy by the persistence of high levels of economic interdependence. The emergence of an 'interpolar' world (Grevi 2009), in which the rise of new centres of power is combined with persistently high levels of interdependence, is nowhere better illustrated than in the current turmoil surrounding world trade and multilateral commercial institutions. Whilst this has been the centre of current and

recent challenges, the global financial structure and areas such as the economics of development bear witness to continued turmoil and the potential for further disruption.

All of this implies that the institutional structure that nurtured the liberal world order – and indeed, the EU itself - for decades is now open to question as never before. This can be conceptualised as a chronic crisis of multilateralism, both as an idea and as a set of institutional commitments (Smith 2019 forthcoming). At the global level, the extent of commitment to multilateral institutions by a number of leading players is contested, as are the detailed commitments themselves in the case of trade (for example, by the Trump administration's use of national security rationales for the declaration of trade wars). Different versions of multilateralism compete, at the same time as bilateral and regional agreements proliferate, and the fluid nature of commitments and undertakings leads to opportunistic and disruptive behaviour. Within Europe broadly defined, the use of economic instruments to subvert or disrupt political institutions (for example through oil and gas supplies) has become more frequent. Equally, whilst the institutions of European integration might be attacked and challenged from without, they are also challenged from within, by the rise of neo-nationalist politics within member states and by Brexit.

The crisis of multilateralism noted above is not merely a crisis of institutions – it is a crisis of a normative order, in which the 'reigning ideas' associated with open processes of international commercial and financial exchange are contested. It is important to register that these ideas are foundational for the EU (although some would argue they have never been perfectly reflected in EU policies) and thus that this is an area in which external and internal challenges combine to produce a kind of multiplier effect. The neo-nationalist political movements that have become prominent in a number of EU member states draw not only on European roots but also on varieties of 'transnational nationalism' reflected most obviously in the Trump administration, but also in other radical right-wing movements. The emphasis on 'sovereignist' politics that characterises many neo-nationalist groupings challenges not only the external but also the internal order of the Union, and thus raises questions about the EU's roles in both European and broader international order.

RESPONSES

How should Europe and the EU in particular respond to the set of challenges outlined above? Recent years have seen a number of proposals for the extension and/or reform of the Union's institutions, and have also seen the working through of the Lisbon Treaty provisions, especially in the area of external action and diplomacy. But they have also seen a resurgence of 'domesticism', effectively giving priority to the treatment of internal problems (both at the EU and at the member state level) above the projection of EU power, interests or values. One symptom of this tension is the idea of 'foreign policy as an antidote' – the idea that a more activist and extended set of external actions can defuse some of the internal tensions – but this is in a sense a circular argument, since the internal tensions are precisely what might set strict limits for an extension of EU external activism. So we are at a potential crossroads in the relationship between the EU and European or international order, in which the stakes are heightened but the internal constraints on external activism may be reinforced – partly because the stakes and potential risks are more salient.

One way of developing these arguments is to go back to the four elements of international order sketched earlier, and to ask what resources (actual and potential) the EU can deploy in attempting to shore them up. In the first place, the Union still finds itself in an ambiguous position in relation to international power structures, although it has taken some significant initiatives since 2016 in relation to collective defence planning and structured cooperation. In principle, more resources are available, but there are still important constraints on the perceived legitimacy of action in 'high

politics'. When it comes to market structure, the EU still occupies a prominent position as a leading commercial actor, and has developed a range of tools to deploy its economic power in such areas as development cooperation in the global arena – but there are new and potent competitors in such domains, most notably China. At the European level, the EU has shown an inclination to engage with geo-economic issues, but has encountered severe problems when geo-economics and geopolitics become closely linked, as in the case of Ukraine. The Union still occupies a leading position in the institutional power structures of Europe and the world arena, but the undermining of institutions in key areas of the global political economy (trade, environment) has meant that the EU has suffered a loss of leverage in the multilateral system, allied to the losses arising from its own internal economic and institutional contradictions.

Another approach to exploring the ways in which challenges to European and world order might be met by the EU is by returning to the four aspects of international order identified at the beginning of this article: statehood, stability, negotiated order and the legitimacy and centrality of the EU itself. In recent years, the tension between statehood and the search for forms of order across or among states and other actors have become more rather than less severe, and that this can be discerned in many of the EU's internal and external activities. At the same time the search for stability in Europe and beyond through the consolidation or the transformation of boundaries has become more fraught, with issues such as migration highlighting the imperfect nature of cross-national consensus on what the boundaries of Europe and the EU should or could be. As a result, the tension between a politics of inclusion and a politics of exclusion remains severe and persistent. Not surprisingly, the nature and extent of negotiated order in Europe and the wider world arena have been questioned and in important respects constrained: whilst modest gains might still be made in the extension of the EU order through accession, the Union's neighbourhood has become more rather than less contested and is likely to remain so. In this context, the EU's credentials as a supplier of order, both within the wider Europe and beyond, have come into question, and the extension of its external actions and ambitions at least to some extent curtailed, despite the apparent ambition of the Global Strategy. What the Strategy labels 'principled pragmatism' may well be an appropriate response to the circumscription of its resources and potential leverage, but it is a far cry from the heyday of the EU as a 'force for good' at the European and the global levels.

CONCLUSION

What kind of future for the EU and European order, in a global context, can be deduced from this argument? Two alternatives can be proposed, each of them reflecting the impact of the challenges and constraints outlined above. The first might be labelled 'A reformed Union in a pluralist European and world order'. In this alternative, the EU overcomes its current internal tensions to create new institutional and material resources, and succeeds in deploying them within Europe and beyond. But both the European order and broader global order in the mid-21st century will require action within a more pluralistic context, with new alignments of forces at the transnational, transgovernmental and intergovernmental levels. The challenge for the EU will be to develop and deploy new instruments, but above all to adapt them to shifting constellations of power, markets, institutions and norms both internally and externally. The pursuit of a leading role in international order carries with it – as it always has – potential costs and risks that are multiplied in a more pluralistic arena, and the EU will have to both identify and respond to these costs and risks both in the short and in the longer term. Such a process demands legitimacy and leadership in areas that are currently questioned both within and outside the Union – and such legitimacy and leadership cannot be generated simply by institutional reforms.

The other alternative future might be labelled 'A paralyzed EU in a fragmented European and world order'. In this version, fragmentation would take place both within the Union and outside, with the two tendencies reinforcing each other. Reform of the EU institutions and practices would be obstructed from within and challenged from outside, whilst order and stability would become commodities in short supply. Such a situation would be self-reinforcing, in the sense that problems within the Union would be compounded by and fed by challenges from new constellations of actors, pursuing partial aims and a materialist agenda focused on short-term gains. The EU's retreat to 'conditional multilateralism' or 'contingent multilateralism' would be accelerated, and this in turn would reinforce tendencies towards fragmentation in the broader field of global or regional governance. A further effect of this set of processes would be to re-nationalise key areas of policy within the Union, especially foreign, security and defence policy but also central areas of commercial and financial action. The EU would not be destroyed, at least in the short term, but would be eroded, by-passed and ignored in an expanding range of issues and situations.

Neither of these scenarios is likely to come about in an unalloyed form, but each of them can be inferred from current tendencies. Each of them in turn reflects major changes in the opportunities and risks facing the EU, both in Europe and beyond, through a combination of shifts in power structures, market structures, institutional structure and normative structures. Calls such as that made by Jean-Claude Juncker in his valedictory State of the Union speech for a new and more proactive approach to EU external action (Juncker 2018) embody both an appreciation of the challenges and an awareness of the opportunities surrounding Europe and the EU, but they are not panaceas in light of the constraints and risks faced in Europe and beyond. A blend of prudence, pragmatism and purposeful opportunism will be required to steer the Union through the turbulent waters that lie ahead.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Michael Smith, Department of Politics and International Studies, Social Sciences Building, The University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom [M.H.Smith@warwick.ac.uk].

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Commentary

The Next European Century? Europe in Global Politics in the Twenty-First Century

Brigid Laffan, *European University Institute*

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Abstract

This article addresses the key challenges facing Europe in the face of the fraying of the World Order that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War. It identifies four issues that may disrupt the multilateral world order – the rise of China, disruption to the trans-Atlantic relationship, the challenge of Russia and climate change. It concludes by highlighting EU efforts to respond to this challenge and questions whether these are a case of failing forward, failing better or the growing pains of a new strategic actor.

Keywords

EU; Transatlantic relationship; China; Russia; Climate change

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Europe finds itself navigating the turbulent waters of an international system that is experiencing profound change and transformation. The world order established after the Second World War is fraying and it is far from clear what will replace it - a new order or more pronounced disorder. Faced with the traumatic experience of the last war, European leaders developed a two-pronged post-war strategy. First, confronted by an expansionist Soviet Union, Europe opted for the shelter of the United States to assure its security. The Transatlantic Alliance enabled the western half of the continent to concentrate on economic integration by embedding the future of its security in an US-led Alliance. Second, the European strategy was to proceed with a process of deep economic interdependence in the form of the European Union (EU) from the 1950s onwards. The latter was geographically contained in the Western half of the continent until the collapse of communism propelled the EU to a continental scale. The EU evolved within an international system characterised by the distinctive structural features outlined above. In analysing Europe in Global Politics in the 21st century, it is important to explore just what kind of Europe might evolve in tandem with what kind of global politics.

GLOBAL POLITICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

As we approach the third decade of the 21st century, it is evident that the international system is in a transitory period and has experienced significant shifts and shocks. The post war trade and monetary order defined by Ruggie as 'embedded liberalism' is under severe strain and somewhat loose of its moorings (Ruggie, 1982). What follows is a synthesis of the main shifts that impinge on Europe in global politics. These are:

- *The Rise of China*: The most pronounced change in global politics over the last 40 years is the rise of China. It has transformed itself from a poor, peripheral, inward-looking rural society into a political and economic great power. Its rapid modernisation has not followed the US, European or Japanese models but was driven by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its state apparatus. In the early phase, its twin goals were growth and access to global markets. With

growing economic weight, China began to assert its vision of a plural world and started to project a Chinese way of doing things beyond its border. The arrival in power of Xi Jinping in 2012 heralded a shift in focus at home and abroad. Xi Jinping assumed far more personal power by diluting the collegiate leadership and collective decision-making that characterised governance in China. Under Xi, China is asserting its great power status and its vision is playing out across the world. A revitalised China pursuing the Chinese Dream is determined that the century of humiliation (1842-1949) that it suffered as a result of the actions of other great powers will never happen again. There are many perspectives of just what kind of power China is or will become. In addition to being a formidable trading state, its military capacity is growing at a rapid pace. What is more, it is strengthening its presence in Africa and Eurasia in its bid to secure raw materials and trading routes. It is the dominant state in Asia and given the asymmetry that this creates, smaller Asian powers and Japan have an interest in the presence of a balancing power. Moreover, as its economic power increases there is evidence of push-back from other powers given the weight of the state in the Chinese economy.

- *US Economic Nationalism*: Under President Obama, the US tried to act as balancer to China by its pivot to Asia and the launch of the 12 country Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). This was intended as a soft containment strategy as it did not exclude China but represented a group of Pacific Rim states willing to sign up to standardised rules on trade. It was superseded by the election of Donald Trump on a ticket of 'America First' underpinned by economic nationalism. One of the first things President Trump did when he assumed office was to refuse to sign the TPP. Instead of containing China with soft tools, Trump began to impose tariffs on Chinese trade at the beginning of 2018. What has come to be called a trade war, intensified during the year with further impositions of tariffs. There is no evidence that the US and China are close to a resolution of this conflict. Although there is disagreement about the imposition of tariffs as an effective weapon, there is agreement that China has not lived up to its commitments to open its markets while it has availed of the openness of the markets of others. President Trump did not sign away NAFTA but insisted on a re-negotiation and threatened to impose tariffs on the EU. The latter together with Trump's attitude to the Atlantic Alliance has damaged transatlantic relations and raised tensions between allies and partners at a time of wider geo-political change. President Trump's focus on economic nationalism undermines US leadership in the international system and may have lasting effects.

- *Russia-the disruptor state*: Russia is not a rising state but a declining one, still hurting from the loss of its sphere of interest in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992. Russia sees itself a victim of an expansionist NATO and EU, which has undermined its 'sphere of influence' in its neighbourhood. Vladimir Putin has sought to re-build Russian power and presence in the world by becoming a disruptive state. His model is very much that of a 19th century Great Power; having an influence on all big global issues and a seat at the table. It continues to fight a proxy war in Ukraine and has supported Iran and Syria in the battle over the future of the Assad regime. It has actively engaged in seeking to disrupt democratic politics by interfering in domestic elections and engaging in active cyber-attacks on many states and facilities. The Kremlin playbook is unlikely to shift in the absence of political liberalisation in Russia and a decision

to focus on the future of its economy. The exposure of Russian intelligence activity in a number of European states will not be challenged domestically but makes Russian disinformation less credible in Europe. For the EU, it poses particular challenges because of geographical proximity and Russian links to some member states.

- *Whither the multilateral system*? The US retreat combined with the rise of China and the disruptive power of Russia has undermined the global order that was created after the war. The US acting in the role of hegemon provided financial and institutional resources to maintain the system but is no longer committed to this system. The US has sought to disrupt the dispute settlement system of the WTO by refusing to appoint judges to the WTO Appellate Body. Although the dispute resolution system is still functioning, the loss of more judges when they come up for renewal will destroy the enforcement capacity of the WTO. The failure to conclude the Doha trade round has led to a proliferation of regional trade agreements across the world. Regionalism has become a substitute for global agreements. The international system has experienced significant power shifts, beyond just the rise of China, which are captured by the evolution of the G7 to the G20 although both those groupings are not functioning particularly effectively. The international system has morphed into a multipolar one but it is far from clear just how multilateral the future system will be.

- *Climate Change & Technological Transformation*: For the first time in human history, humanity has the capacity to destroy the planet and transform what it is to be human with the development of AI and bio-engineering. Moreover we are in the midst of a revolution in communications and every such revolution in the past has transformed politics. These changes go beyond what might be described as traditional geo-political challenges and are truly systemic and global in scope. Moreover, technology and communications are a resource in the battle for power and presence in the international system.

EUROPE IN 21ST CENTURY GLOBAL POLITICS

How should Europe respond to the changes outlined above and how will it operate in a multipolar world characterised by deep interdependence? The shifts and shocks outlined above underline the key dynamics that confront Europe as it seeks to respond to this changing world. The EU has agency and a capacity to shape and not just take what is emanating from the international system but it has distinct limits because it is a union of states with very different histories and foreign policy concerns. The depth of heterogeneity in Europe is a continuous constraint. There is a marked asymmetry within the EU between the larger and smaller states; the larger ones tend to pursue their own foreign policy goals while the smaller ones have a tendency to free ride. The EU has learnt that when it 'speaks with one voice' and acts together in a unified manner its power and influence is enhanced. Europe is one player among many searching for voice and influence and its power resources are stronger in some fields than in others and in some parts of the world than in others. For many years, the EU was portrayed both in the academic literature and in the EU's self-definition as a 'normative power' built on shared values. This portrayal was that of a Union that had moved beyond traditional geo-politics. The annexation of Crimea and the Russian engagement in Ukraine brought geo-politics crashing back into the consciousness of Europeans and disturbed their preference that the world beyond the EU should be more like the EU. The failure of the Arab Spring

and the destabilisation of Europe's neighbourhood triggered a flow of refugees that by summer 2015 was a major crisis. The election of President Trump to the Whitehouse and Brexit added to the uncertainty and contingency surrounding the Union and its future. The EU has not been passive but has responded in the following ways.

- *Deploying Trade Power*: One of the prevalent arguments during the UK referendum on Brexit was that exit would give it the freedom to sign trade deals across the world not hampered by the EU and the need for collective agreement. While the UK is negotiating Brexit, the EU has intensified its commitment to conclude multiple trade deals by agreeing the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada in 2017 and the Strategic Partnership with Japan in 2018. Negotiations are continuing with Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, India and a host of ASEAN states. Given the blockages at the global level, an intensification of bilateral agreements is to be expected but Brexit adds an additional incentive. When President Trump threatened to impose tariffs on the EU, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker visited Washington in July and managed to reach an agreement that averted for now a trade war between the two sides of the Atlantic. Europe's trade clout continues to be its major power resource.

- *A Pivot to Africa*: The growing power of China in Africa and the increased movement of migrants and refugees from Africa to Europe prompted a review of Europe's approach toward Africa. The domestic salience of migration is a major driver of this policy as the 2015 crisis appeared to have a lag effect in European politics; the rise of the anti-migrant radical right in Europe has increased the volatility of European politics and made government formation more difficult in many EU states. Speaking in November 2017, the President of the EP, Tajani said "Before it's too late, we need a radical change that puts the African continent on top of the EU's political agenda," (Politico, November 2017). For long, the future of Africa was seen as an issue of development, now it is seen as Europe's self-interest as the future of Europe is bound up with the future of Africa. In September 2018, the Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker launched plans for a new Alliance with Africa that would involve a 'continent to continent' free trade agreement. This is partly to counter the growing Chinese power in Africa but more importantly to address migration from Africa to Europe.

- *Difficult Unity on Russia:* Russia is Europe's largest neighbour which underlines the salience of Russia-European relations. The legal basis for these relations is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which came into force in 1997. Since the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, EU-Russia relations have experienced considerable strain. In response to the Russian actions, the EU has imposed a series of restrictive measures and sanctions on Russia in 2014, and further expanded them in 2018. It was difficult for the 28 European states to agree on sanctions and to maintain them but that is what has happened. The tense situation between Russia and the EU was further exacerbated by the Salisbury chemical attack in the UK and the attempt by the Russian Intelligence Agency (GRU) to engage in a cyber-attack on Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Netherlands. Russia seeks to create maximum cleavages with the EU and weaken the supranational institutions. Russia cyber activity and support for right

> wing groups in Europe adds to its disruptive role but also isolates it further with its neighbours. In the Balkans, Russia wants to disrupt the EU enlargement process. The EU marks its disapproval of Kremlin policy with sanctions but has not managed to influence Putin to change tack and to abide by the norms and rules of the international system.

GRAND STRATEGY OR MUDDLING UP?

The EU has always struggled to be an effective strategic actor in the international system and as already underlined, there are significant structural impediments to effective international action. The EU's strengths in soft power and a preference for multilateralism are ill-suited for a multipolar world dominated by power politics. Yet, in his State of the Union address in September 2018, Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker argued that

> The geopolitical situation makes this Europe's hour: the time for European sovereignty has come. It is time Europe took its destiny into its own hands. It is time Europe developed what I coined "Weltpolitikfähigkeit" – the capacity to play a role, as a Union, in shaping global affairs. Europe has to become a more sovereign actor in international relations (Juncker 2018).

The use of the phrase 'European sovereignty' is to emphasise the ambition of Europe to be a shaper not just a taker of developments in the international system.

Twice in less than 20 years, the EU has attempted to outline its strategic priorities: first with the 2003 *European Security Strategy* and later with the 2016 *Global Strategy*. Both documents were strong on aspiration but weak on how to translate strategy into policy because they were an amalgam of national foreign policy objectives and strategic cultures. The unfavourable external environment, however, is propelling Europe into further concerted action. This is more akin to 'muddling up' than grand strategy. It is characterised by the following features. First, there is an effort to strike a balance between normative and geopolitical goals and the EU is willing to use its trade power to protect itself in an increasingly unstable world. Second, the EU is working with like-minded states to defend a rule-based international order at a time when it is under extraordinary strain. Third, Africa has emerged as a central focus for the next decade. Whether this amounts to 'failing forward' (Jones et al, 2016), 'failing better' (Beckett, 1983) or the painful emergence of a more strategic actor, only time will tell.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Brigid Laffan, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Villa Schifanoia, VS035, Via Boccaccio 121, I-50133 Firenze, Italy [brigid.laffan@eui.eu].

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Commentary

These Are Those That Faustus Most Desires: Identity, Iconography and 'Europe' in the Crimea Crisis

Russell Foster, *King's College London*

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Abstract

Since the inception of the European Coal and Steel Community in the late 1940s, leaders of the European Union have sought a common identity which transcends nation-states. Recent events such as Euromaidan, Brexit, and an ongoing shift towards eurosceptic populism in the EU are focusing attention on this 'Gospel of Jacques Delors' and how a "European identity" is expressed. Significant in studies of Europeanness is the role of symbols that express a myth of Europe. Manifestations of this myth have looked backwards to an imagined teleology of European unity in which all Europeans were united regardless of geopolitical divisions, particularly since the dissolution of the Soviet bloc. However, events in Ukraine have demonstrated not only public rejections of the myth of European unity, but also the use of the EU's symbolism to construct an '*alter*-Europe' defined by opposition to the EU. This overt use of iconography and iconoclasm to express political identities and affiliations challenges traditional interpretations of how the EU is received by its neighbours, and illustrates that there are multiple, competing versions of "Europe".

Keywords

Identity; Europe; Memory; Symbols; Ukraine

In Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragicall Historie of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (1594), the protagonist's thirst for power leads him to summon a force which he believes he can manipulate to his own ends. To do so, Doctor Faustus invokes the primal power of symbols. Believing that symbols offer a gateway to malleable power, Faustus unleashes a primordial consciousness which quickly diverts from the path he predicts. The result is his downfall at the hands of a manipulative force which he himself had attempted to manipulate; a force whose emotional power, constantly changing in response to emotional whims, seduces him into the false belief that once unleashed, it could be controlled. At the end of the play, Faustus pays the ultimate price for his hubris.

Dabbling with lines, circles and schemes in an attempt to manipulate the affective unconsciousness is not confined to fiction. Since the beginning of the Maidan protests in November 2013, and accelerating since Russia's intervention in Crimea in March 2014, the same has been attempted by different political actors 'dancing with the devil' (Kubicek 2017: 143-162) in Ukraine, who have 'resurfaced old ghosts' (UvA 2016) by deploying the symbols of the EU, USSR, Third Reich, and Russian Federation, to simultaneously express, and attempt to render static, identities which are inherently fluid, hybrid, and in constant flux. Some politically significant consequences of invoking historical symbolism are the appearance of multiple, competing visions of "Europe", and a false bipolarity in Ukraine in which Ukrainians are expected to choose between two internally homogenous pro- and anti-EU identities distilled from complex, fluid, overlapping, and shifting identities, and which are equally incompatible, equally antagonistic, and equally artificial.

This paper argues three points. First, political iconography has a unique power as it relies on affect (Thrift 2004: 57-78). Iconography directly and immediately appeals to emotions. This emotive power cannot be matched by rational economic or constitutional politics; rather, the very appearance of symbols and iconography can trigger instant emotional responses to political projects, which

become indelibly stained by the appearance of particular symbolisms (Hutchison and Bleiker 2008: 385-403). This has been seen in EU nations, and this emotive power is even more pronounced in Ukraine, as the symbols used are saturated with the emotions and myths of the Soviet period, Nazi invasion, post-Soviet nationalism, and Russophilia/Russophobia. Political actors have relied on symbolism to act as a social solvent throughout history, but in the specific context of Ukraine, specific symbolism conveys profound historical and emotional connotations of distrust, conflict, trauma (Neumayer 2018) and the creation of unstable and unsustainable geopolitical rivalries wherein political identities become affixed to (contested) territorial spaces (Bassin et al. 2017: 665-692).

Second, the use of symbols in Ukraine impacts scholarly debates on the frontiers of the EU, the distinction between "Europe" and "EU" and the existence of alter-Europe(s). Iconography in Ukraine reflects an existing antipathy towards the EU in the Union's border zone, and expresses popular sentiments not only on who is and is not 'European', but who should and should not be considered such. This is significant as it reveals substantial *passive rejection* of the European project, in contrast to 1990s-2000s assumptions that the populations of the former Soviet bloc, and USSR itself, desire to join the EU (Sasse 2007: 155-174). Additionally, this symbolic behaviour indicates an imagined *alter*-Europe, whereby the EU is symbolically constructed as a partial or undesirable unification of Europeans, and a force to be resisted. This *alter*-Europe is not unique to the Ukrainian context, and has been invoked in the Brexit campaign, continental Euroscepticism, and the appearance of pro-European but anti-EUropean discourses (Foster and Grzymski 2019). This *active rejection* is manifest in the adoption of iconography which is not only non-EU but *anti*-EU (e.g. the positive embracement of Russian Federation and/or Soviet Union symbolism) while simultaneously constructing and expressing a parallel alter-myth of Europeanness. The Maidan protests and subsequent counter-Maidan, anti-EU activities in Crimea (Wilson 2014: 86-117) demonstrated the creation of an EU myth *beyond* the borders of the EU; a myth in which the EU is either entirely benevolent or entirely malevolent. This has been replicated in the polarisation of EU sentiment in Brexit Britain (Foster 2019). But the Ukrainian case demonstrates a myth of the EU in which the EU is constructed as a force to be violently defended or violently resisted (UvA 2016), impacting popular understandings of the EU by transforming the Union from something banal and technocratic, to an entity with the emotional appeal, and power, of a nation.

Third, the use of symbols in Ukraine informs debates on the nature of European identity not only in the former Soviet bloc but across Europe more broadly. Events in Ukraine from 2013 onwards have been characterised by a rejection of national symbolism (i.e; of Ukraine) in favour of foreign and/or meta-national symbols (i.e: EU, USSR, Russian Federation), a phenomenon which partly replicates and partly diverges from a polarisation within the EU, where national symbolism is resurgent. This suggests that while populations within the EU continue to negotiate their relationship with the EU and with Europeanness through institutional and legal pathways, the strongest European identity is found among those populations – in Ukraine and the UK – who are not of the EU, and who negotiate their relationships with the EU through emotion and affect. As Ukraine demonstrates, this is partly because of the emotions mediated through the power of symbols.

THE POWER OF SYMBOLS

Symbols – from the Greek *σύμβολον* or *sumballein*, "to bring together" (Whittick 1960: 4; Gheerbrant, Chevalier and Buchanan-Brown 1996: 11) – act as a 'visual shortcut' between the mind and an abstract concept. Symbols and iconography connect the individual to a broader imagined community in space and time, and as consequence symbols are inherently imbued with inherited imaginations, acting as both a social adhesive and a solvent which simultaneously signify who does and does not belong in a group. This imbues symbols with a political and emotional power which

manifests in shaping political behaviour and political attitudes by uniting a nation across time and space; ultimately 'social and economic activities are carried on by means of symbols… society is held together by acceptance of, and reverence for, its symbols' (Cooper 1978: 36-37).

Reverence offers a useful starting point, because of particular significance is the emotional power of symbolism. Political symbols are emotionally charged as they convey the nation's history, myths, and unite fellow-subjects scattered across space and time into an imagined community which is immediately recognisable through symbols. The Ukraine situation demonstrates the deployment of political symbols which have especial significance to Ukrainians and Russians, notably the iconography of the Third Reich and the Soviet Union alongside EU iconography. The use of this highly emotionally charged symbolism has rendered EU symbolism more significant in Ukraine than it is in the EU or even Brexit Britain. This is particularly significant for Ukraine, where political symbols convey highly emotionally-charged memories of the Soviet and Nazi past, and the Russian present.

Since late 2013, the Ukraine situation has seen multiple factions deploying the political iconography of defunct states, namely the Soviet Union and the Third Reich, with both Nazi and Soviet emblems being used as symbols of nostalgic pride and/or contemporary rejection and/or as reminders of past atrocities whose cultural memory is transferred, and attributed, to a demonised Other. As a consequence, waving the EU flag in the same settings as the waving of Soviet or Nazi flags associates the EU with the same historical memory; not equating the EU with the USSR or the Reich but imagining it as the virtuous mirror image, a flawless paragon which is desirable simply because it is not the Other (UvA 2016). This constructs an imagination of the EU as inherently good simply because it is an alternative to the inherently evil USSR and Reich. The use of symbolism thus accelerates a force which separates complicated, dynamic, and overlapping identities into two irreconcilable camps – EUropean and non-EUropean – who each claim to be right while rejecting the other as wrong. Like Doctor Faustus torn between the Good Angel and the Evil Angel, each trying to persuade him of their faction's merits, the deployment of Nazi, Soviet, EU, and Russian iconography alongside or in place of Ukrainian national iconography, obliges Ukrainians to take artificial sides in an artificial contest between an imagined good and an imagined evil – with the EU, USSR, Third Reich, and Russia moving between "good" and "evil" depending on the faction. This theme was replicated to a degree in the Brexit campaign by Leavers and Remainers, and has become much more pronounced since Brexit as Leave and Remain have become more polarised, moralistic, and intolerant of one another (Foster 2019), but the Ukrainian case remains unique in the invocation of context-specific, traumatic histories of "Europe". This not only signifies developments in Ukraine, but further signifies a shift in the imagination of "Europe", or "EUrope" (Foster and Grzymski 2019), from emotionless abstraction to a powerful, emotional norm which appeals not to banality or bureaucracy, but to good or evil (Foster *2019]*).

MORE EU-ROPEAN THAN THE EU-ROPEANS?

According to what might be termed the 'Maidanmyth', the EU's symbols signify a homogenous bloc of which membership was a desirable trait; not for purely commercial or bureaucratic reasons but as an apparent exemplar of freedom, progress, and civilisation – values which are expressed and imagined in fundamentally emotional terms. This is visible not only in the choice of symbols, but in the way in which they are used. At Maidan, EU iconography was not passively displayed but actively performed, with the flag being waved at protest sites and even worn on the body. Significantly, this frequently took place alongside Ukrainian national iconography. A consequence of this is the centrifugalism of identity; a visual claim that Ukraine belongs in the EU and has a historical destiny to fulfil, and thereby tacitly rejecting identities based on pro-Russian, anti-EU (but not necessarily anti-

Europe), or neutral norms. For examples of this symbolic behaviour, see (Chatham House 2017; AvaxNews 2013; Reuters 2013; New Eastern Europeans 2013).

Symbols are both adhesive and solvent, and one consequence of deploying EU iconography was the alienation of non-aligned factions who adopted EU symbolism for the purposes of iconoclasm; the public destruction of symbols. By embracing EU iconography against Russian/Soviet iconoclasm, a polarised dichotomy is constructed in which Ukrainians must make a choice between either the EU or Russia (no third option is ostensibly allowed), and in which the EU and Russia (or the Russosphere/*alter*-Europe) are constructed as mutually and perpetually incompatible. This is apparent as, in response to the proliferation of EU symbolism, Russian iconography appeared in public performances. The use of Russian and Soviet iconography in Crimea (see below) triggered response from pro-EU Ukrainians, namely iconoclasm against symbols of Russian identity. This iconoclasm is both direct (e.g. demolishing Soviet symbolism) and indirect (e.g. equating the Russian Federation with the Third Reich). This suggests not a passive objection to pro-Russian Ukrainians, but an active rejection of alternative identities which further emphasises the myth that Ukrainians are forced to choose between two mutually incompatible identities. The use of symbolism, therefore, constructs a false (and potentially extremely dangerous) dichotomy. This, in turn, contributed to an escalation of iconography, iconoclasm, and the further centrifugalism of a highly complex and fluid identity politics into a false binary of pro-EU/anti-Russia *or* pro-Russia/anti-EU. For examples, see (WJLA 2014; NBC 2014a; *Le Monde* 2015).

As a consequence of the use of EU symbolism, the iconography of the Russian Federation became public and visible among pro-Russian factions. Yet of particular significance is that Russian symbols often appeared *alongside* Soviet symbols. The simultaneous use of Federal and Soviet iconography suggests popular emotional identification not specifically with the Russian Federation, and even less with the USSR; but rather, an emotional identification with an *alter*-Europe which symbolically overlaps with an imagined Russosphere. It is in this context that the use of Soviet iconography should be interpreted. The juxtaposition of Soviet and Russian iconographies strongly suggests identification and affiliation with an *alter*-Europe: one which is dominated by Russia as the hegemon of post-Soviet "alter-Europe" (Neumayer 2018). It is therefore reasonable to interpret the use of Soviet iconography as *alter*-Europeans adopting a clearly recognisable symbol (one which retains some residual emotional capital among some demographics of the former USSR) only as a placeholder, a temporary icon to express their identification not with the USSR and not necessarily with Russia, but with a conscious rejection of the EU. This hypothesis is supported by the post-Maidan surge in iconoclasm.

ICONOCLASM

Iconoclasm in Ukraine occurs in two contexts. First is what might be termed active iconoclasm; the destruction of symbols. Parallel to this is passive iconoclasm; the use of historical symbols to associate the present with a traumatic past. The first aspect of iconoclasm concerns Soviet emblems. While anti-Soviet iconoclasm preceded Euromaidan, it accelerated following the Crimean independence referendum as Ukrainian nationalists, pro-EU Ukrainians, pro-Russian Ukrainians, and white power separatists, publicly destroyed the symbols of the multi-ethnic Soviet oppressor. For examples, see (Yahoo News 2014; NBC 2014b; *Occupy* 2014).

A significant dimension of anti-Soviet iconoclasm in Ukraine is that the iconoclastic surge appeared alongside other factions' appropriation of Soviet symbolism to visually express political and emotional identification with *alter*-Europe. Consequently, the destruction of Soviet symbols is arguably best interpreted as a rejection not of the Soviet past but of the Russian present. Active iconoclasm in Ukraine, which has largely taken the form of anti-Soviet activity, is not an act of public

negotiation with the past but an active political rejection of contemporary Russia and therefore, tacitly, a public declaration that the citizens of a 'semi-authoritarian' Ukraine (Kubicek 2017: 156) must choose one of two sides aligned to "Europe" or "alter-Europe". Passive iconoclasm is parallel to this, and, as illustrated by the complex anti-USSR *and* anti-EU iconoclasm of various political and racial extremist groups, involves the appropriation of the symbols of the Third Reich.

The use of Nazi symbolism to denigrate Vladimir Putin has been visible, but it is rare. When used against the EU, though, it is not specific individuals or members but the entire institution. The use of Nazi iconography in Ukraine is arguably more emotionally charged than in the states of the EU, rendered more powerful when Ukrainians are starkly offered a visual dichotomy (Figs. 11-13). Equating the EU with the Third Reich further simplifies complex identity politics into two camps which are not merely separate, but incompatible and hostile. Examples of equating the EU with the Third Reich are visible at (RT 2014; Guardian 2014), equating Russia and President Putin with the Reich ("*Putler*"), at (Washington Post 2014).

In the case of Nazi iconography, a symbolic duality appears. In the aftermath of Maidan, Nazi symbols were used not merely to condemn the Ukrainian state or the EU but also to suggest that Russia is a righteous bulwark against this demonised Other. One symbolic consequence of Maidan, in a reflection of 'messy geopolitics' (Flint 2016), is that the deployment of pro-EU iconography has strengthened the mediatisation of anti-EU symbolism, and that the symbolic representation of an imagined virtuous EU has strengthened the symbolic representation of an imagined malevolent EU.

Iconoclasm of EU and USSR symbols thus reveals not a passive objection but active rejection – rejection of the EU's version of Europe, or rejection of the *alter*-Europe which is symbolically (and perhaps temporarily) represented by the hammer and sickle as a placeholder icon. The destruction of Soviet symbols such as statues and architectural ornaments might therefore be interpreted not as a rejection of the past but of a EUropean future. Soviet iconography in Ukraine represents not merely a historical period, but is a symbolic representation of the Russosphere, the *alter*-Europe forming in opposition to the EU. The public deployment of Soviet iconography (and its subsequent iconoclasm) demonstrates the continuation of myths in constructing identity: an identity in which Europe is yet again essentialised as a false dichotomy between West and East, EUrope and alter-Europe, Europe and Eurasia (Maçães 2018: 227-252; Menon and Rumer 2015: 93-96). Significantly, according to this myth, this is not merely Europe *alongside* alter-Europe, but Europe *versus* alter-Europe. The myth constructs an imagination of two internally homogeneous, mutually incompatible, mutually opposed "Europe"s – with Ukrainians falsely forced to pick one (and thereby tacitly declare that they not only reject the other, but actively oppose it). The use of symbols in Ukraine, and perhaps in the UK too, demonstrates the multiplicity of "European" identities, and that a European identity cannot be extracted from the memories of twentieth-century trauma which gave birth to the post-war European project. Rather than speaking of a "European" identity, it is instead more appropriate to ask – "which Europe?"

CONCLUSIONS

The use of symbols in Ukraine has had, and continues to have, a centrifugal effect on identity politics, distilling the complex and fluid identities of its people into two warring camps who force Ukrainians to choose sides.

The public use of symbols is significant for three reasons. First, political iconography has a unique power as it relies on affect and emotion. As such, symbols are important in the formation of identities; the very appearance of symbols and iconography can trigger instant emotional responses

to political groups, leaders, or projects, which become indelibly stained by the appearance of particular symbolism. In the specific context of Ukraine, specific symbolism conveys profound historical and emotional connotations of distrust, conflict, trauma, and the creation of unstable and unsustainable geopolitical rivalries wherein political identities become affixed to (contested) territorial spaces (Bassin et al. 2017: 665-692). Second, the use of symbols in Ukraine impacts scholarly debates on the frontiers of 'Europe', the future of the EU, and the existence of *alter*-Europe(s). Iconography in Ukraine reflects an existing antipathy towards the EU in the Union's border zone, and expresses popular sentiments not only on who is and is not 'European', but who should and should not be considered such. This is manifest in the adoption of iconography which is not only non-EU but *anti*-EU (e.g. the positive embracement of Russian Federation and/or Soviet Union symbolism) while simultaneously constructing and expressing a parallel alter-myth of Europeaness. Events in Ukraine demonstrated the creation of an EU myth *beyond* the borders of the EU; a myth in which the EU is either entirely benevolent or entirely malevolent. This same myth has developed in Brexit Britain between polarised camps of Remain and Leave, and indicates the likely trajectory of "European identity". This identity is no longer vague or lacking interest, instead "European identity" is splitting into two fundamentally opposed camps whose adherents construct imagined histories and imagined communities. At present this is most visible in the 'fringes' of the EU – Ukraine and the UK. It is reasonable to predict that as the EU adapts to the consequences of Brexit, populism, a new Parliament and Commission from 2019, and the ongoing unclear future of Ukraine, that this same false dichotomy will become more visible and more pronounced within EU states.

In the final scene of *Doctor Faustus,* Faustus himself is dragged down to Hell by the same elemental forces which he had unleashed in the belief that he could control the consequences of meddling with arcane symbols. Like Doctor Faustus, Ukrainians (along with the British, and perhaps EU citizens in the near future) are forced to choose between the Good Angel and the Evil Angel – each of which whispers that the other is entirely wrong and both of whom construct a false dichotomy. In a rapidly polarising political world, Europeans increasingly face the same Manichean choice of God or the Devil. Yet it is possible that through analysis of symbolic interactions, imaginations, and communications, and by critically reassessing the significance of symbols in constructing imagined identities, "Europeanness" may yet avoid Faustus' fate.

Fig. 1 Maidan Square (Chatham House 2017)

Fig. 2 Symbolic centrifugalism (AvaxNews 2013)

Fig. 3 Maidan Square (Reuters 2013)

Fig. 4 Performing Europeaness (New Eastern Europe 2013)

Fig. 5 Crimea, March 2014 (WJLA 2014)

Fig. 6 Independence referendum, March 2014 (NBC 2014a)

Fig. 7 Flags of the Russian Federation, Soviet Union, and the Republic of Crimea (*Le Monde* 2015)

Fig. 8 Soviet iconography in Ukrainian national colours, Moscow (Yahoo News, 2014)

Fig. 9 Monumental iconoclasm: Kharkiv, Ukraine, 2014 (NBC 2014b)

Fig. 10 White-nationalist separatists burn the USSR, UPP, and EU flags (*Occupy*, 2014).

Fig. 11 Billboard on referendum, Crimea, March 2014 (RT 2014)

Fig. 12 Billboard on referendum, Crimea, March 2014 (Guardian 2014)

Fig. 13 Imagining a Fourth Reich: Kiev, 2014 (Washington Post 2014)

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CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Dr Russell Foster, Department of European and International Studies, King's College London, Virginia Woolf Building, 22 Kingsway, London, UK, WC2B 6LE, United Kingdom [russell.1.foster@kcl.ac.uk].

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Commentary

Hotspots: Questioning the Future of Europe Through Its Borders

Elisa Pascucci, *University of Helsinki*
Emma Patchett, *University of Helsinki*

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Abstract

The article examines recent research on hotspots – the EU system for the management of incoming asylum seekers, implemented in Greece and Italy – to raise some questions on Europe's relation to its external borders, and its *others*. Briefly discussing Abdelmalek Sayad's writings on "state thinking" and the migrant condition, and drawing attention to the repeated failures that characterise the government of the external borders of the EU, we question Europe's capacity to articulate its relation to the external world and to people on the move beyond the space of the border. This question, we think, will be central in the next European century.

Keywords

Hotspots; Migration; Asylum; Europe; Abdelmalek Sayad; Greece; Italy

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The commentaries in this special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary European Research* are inspired by the 100th anniversary of the armistice that put an end to land, sea and aerial fighting in World War I, signed by the Allies and Germany on November the 11th, 1918. This month, celebrations of the armistice will be held across Europe, from London to villages along the Franco-German border. A few weeks before this anniversary, with much less media and institutional attention, Afro-European communities, migration activists and refugee advocates across the continent commemorated another event, the Lampedusa migrant shipwreck of October the 3rd, 2013, which caused the death of over 360 migrants, mostly from Eritrea, Somalia and Ghana. What can this second, much overlooked, anniversary tell us about Europe and its future? In this commentary we offer a reflection inspired by this question. We argue that exceptional measures for the government of unwanted mobilities at the European Union's external borders have become a defining mechanism of the supranational state, and raise some questions on the implications of this for visions of a European future.

Let us start with a quick snapshot of the present. Five years after the Lampedusa shipwreck, large-scale search and rescue operations in the central Mediterranean – like *Mare Nostrum*, launched by the then Italian government immediately after the tragedy – seem to belong to a recent yet distant past. The right-wing populist alliance in power in Italy has claimed to have closed the country's harbours, and repeatedly declared 'war' on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) committed to saving migrants at sea – a criminalisation of solidarity that is far from unique in Europe. On the Southern-Eastern front, since March 2016 the EU-Turkey Statement on refugees (better known as the 'EU-Turkey deal') has led to thousands of migrants being 'stuck' on Greek islands, and normalised what the European Commission calls its *hotspot approach* to migration and border management. The latter has recently been the subject of a growing body of excellent critical research in politics, geography and anthropology (Kalir and Rozakou, 2016; Martin and Tazzioli, 2016; Mitchell and Sparke, 2018; Pallister-Wilkins, 2018, Tazzioli, 2018; among others), and it is worth considering in some detail, for it is the most emblematic of the recent developments in the government of European borders.

Hotspots are inter-agency processing centres (involving the EU Asylum Office – EASO, the Judicial Office – Eurojust and the EU Border Agency – FRONTEX, alongside national governments) aimed at identifying, registering and fingerprinting incoming migrants and streamlining asylum procedures in the countries located at the Southern and Southern-Eastern borders of the EU (namely Italy and Greece). They were first formally introduced in the EU Agenda on Migration in 2015 to respond to increased migratory movements and related growing humanitarian concerns. In May 2018, the Commission report on the implementation of the Agenda confirmed their role as 'key elements' in EU border management (European Commission, 2018).

As a legal-administrative, humanitarian and policing technology, hotspots follow a dual spatio-temporal logic. On the one hand, they work by modulating the movement of migrants (Pallister-Wilkins, 2018). People are confined in enclosed facilities, camps and reception centres often located on islands or close to the harbours of first arrival in order to be identified and undergo a preliminary assessment of their claims for international protection (referred to as 'debriefing' in European Commission documents). If their request is deemed admissible, they then enter the national asylum systems as legitimate applicants, get transferred to dedicated facilities, and possibly have access to distribution and relocation programs (from countries of first access to other member states). If considered as not in need of protection, they are repatriated or, most often, left to languish in a socio-legal and geographical limbo. For example, in the Moria hotspot on the Greek island of Lesvos this limbo often takes the form of protracted encampment in hyper-precarious conditions. During fieldwork carried out by one of the authors between October 2016 and February 2017, international organizations officers, European diplomats and aid workers dispatched to Greece often defined such conditions as "abysmal" and "among the worst in the world".

At the same time, as highlighted by the echoes of technocratic managerialism that are found particularly in early EU documents on the topic, hotspots have the function of collecting and ordering biometric data on incoming migrants, and making EU migration and asylum bureaucracy more efficient. In doing so, they accelerate the temporality of asylum in the EU (Tazzioli, 2018). Significantly, hotspots also act as inter-governmental 'control' mechanisms (Martin and Tazzioli, 2016). Conceived to ensure and facilitate the implementation of Dublin III Regulations, according to which the responsibility for examining asylum applications lies with the country of first arrival and registration, hotspots allow the Commission and the other member states to exert control on 'unruly' Greece and Italy, plagued as they are by financial crises, economic recession, and chronic corruption. They are thus as essential to the stabilization of intra-European relations as they are to the Union's external border policies. Finally, hotspots enclose and order the spaces and practices through which basic humanitarian assistance is provided to migrants, and establish which actors can legitimately provide that assistance. Only specific NGOs are allowed to operate inside hotspot facilities, while others, like Doctors Without Borders, have in many instances refused to be partners, objecting on ethical grounds due to the extremely poor infrastructural and legal standards that are part of the EU-Turkey deal. Thus, hotspots regulate compassion and solidarities, such as those seen at work in Greece at the height of the so-called 'crisis', with the arrival of thousands of volunteers (Pallister-Wilkins, 2018). They intervene in the relation between the states, and the supra-national state, and its engaged citizens and communities. They are a central, perhaps *the* central, site of twenty-first century European politics.

In the last couple of years, academic research, media, NGO reports, activist mobilizations and migrant voices have repeatedly exposed how unsubstantiated the claims of streamlined and effective asylum and border bureaucracies, harmonized procedures, and professionalized, prompt humanitarian response that accompany the implementation of the EU hotspot approach actually are. Identification and asylum procedures are confusing, slow and arbitrary, and the promised transfer to other European countries is often made impossible by lack of agreement and political will, as in the

case of the 73 migrants rescued at sea in July 2018 and then stuck for months in the Pozzallo hotspot, in Eastern Sicily (Ruta, 2018). Infrastructures and sanitation are notoriously inadequate. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) report on the Moria hotspot, published in September 2018, is but the latest of a series of horrific accounts of everyday life in the camp. In the report, the IRC details how problems in the sewage system are reported to have caused waste water to spill on to the mattresses where children were sleeping, and estimates that, due to the camp being severely overcrowded, there is approximately 1 toilet facility for every 70 inhabitants (IRC, 2018). On October the 3rd, 2018, The Guardian reported the attempted suicide of an Iraqi girl as young as 13 – yet another case in a generalized, severe mental health crisis particularly affecting children and adolescents (Tondo, 2018). In September 2018, the Greek government made a commitment to work on improving conditions in the camp, and relocated approximately 2000 people from the island of Lesvos to the mainland. Meanwhile, the EU anti-fraud office, OLAF, following orders by the Commission, started an investigation on the alleged misuse of funds devoted to food for refugees in Greece (Bayer, 2018). None of the institutions involved, however, have so far questioned the legitimacy of the hotspot itself, as a space of protracted containment and an approach to the government of migration and mobility. The people sleeping close to sewage water in Moria might in the future get a slightly better hotspot, or a hotspot that has been externalized to Libya, Turkey, or other extra-EU transit countries. Yet there will still be hotspots. Hotspots, Commission and members states seem to say, are here to stay. They are part of the European future.

In his essay *Immigration et 'Pensée d'Etat'*, Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad, director of research at French *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* from 1977 to 1998, and a pioneer in European migration studies, famously argued that thinking about migration means reflecting upon "how the state thinks of itself" (1999: 6). For Sayad (1999), only migration can expose the fundamental nature, the truth of the state as an unstable, unfinished, even fictional political project. The mere presence of non-citizens on the state territory constantly exposes this essential precariousness. In the hotspot, we see this inherent precariousness at work as the European Union attempts to define itself through its borders. Barak Kalir and Katarina Rozakou (2016) have offered an impressive account of the frustrated "search for the state" by local officers in Moria, as they go about daily administrative and management tasks in the abject chaos of the camp, claiming to be unable to identify who actually is or should be in charge among the many national and supranational agencies involved.

Sayad (1999) discusses at length the effects of this frantic "search for the state" on the condition of the migrant. He does so by elaborating on the relation between migration, criminalization and what he, drawing on the work of his mentor and friend Pierre Bourdieu, refers to as *pensée d'Etat* (state-thinking). He thus defines the status of migrants in the eyes of the state as one of nearly 'ontological' delinquency, where delinquency is not only the condition of those who commit a crime (Sayad 1999:7). Rather, it is the state of being at fault because of one's radical non-belonging to the community and the place where she is physically present. It is the potential ontological delinquency of people who migrate that hotspots are supposed to modulate and produce data about, acting as a spatial bulwark against it. Sayad documented this logic at work in the condition of Algerian guest workers in the banlieues of 1970s metropolitan France. In the first volume of the collection of essays titled *L'immigration ou Les paradoxes de l'altérité* (Immigration or The Paradoxes of Alterity, 2014), he shows how this condition of non-belonging is reflected in the temporariness, provisionality, and poor living standards of the physical spaces – in his case, the *foyers* – where migrants are accommodated. Nearly twenty years after Sayad's essay on *pensée d'Etat* was published, we see similar dynamics being reproduced at the territorial borders of Europe. The confining of migrants to the "internal colonies" of European cities, so lucidly diagnosed, alongside Sayad, by spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre (2009: 181), has been coupled with their protracted confinement at the border. As a

supranational state, the European Union thus reproduces the inherently exclusionary aspects of "state thinking", as diagnosed by Sayad (1999), revealing the inherent limits of its self-definition as a space of freedom, security and justice, limits which are particularly evident in the progressive deterioration of the right to asylum.

The resonances between Sayad's reflections on the condition of Algerian workers in France in the 1970s-1980s, and the spaces and practices of confinement and encampment through which Europe deals with the people who, confronted with the lack of sufficient legalised, safe routes to migration, attempt to access its territory to seek protection, are reminiscent of Didier Fassin's (2016) provocative observations on the relation between asylum and labour migration. For Fassin (2016), European states have (partially) welcomed asylum seekers only as long as their prosperity and need for workers demanded a comprehensively open migration policy, and the Cold War required the maintenance of a liberal space nominally marked by the defence of individual human rights. Highlighting the convergences between the political economies and the moral economies of asylum, Fassin details how geopolitical and structural economic change has de facto transformed the latter from right to favour, with "selective humanitarianism" replacing "legal entitlement" (2016: 1). As these changes intersected with the creation and solidification of the European supra-national state, and later with military occupations, unrest and war in the neighbouring North Africa and Middle East (Iraq 1991, 2003, Syria 2011, Yemen, 2015, to mention but three of the major, still ongoing conflicts) the humanitarisation and exceptionalisation of asylum has gone hand in hand with the growing identification of Europe with its borders.

However, the research reviewed in this commentary has shown how, rather than leading to the creation of a well-guarded "fortress", as the popular activist narrative goes, this identification translates into conflicts between member states, tensions between border enforcement and citizens' displays of solidarity, and an apparent repeated failure in establishing who is actually responsible for the abject conditions to which some migrants are relegated. In the meantime, arrivals to Greece and Italy via sea never completely stopped – they just became slower and dramatically more complicated and dangerous. EU border management through hotspots appears, at best, futile (Kalir and Rozakou, 2016), and continues to be deadly. The current growing hegemony of right-wing populist politics seems to suggest an imminent violent drift of the 'state thinking' discussed in this piece. Yet the attempt at defining Europe through its borders remains unfinished and unstable, deadly and contested – as Sayad reminds us, it could not be otherwise. Refugee movements over the last 100 years of European history, and particularly in the aftermaths of WW I, are a testament to how 'state thinking' produces displacement and makes mobilities unwanted, dangerous, abject. In the next European century there will still be people on the move – will Europe, as a spatial political imaginary that goes beyond nation states and 'state thinking', be able to respond to them with something else than just borders?

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Elisa Pascucci & Emma Patchett, Centre of Excellence in Law, Identity and the European Narratives (EuroStorie), University of Helsinki, Siltavuorenpenger 1 PO 9 00014, Helsinki, Finland [Elisa.Pascucci@helsinki.fi].

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Interview

European Security in the 21st Century: A Conversation with Dr Nathalie Tocci

Abstract

Dr Nathalie Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali, Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen, and Special Adviser to EU HRVP Federica Mogherini, discusses the past, present and future of European security and the EU's Global Strategy with JCER editor Dr Kenneth McDonagh.

Keywords

EU; EU Global Strategy; CSDP; Security; Defence; Transatlantic relations

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO INTERVIEW

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Journal of Contemporary European Research

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Interview

European Law in the 21st Century: A Conversation with Professor Federico Fabbrini

Abstract

Professor Federico Fabbrini, Professor of European Law in the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, and founding Director of the DCU Brexit Institute, discusses the legal origins of the European Union and the challenges and opportunities for the EU institutional structures in the 21st century with JCER editor Dr Kenneth McDonagh.

Keywords

EU legal order; Lisbon Treaty; Brexit; Rome Manifesto; Social Europe

CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO INTERVIEW

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Research Article

The Relationship between Economic Performance and the Rise of 'Unholy Alliances' in the European Union

Marco Morini, *European University Institute*

Citation

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Abstract

This article investigates the phenomenon of 'unholy alliances': grand coalitions and ideologically-incoherent coalitions in the EU. In the last decade, these types of government majorities have proliferated, even in countries that have not previously experienced them. This substantial increase happened during the years of the so-called Great Recession, together with the electoral growth of populist movements and new political parties. This article investigates the potential correlation between these 'unholy alliances' and the economic situation of countries. The hypothesis is that negative economic trends might have led to fragmented electoral results, a decrease in the support for mainstream parties and the growth of populist parties and new parties. This generated additional difficulties in forming homogeneous coalitions, forcing the birth of these unholy alliances.

Keywords

Comparative politics; EU politics; Government formation; Grand coalitions; Political parties

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In the last decade, European voters have become familiar with grand coalitions and ideologically-incoherent majorities, something that was previously considered rare. Safire's Political Dictionary defines these government's majority arrangements as 'unholy alliances' (UAs) and the parties involved as 'strange bedfellows' (2008: 132). Until recently, these arrangements were considered as an exception to the rule or a working arrangement for 'special' times. Indeed, around fifteen years ago it would have been hard to think of the United Kingdom (UK) being governed by an ideologically-uneven coalition during peacetime. However, UAs are now regularly occurring in both countries using proportional representation and majority election systems.

As of 31 December 2007, before the so-called Great Recession (GR), there were six UA governments among the 28 European Union (EU) member states. Ten years later (at 31 December 2017), a total of 16 EU countries experienced such forms of government.[1] What are the reasons for this increase? Is there any correlation with the economic situation of a country? Does a country's economic trajectory influence the formation of a UA?

UAs are never formed before elections and they are always associated with high levels of fragmentation in parliament. When electoral results produce no clear winners, no ideologically-coherent majorities can be formed, so UA majorities become an option in order not to force the country into political paralysis and to avoid a second election. Consequently, this article focuses on UAs formed after general elections, rather than those arising from government crises or during parliamentary terms. In doing so, the electoral event is strictly linked to the (obliged) choice to form grand coalitions and ideologically-incoherent majorities.

Having assumed that UAs are the result of a 'lack of numbers' in parliament, this article aims to determine if there is a correlation between the economic situation of countries and the formation of UAs. Are UAs an indirect consequence of the Great Recession and of the political crisis that followed in many European countries? This paper hypothesises that poor economic indicators favour

fragmented election results and thus necessitate the building of grand coalitions and ideologically-incoherent coalitions in order to have working governments. The idea is to look at UAs formed in the years before and after the GR and to check four of the most relevant economic indicators (GDP real growth rate, change in the unemployment rate, change in youth unemployment rate, Gini index).

The GR began in December 2007 in the United States and rapidly expanded to Europe.[2] It touched every corner of the continent and shaped its economic, cultural and political affairs. Existing research has focused on the severity of the economic downturn and its impact on different political environments and segments of the population. This article aims to provide readers with a picture of coalition formation in EU countries in the context of the GR.

After this introduction, the next section outlines the definitions employed and offers a short history of UAs. The third section focuses on the rise of populist parties in the years of the GR, offered as a reason for the increasing complexity in forming 'coherent' government majorities. The fourth section investigates UAs in the EU and proposes a classification of government types per country. Section five deals with the core of this research: checking the potential correlation between countries' economic situations and the formation of UAs.

UNHOLY ALLIANCES AND STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

The study of coalitions holds a relevant place in the political science literature. Much has been published on how coalitions form, under which conditions and what causes them to fall apart (Laver and Shepsle 1990; de Swann 1973). Grand Coalitions are a unique sub-species of coalition government in developed democracies. They too have been an object of scholarly research, yet the number of cases has remained relatively low for several years and most of research has been conducted as single case studies (Proksch and Slapin 2006; Helms 2006).

A grand coalition is an alliance in which the two leading parties, usually from the right and the left, unite in a coalition government (Strøm 1983). In the past they have been considered as a regular feature of 'consociational democracy', and in Continental Europe they were defined as a consequence of the 'fragmentation of political culture' (Lijphart 1969: 207). Dahrendorf believed that grand coalitions were a 'cartel of elites' (1967: 11) and, in their assemblage, Lijphart highlighted the 'ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures' (1969: 216). More recently, however, grand coalitions have been often considered as exceptions. That is why scholars sometimes refer to them and to the parties involved as 'unholy alliances' and 'strange bedfellows' (Safire 2008: 132). These definitions can have negative connotations and have been widely adopted by media and shape public opinion (Plasser and Ulram 2003).

'Normal' government coalitions should resemble pre-election arrangements or be at least ideologically-coherent. In this sense, UAs can be considered as 'signs of resistance' for mainstream parties. They are inevitable arrangements which are made to provide governments to countries, due to the increasing fragmentation and the difficulty to integrate populist parties in the traditional dynamics of government formation:

> While grand coalitions can be formed for many reasons, the rise of populist parties are challenging conventional party systems, exhausting and discrediting many classic coalition formulas, and shrinking the room for manoeuvre of large parties (along with their vote share). (Jacoby 2017: 1)

Grand coalitions have been extensively studied in the EU Parliament (Kreppel and Hix 2003; Hix 2009) and as single case studies, with a particular emphasis on Germany (von Wahl 2008), while not

much work has been done at a comparative level. In contemporary Germany the term 'Grosse Koalition' describes a governing coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU together with the Bavarian CSU) and the Social Democrats, the two largest mainstream parties. The first experience came after the inconclusive result of the 2005 German federal election, when neither of the traditional coalitions could form a majority government. Germany already enjoyed previous experiences of grand coalition: in 1923 and in 1928-1930, in the Weimar Republic, and in 1966 when the SPD and CDU decided to support the Kiesinger government (Gassert 2006). For instance, comparing the Kiesinger Grand Coalition government of 1966–69 with the Merkel Grand Coalition government of 2005–09 helped in explaining leadership styles and policy outcomes within the constraints of a Grand Coalition (Olsen 2011).

Jacoby described three logics that stand behind parties' choices for grand coalitions. Firstly 'renovation', where mainstream parties form grand coalitions together to pursue policy goals unreachable in smaller coalitions. Secondly 'clientelism', where parties enter grand coalitions in order to provide benefits for their constituencies and for themselves. Thirdly 'sterilization', in which grand coalitions are a strategy for large parties to limit the room for manoeuvre of (often new) parties 'unacceptable to one or both of them' (2017: 331). When no other coalition is stable or is considered numerically feasible (Strøm and Nyblade 2009), the chosen arrangement for mainstream parties of the left and the right is often to keep 'new parties' and populist parties out of government (Mral, Khosravinik and Wodak 2013), forming a 'cordon sanitaire', a term introduced in the late 1980s in Belgium. At that time, because the far-right Flemish nationalist Vlaams Blok was considered as a racist group, all the other Belgian parties decided to exclude it from any coalition government and preferred to negotiate the formation of grand coalitions instead. Other notable examples of cordons sanitaires existed in Italy towards the neo-fascist MSI and in France against the Front National. The logic behind it is the same: the necessity to exclude a challenger that is considered unworthy to be part of any possible coalition (Stefuriuc 2013).

Belgium is one of the countries with the largest history in UAs, especially in grand coalitions, starting with the case of the Catholic-Liberal grand coalitions in the early Nineteenth century. While in Austria, for instance, 'a grand coalition was formed soon after WWII, when the country was occupied by the allied forces (…) the external threats impressed on the elites the need for internal unity and cooperation' (Lijphart 1969: 217).

This article partially extends the 'classic' definition of grand coalitions to coalitions which include minor parties that are ideologically distant from the mainstream one. This is the case of Italy, where Renzi and Gentiloni's cabinets (all centre-left prime ministers) could be formed only with the key support of the centre-right Nuovo Centrodestra (NCD) as a minor partner in the government's majority (while the 2013 Letta's centre-left post-election cabinet, being firstly supported by the mainstream centre-right PDL, resembled a 'classic' grand coalition).

The same applies for the 2010 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition in the UK. Following the 2010 general election resulting in a hung parliament with the Conservatives as the largest party, the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives agreed to enter a formal coalition. In the UK, the archetypal grand coalition would obviously be a Conservative-Labour one – the two long-term mainstream rival parties. However, because since the Second World War Conservatives and Liberal Democrats at the national level have always been in opposition to each other, this coalition can be also considered 'ideologically-incoherent'.

These ideologically-incoherent coalitions are also frequent in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), especially in Latvia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Foy 2016; Cabada, Hloušek and Jurek 2014: 138-139). In fact, for many CEE young democracies, where it is difficult to highlight 'long-term

mainstream rival parties' (Kreuzer and Pattai 2003) and personality-based parties are the norm (Gherghina 2015), these are frequent arrangements that can be compared to grand coalitions.

POPULIST PARTIES DURING THE GREAT RECESSION

The rise of populist parties helps us understand both the heightened frequency of grand coalitions in countries that have long used them – such as Germany and Austria – and also the rise of 'unlikely governments' in countries with little prior experience of UAs (Lochocki 2016).

Measuring populism has always been difficult. Knowing which party is populist and which is not has been a contentious topic in political science since at least the early 2000s. However, several prominent studies have set the ground for a common interpretative background (Taggart 2004, Roodujin and Pauwels 2011, Müller 2016, Mudde 2004). Drawing from that and considering all the 28 EU member states, in 2007 23 populist parties were represented in national parliaments. Ten years later, the number of populist parties represented in European national parliaments was 34.

Table 1 highlights the vote share held by populist parties in 2007 and in 2017. Political movements such as the Team Stronach in Austria, the Five Stars Movement (M5S) in Italy, the Free Party in Estonia were barely in their founders' minds at the beginning of the GR. Nevertheless, at 31 December 2017 populist parties held a vote share of 18.44 per cent in national parliaments in the EU. The proportion of parliamentary seats held is slightly lower: 16.63 per cent. Ten years earlier these numbers were much smaller: 7.79 per cent and 5.65 per cent, respectively.

Table 1. Populist parties in the EU national parliaments

	Number of Populist Parties represented in Parliaments	Average vote share of Populist Parties in national parliaments (EU-28)	Average seat share of Populist Parties in national parliaments (EU-28)
31 December 2007	23*	7.79%	5.65%
31 December 2017	34**	18.44%	16.33%

Source: Author's elaboration on OECD data (2017d). Note: *In 2007 populist parties were represented in national parliaments of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria (2 parties), Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece (2), Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands (2), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia (2), Spain. **In 2017, populist parties were represented in national parliaments in Austria (2), Belgium, Bulgaria (2), Croatia (2), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany (2), Greece (2), Hungary, Ireland, Italy (2), Latvia, Lithuania (2), Netherlands (3), Poland, Romania (2), Slovakia (4), Spain, and Sweden.

The variance between vote percentages and number of seats is obviously driven by the different electoral systems, which by their nature tend to stretch or minimise certain percentages when it comes to apportionment. Electoral systems matter: for instance, Front National in France and UKIP in the United Kingdom scored tremendous successes and gained many votes, but their return in number of seats was poor.

Since the GR, many European countries have experienced a prolonged period of electoral turmoil with growing contingents of dissatisfied voters. In many cases, voters have punished incumbents amidst negative perceptions of the state of the economy, a collapse of growth figures and surging unemployment (Kriesi 2014). The GR has proved to be a 'social earthquake'. In Italy, in 2007 there

were 2.5 million of families below the poverty line. Eight years later this had doubled to 5 million. The same applied for 'families in relative poverty', of which there were 5 million in 2007 and 8.5 million in 2015 (OECD 2017d). In Belgium, a 2014 report showed that the number of children living in poverty stood at 420,000, a figure which had doubled since 2007 (KBS 2014: 4).

Research conducted before the GR recognised a moderate confirmation rate for national governments in Western Europe (Keman 2011). Bouvet and King (2013) showed that in the 35 national elections held in the 27 OECD countries during the years of the GR, only in eight cases were incumbents confirmed. Mainstream parties, especially in Western Europe, have been severely punished by voters where the economic conditions were getting worse. According to Kriesi (2014: 34), in Western Europe political parties which were part of governmental majorities lost an average of 3.6 per cent in the following elections, whilst the Prime Ministers' parties lost 5.1 per cent on average (2014: 34). Major gains were scored by radical and 'new parties'. Consequently, these political parties seemed to have increased their vote in inverse relation to countries' economic performance (Hughes 2011).

Kriesi (2014) analysed electoral results in 30 European countries. His research design included two national elections for each country until November 2008 and all the elections held before July 2014. 107 elections were considered (two for each country, plus an additional one for Austria that voted in September 2008 at the beginning of the GR) – 61 are pre-crisis and 46 post-crisis. Reflecting on the correlation between economic indicators and the confirmation rate of the incumbent governments, Kriesi (2014) observed that, while in Central and Eastern Europe there has not been a significant impact of the economic situation on the electoral results of incumbent governments, in Western Europe the influence has been high, revealing at the same time a massive growth of right-wing populist movements, radical left movements, and new parties in general (Hino 2012). It is in these years, during and after the GR, that UAs significantly increased.

UNHOLY ALLIANCES IN THE EU (2007–2017)

Recently, Cas Mudde (2017) provided a comprehensive picture of contemporary European politics:

> Most European countries have seen a sharp decline in electoral support for established parties (…) and [it] has significantly increased during the GR. The combination of decreasing loyalty and increasing voice leads to fragmented and polarised party systems, which make it more difficult to form coalition governments – as we have seen in Greece and Spain, where new elections were necessary to break the deadlock.

At the same time 'new parties' and 'populist parties' are increasing their votes in several countries (Hartleb and Ostheimer 2014) and many of these political organisations are difficult to be integrated. Some are considered too radical by potential coalition partners, while others – such as the Italian M5S - were explicitly born on a platform which forbade coalitions with other parties (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013).[3] It is a situation which complicates post-election negotiations and certainly contributed to the increase of UAs. 'New parties' are significantly on the rise: in 13 EU countries at least one new-born party came straight up to be represented in parliament (19 cases in total). For instance, the 2014 Slovenian Parliamentary Election was characterised by as many as three new parties which successfully gained seats, two of which were formed around the charismatic leaderships of former Prime Ministers Cerar and Bratuŝek.

Table 2 shows an overview of UAs in national governments in the EU. In the decade 1997–2007, only two UAs were formed. Here, the most notable examples came from the Netherlands: the two Kok 'purple' cabinets were called as such because they contained both the social-democratic Labour Party (red) and the liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (blue). In the decade 2007–2017, however, 16 EU countries experienced governments led by UAs.

Table 2. EU countries governed by 'Unholy Alliances' (grand coalitions, ideologically-incoherent coalitions)

At 31.12.2017	Countries that also experienced UAs in the period 31.12.2007-31.12.2017	At 31.12.2007	Countries that also experienced UAs in the period 31.12.1997-31.12.2007
Croatia Germany Italy Lithuania Slovenia Slovakia	Austria Belgium Bulgaria Czech Republic Finland Greece Luxembourg Netherlands Romania United Kingdom	Austria Belgium Bulgaria Finland Germany Luxembourg	Netherlands Slovakia

Source: Author's elaboration on NSD data (2017).

It is not always simple to identify the reason that accounts for the formation of UA and why in some countries they have been formed, but not in others. Bearing in mind the three major possible reasons as stated above (national crises, only stable alternative and cordons sanitaires), it becomes immediately clear how the second and third options coincide, where 'only stable alternative' reflects a lack of confidence towards other political parties represented in Parliament. In 2007-2017, the only country where the reason for forming a grand coalition seems to be a situation of 'national crisis' is Belgium in 2011, where the Di Rupo government was sworn in after a record-breaking 541 days of negotiations following the 2010 elections. Grand coalitions formed as cordons sanitaires, appear to be the majority. As Jacoby (2017: 331) argues:

> European populism of both the left and right has made sterilization relatively more important in recent years (…) both the long-running euro crisis and the more recent refugee flows have pushed the sterilization logic closer to the forefront of large party choices.

Some of the cases reported in Table 2 are well-known. For example, Germany has always been considered as the epitome for grand coalitions, while Italy and the UK represent other high-profile examples. On the other hand, some smaller EU countries have not attracted as much scholarly attention. In the Czech Republic, for instance, in January 2014, Bohuslav Sobotka became the first left-wing prime minister after six years of right-wing political control. He started the negotiations with the intention to exclude the incumbent centre-right OSD from the coalition. He was then able to form a grand coalition government which included the new ANO 2011 party and the centrist Christian and Democratic Union–Czechoslovak People's Party (Groszkowski 2013). In Croatia, the Plenkovic government has been defined by Viseslav Raos as a 'combination of liberals and conservatives [which] is atypical for Croatia's political culture' (Reuters 2017).

ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND UNHOLY ALLIANCES

The hypothesis that economic fluctuations influence electoral results has been upheld several times. It is based on the idea that incumbent governments are considered accountable for the economic situation (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2007). If the economy is good, voters will reward the incumbent and confirm them in power, whereas in a troubled economy the electorate will punish the incumbent and vote for opposition parties (Duch and Stevenson 2008; 2005; Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck 2012). In the years of the GR, there have been several studies concerning election results and economic indicators (Bellucci, Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck 2012). More recently, Giugni and Grasso (2018) analysed citizens' experiences and reactions to the GR in Europe, showing that lower social classes were particularly hard hit and that GR can be considered as a driver of populist attitudes. Parker and Tsarouhas (2018) specifically investigated the causes and consequences of the economic crisis in four countries of the Eurozone 'periphery': Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. In doing so, they highlight the link between the decline of these countries' economies and the consequent political fragility.

The 16 countries that experienced UAs in the time span 2007-2017 were studied, leading to the analysis of 62 elections occurring in the period, making sure to include one election before the GR (2007). This leads to the identification of 28 cases of UAs arranged after elections and 34 cases of 'classic' government majorities. The GR is thus taken as a relevant factor, both for its impact on the economic indicators and as an 'inevitable' contextual element to be considered in a comparative analysis which includes more than 10 years of elections in 16 European countries.

There is agreement that macroeconomic issues matter for political evaluations. Previous work has suggested that inflation, unemployment and economic growth are important issues for voters (Chappell 1990: 314). People also generally rely more on the media for information about issues outside of their reach or personal experience, such as the current and future state of the economy (Hester and Gibson 2003), meaning the economic reality they perceive is mediated (Boef and Kellstedt 2004). Common indicators such as GDP growth and unemployment rate are the ones that are usually mentioned by mass media and politicians when addressing the state of the economy. In other words, these are the most well-known economic indicators among voters (Su 2008). For this reason, this analysis uses these simple economic indicators and focuses on arithmetic means. The idea is to illustrate the general economic cycle as it was portrayed in the news and, probably, felt by citizens. The results are presented in table 3.

Looking at the economic data for the year of the elections only, most of the correlations seem to be counter-intuitive: the only parameter which seems to be in line with the initial hypothesis is the one concerning the annual variation of the Gini Index: UA formation happens in election years when there is a slight increase in inequality (total +0.059, average +0.00188). At the same time, in these 16 countries during the ten-year period, 'normal' governments are formed in the presence of a slight decrease of inequalities (cumulative Gini Index -0.1, annually averaged at -0.003).

However, this is only a partial analysis because considering the election years does not provide an accurate picture of the long-term economic trend perceived by voters. Hence, to provide a more structured analysis, the same indicators were observed in the 16 countries for all the years between one election and another. This was achieved by obtaining the cumulative data and calculating an average annual rate for each country.

Looking at the cumulative economic data, the results are more in line with the research hypothesis. In order to measure this possible correlation the average annual GDP growth rate for each legislature was added together, then divided by the number of years of the legislature. There are thus 97 years of legislature which preceded UAs and 125 years of legislature which were not

followed by elections that generated UAs. The average GDP annual growth rate in the years before elections leading to UAs is +1.59 per cent, while the same indicator in the years before elections which did not lead to UAs was higher, at +2.23 per cent. As shown in Table 3, the same trend applies for the average annual change in unemployment rate: -0.06 per cent in the years before elections resulting in UAs, -0.19 per cent for elections which did not result in UAs. The youth unemployment rate goes in the same direction. Here, the change in youth unemployment rate is around 0 per cent for the years before UAs and on average fell by 0.34 per cent when UAs were not returned.

The same correlation was then tested excluding Greece, which is the country with the most 'extreme' economic data and that may have driven most of the figures. Without the Greek case, the average GDP annual growth rate in the years before elections followed by UAs is +1.88 per cent, while in the years before elections not followed by UAs it is +2.46 per cent. As expected, also the unemployment rate data go in the same direction and reinforces the research hypothesis.

Table 3. Economic indicators and Unholy Alliances in the EU

	Years of legislature preceding elections which led to UA	Years of legislature preceding elections which did not lead to UA
GDP annual growth rate*	+1.59%	+2.23%
GDP annual growth rate without Greece**	+1.88%	+2.46%
GDP Western Europe***	+0.91%	+1.04%
GDP Eastern Europe****	+2.59%	+3.23%
Unemployment Rate	-0.06%	-0.19%
Unemployment Rate without Greece	-0.25%	-0.21%
Unemployment Rate Western Europe	+0.48%	-0.13%
Unemployment Rate Eastern Europe	-0.81%	-0.41%
Youth Unemployment Rate	<0.00%	-0.34%
Youth Unemployment Rate without Greece	-0.37%	-0.43%
Youth Unemployment Rate Western Europe	+1.32%	-0.61%
Youth Unemployment Rate Eastern Europe	-1.92%	-0.29%

Sources: World Bank (2017), Eurostat (2017a; 2017b), OECD (2017a; 2017b; 2017c). Notes: annual average for the years of legislature before the government formation. *General indicator: 28 cases for UA, 34 cases for non-UA. **Indicator without Greece: 26 cases for UA, 30 cases for non-UA. ***Western Europe indicator: 17 cases for UA, 16 cases for non-UA. ****Eastern Europe indicator: 11 cases for UA, 18 cases for non-UA.

Repeating the same analysis and isolating the Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia), which include 11 cases of UAs, results in an averaged GDP annual growth rate of +2.59 per cent, while the same value is at +3.23 per cent for the years before elections that did not generate UAs. This shows how Eastern European countries drive the GDP rate variable, also considering that the Western European nations (Greece included) score an annual average of +0.91 per cent for the years before UAs and +1.04 per cent for the years before elections not followed by UAs. Regarding change in youth unemployment, Eastern Europe countries

seem to move in the opposite direction: in the years before elections generating UAs the unemployment rate decreased by 1.92 per cent, while in the years before elections which did not lead to UAs the same indicator decreased by only 0.29 per cent.

The annual variation in the Gini Index also seems to confirm the research hypothesis: the formation of UAs occur when there is a slight increase in inequalities (averaged at +0.04), while the years before elections which led to 'normal' government coalitions show a slight decrease in inequalities (averaged at -0.01).

Looking at countries at an individual level (table 4), most countries seem to match the research hypothesis that bad economic indicators lead to fragmented election results, generating UAs, but the pattern is more mixed.

Table 4. Economic indicators in countries that experienced UAs

	GDP annual growth rate*		Change in Unemployment rate (annual)*		Change in Youth Unemployment Rate (annual)*	
	%		%		%	
	UA**	Non-UA**	UA**	Non-UA**	UA**	Non-UA**
Austria	2.05	0.87	0.04	0.28	0.26	0.43
Belgium	1.44	1.24	0.02	0.28	0.58	0.45
Bulgaria	2.69	3.15	-1.97	-0.45	-0.85	-0.56
Croatia	-1.55	2.52	-0.72	-0.11	0.09	-0.23
Czech Republic	1.06	3.16	0.07	-0.28	0.98	0.93
Finland	1.66	-0.06	-0.08	0.06	0.04	-0.19
Germany	0.35	2.23	-0.06	-0.56	0.8	-0.6
Greece	-6.31	0.64	3.37	1.08	7.6	0.17
Italy	-1.42	1.13	0.91	-0.69	2.78	-1.63
Lithuania	1.03	7.55	0.6	-1.45	1.11	-2.13
Luxembourg	3.08	2.75	0.38	0.2	1.02	-0.66
Netherlands	1.37	1.23	0.37	-0.01	0.79	0
Romania	6.83	2.87	-0.48	0.25	-0.85	0.45
Slovakia	4.65	3.12	-2.83	0.04	-2.74	0.97
Slovenia	-0.27	2.53	0.58	0.16	1.44	0.09
United Kingdom	0.37	2.22	0.4	-0.37	1.43	-0.76

Source: World Bank (2018) and OECD (2018).
Notes: *Yearly averages per year of legislature. **Years of legislature before UA and Non-UA governments.

Italy had tenuous growth before the 2006 and 2008 general elections (averaged annually at +1 per cent and +0.15 per cent, respectively) while it suffered -1.06 per cent in annual average GDP before the 2013 general elections which led to the UA that supported the Letta government. The UK shows a similar trend with an annual average of +2.73 per cent in the four years before the 2005 general election, +2.07 per cent in the five years before the 2015 election, +1.86 per cent in the two years before the 2017 general election, but only +0.37 per cent before the 2010 general elections which led to the coalition between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The youth unemployment rate in both Italy and the UK follows a similar trend, with youth unemployment increasing before the elections that led to UAs.

However, there are also cases which do not fit with the research hypothesis. Romania enjoyed an average annual growth in GDP of +2.87 per cent in the 12 years which did not lead to a UA, while before the 2008 general elections which resulted in a grand coalition, the average annual GDP growth rate was +6.83 per cent. Bulgaria saw a decrease in the unemployment rate (-0.45 per cent) in the 11 years before elections that had clear winners, but in the five years which led to two UAs, the unemployment rate decreased further (-1.97 per cent). UAs also happened after years of higher youth unemployment in Croatia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK. On the other hand, countries such as Austria, Romania and Slovakia showed better youth unemployment rate figures in the years which led to the formation of UAs.

In the correlation between unemployment rate and UAs, slight 'outliers' are countries such as Bulgaria, Finland and Romania. More significant counter-trending numbers are the ones scored in Croatia and Slovakia (-0.72% and -0.64% before UAs, -0.11% and -0.42% before non-UAs, respectively). However, other major factors might have affected voters' behaviour and government formation. For Croatia, the 2013 accession to the EU, which dominated the public debate since the early 2000s, is often mentioned as a key determinant in the election outcome (Strielkowski 2013: 55). In Slovakia, political scandals and high levels of corruption have regularly featured news and affected politics (Slovak Spectator 2016; Sicakova-Beblava and Beblavy 2016: 296).

GDP is the most consistent indicator in relation to the formation of UAs. However, in Western Europe, a notable exception is Finland. As shown in Table 4, GDP grew more in the eight years before a UA (+1.66 per cent on annual average) than in the four years before the 2015 parliamentary election which did not bring result in a UA (-0.06 per cent on annual average). Again, country specific issues in Finland, such as political scandals and the debate on sovereign bailout programmes, together with the rise of a very successful populist party, played an important role in the formation of a UA. Several scandals dominated Finnish political life before the 2011 parliamentary election. Many politicians in the governing Centre and National Coalition parties received dubious funding from external sources and secret extra-marital affairs brought negative attention to both the former Foreign Minister Ilkka Kanerva and former Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen (Triloqvist 2012). Public confidence in politics was at a historic minimum and the European sovereign debt crisis was another crucial issue in the election. According to opinion polls, nearly 60 per cent of Finns were against the country's participation in European bailout programmes. While all four parties of the governing UA coalition (Centre Party, National Coalition Party, Green League and the Swedish People's Party) supported Finland's participation in the bailout, the populist True Finns were strongly against it (Worth 2011). In the 2011 parliamentary elections, True Finns received 19.1 per cent of the vote and their rise of 15 percentage points was the largest electoral victory for any party in Finland's post-war history. A few weeks after the election, True Finns leader Timo Soini officially announced that they would withdraw from the government formation negotiations due to the bailout issue. Soini said he would prefer to keep to the party's original platform and not compromise its core principles. Subsequently, a six-party grand coalition was formed under the logic of the 'only stable alternative'. Four years later, Soini's party secured 17.6 per cent and, this time, went straight into the new centre-right government coalition.

Obviously, given the variety of countries that have experienced unholy post-electoral alliances in government, the phenomenon cannot be reduced to a mere consequence of economic factors, despite the presence of correlational evidence. Nevertheless, in line with the research hypothesis, populist parties performed better in elections which brought countries to the formation of grand coalitions and ideologically incoherent coalitions than in elections which did not bring about the formation of UAs.

Table 5. Electoral performance of populist parties in the 16 countries which experienced UAs (2007-2017)

	Elections leading to the formation of UAs (%)	Elections not leading to the formation of UAs (%)	Total (%)
Vote Percentages	14.1	10.4	12.2
Seats	13.9	9.8	11.8

Source: Author's elaboration (2018). Notes: 28 cases for UA. 34 cases for Non-UA.

Table 5 shows the average vote share and the average seat share of populist parties in the 16 countries which experienced UAs between 2007 and 2017. In this analysis, some countries (Belgium and the Czech Republic, for instance) marked a clear trend, while others (Finland and the Netherlands) seemed to go in the opposite direction. In general, however, the electoral rise of populist parties (which has already been highlighted at general level in Table 1) has been higher in elections which brought to UAs. The difference is not enormous but is nevertheless notable and suggests support for the main hypothesis that the increased fragmentation of party systems caused by the worsening economic situation in many European countries and the consequent fall of mainstream parties and success of populist and new parties, generated further difficulties in forming homogeneous coalitions.

The relation between the rise of populist parties and the formation of UAs is visibly illustrated in countries such as the Czech Republic and Italy. In the former, in 2013, the new party ANO 2011 went straight into government. In the latter, also in 2013, the M5S scored over 25 per cent of the vote. While Andrej Babis' ANO 2011 was immediately included in the new UA government, the M5S added additional uncertainty to government negotiations because it explicitly rejected any offer of involvement in coalition agreements (Bordignon and Ceccarini 2013: 430). As a result, the centre-left had no other choice than to reach an agreement with their traditional rivals in the centre-right PDL. In next general elections, both ANO and M5S increased their vote shares and went on to enter governing coalitions (ANO in 2017, M5S in 2018).

The rise of new parties and populist parties has also been observed in other CEE countries. In 2009 in Bulgaria, GERB achieved the 52.9 per cent. In 2014, in Slovenia, Miro Cerar's new party (SMC) scored 51.1 per cent. Both results influenced the subsequent government negotiations which brought the formation of two UAs. In March 2016, the populist right-wing Slovak National Party scored 8.6 per cent in the Slovak Parliamentary Election, almost doubling its previous result (4.5 per cent). Centre-left Prime Minister Robert Fico lost his majority and had to face a deeply divided parliament featuring solid Eurosceptics and neo-Nazis. However, after ten days of negotiations, he was able to form a UA coalition which included the Slovak National party, the centre-right liberals and a party representing the country's Hungarian minority – a UA government which contained both the nationalists who have campaigned against greater rights for the country's Hungarian minority, and the party that represents those same Hungarians.

CONCLUSIONS

More and more strangers are becoming 'bedfellows' in the EU. What was previously considered an exception is now becoming almost the rule. UAs have flourished in Western and Eastern Europe, both in countries with proportional representation and majoritarian electoral systems, and in countries with a history of grand coalitions as well as in nations which never experienced them before.

UAs are never offered to voters before elections. They become a necessity when election results are fragmented and there is no ideologically-coherent majority available. UAs can thus be seen as a consequence of the growing fragmentation of politics, where it is increasingly more difficult to reach numbers sufficient to form ideologically-coherent majorities. As shown, populist parties are significantly on the rise: during the GR, in less than ten years, they have more than doubled their electoral support.

This article aimed to test the potential relationship between some of the most relevant economic indicators and the formation of UAs. The research hypothesis was that in periods of poor economic performance, elections would bring fragmented results due to the growth of populist movements and new parties, which are difficult to be included in government majorities. Here the necessity arises to form UAs in order to have working governments. Our first study concerned the economic indicators only for the last year before the vote and this showed none of the expected correlation.

This first analysis was, however, too limited and did not consider more comprehensive economic trends. By expanding the analysis to include all years before an election, the trend seems clearer. UAs are mostly formed after years where the GDP annual growth rate is lower and when employment figures are worse than in the years before elections not followed by UA. Overall, then, when a country's economic situation is fine, UAs are rarer. On the other hand, when unemployment increases and when the annual growth rate is low or even negative, more elections were followed by UAs. Nevertheless, the discussion showed that there are varied experiences between individual countries and that a range of additional factors beyond economic performance were playing a role too. It might be that there is an overall trend, but it is evident from this analysis that the effect of this is not even across all countries.

Whether these unholy alliances will stop being considered 'unholy' and will become just another feature of contemporary European politics is remains to be seen. Nevertheless, this study opens up the field for further research, for example in verifying whether the continued presence of UAs will continue to be driven by economic factors.

ENDNOTES

1 These are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom.
2 The timing and the scale of the recession varied from country to country. Moreover, the scientific literature on the topic does not always agree about the starting date of the GR. According to the US National Bureau of Economic Research, the GR began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009, thus extending over 19 months (Wall Street Journal 2008). However, in some European countries, GR lasted significantly longer (Weisbrot 2014).
3 While in 2013, M5S firmly rejected any offer to enter in government coalition with other parties, after the 2018 Italian general elections it went into coalition with the right-wing League.

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Marco Morini, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, Via della Badia dei Roccettini, 9, 50014 San Domenico, Fiesole, Italy [marco.morini@eui.eu].

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Research Article

Reversed Conditionality in EU External Migration Policy: The Case of Morocco

Fanny Tittel-Mosser, *University of Minho*

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Abstract

Mobility partnerships between the European Union (EU) and third countries are usually viewed as reflecting asymmetric power relations where development aid, trade relations and visa policies are made conditional upon the cooperation by third countries with an EU agenda of migration control. Drawing on Cassarino's notion of 'reversed conditionality', this article advocates a more balanced view of EU-third country relations and argues that mobility partnerships are also instrumentalised as part of the domestic agendas of third countries. The argument is illustrated by an analysis of the case of EU-Morocco relations with a specific focus on the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum in Morocco. The analysis illustrates how soft law instruments such as mobility partnerships have significant legal and political implications for third countries and can provide important external support for the development and implementation of national political priorities.

Keywords

Mobility partnership; EU external action; Reversed conditionality; Morocco; Migration policy

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Mobility partnerships are non-binding instruments concluded between the EU, interested member states and a third country with the objective of cooperating with third countries on migration and asylum issues. Despite its non-binding nature, several authors have observed that mobility partnerships can have concrete legal implications, especially with regard to visa facilitation and readmission (Carrera, Faure Atger, Guild and Kostakopoulou 2011: 6). The logic behind this is that mobility partnerships often combine interests from both EU, such as an effective readmission policy of third country nationals, and third countries, such as access for their nationals to the territory of the EU through visa facilitation.

Since the Arab Spring uprising and increasingly today with the 'migration crisis', the EU needs third countries' assistance in order to manage migration flows. In the 'European Agenda on Migration', the Commission suggests that the EU and the member states should 'work together with partner countries to put in place concrete measures to prevent hazardous journeys' (European Commission 2015). Subsequently, the EU put forth a communication establishing a new Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, saying it was important 'to provide capacity building to the host communities and relevant institutions' (European Commission 2016a: 6). The European Agenda on Migration as well as the MPF are based on the principles of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), which is embodied in mobility partnerships. Mobility partnerships have been criticised for achieving the 'disguised' externalisation of migration control for the EU (Euromed Rights 2014). Brocza and Paulhart (2015: 6) concur with this argument and describe mobility partnerships' first interests as expanding the EU's migration scope of influence and externalising its borders.

Relations with third countries are often viewed as being one-sided where instruments such as mobility partnerships make development aid, trade relations and visa policies conditional upon third countries cooperating with the EU agenda of migration control (e.g. Brocza and Paulhart 2015;

Carrera, Cassarino, El Qadim, Lahlou and den Hertog 2016; Carrera, den Hertog and Parkin 2012). Only a few scholars have observed that such conditionality can also be 'reversed' and tie the EU more significantly to the interests of the third country (e.g. Cassarino 2007). In other words, the relations between different parties to a mobility partnership may be more symmetric than is often assumed and serve not only the interests of the EU and its member states but also those of the third country. This article applies the notion of 'reversed conditionality' to the analysis of the conclusion and implementation of mobility partnerships between the EU, its member states and third countries. I show how mobility partnerships can be used as a tool to support a domestic political agenda in a third country. The argument is illustrated by an analysis of the case of EU-Morocco relations with a specific focus on the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum (NSIA) in Morocco.

The article is structured as follows. First, the flexible nature of mobility partnerships is discussed with a specific emphasis on the potential legal and political implications for third countries. Then, conditionality and reverse conditionality are considered in light of the EU's external migration policy. Subsequently, after illustrating the rationale for this study, the EU-Morocco mobility partnership is introduced and the context of the NSIA is described. The analysis focuses on some key mobility partnership projects of legal and political relevance that support the implementation of the NSIA. The article ends with some reflections on the broader implications of these findings.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL RELEVANCE OF MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR THIRD COUNTRIES

This section discusses how, first, the EU can influence the legal and policy frameworks of a third country through the implementation of soft law instruments, in this case the mobility partnership; and, second, how third countries also instrumentalise mobility partnerships as part of their domestic political agenda.

Non-binding instruments offer a safe way to deal with uncertainty (Dupuy 1991: 423) as they are flexible (Andrade 2013: 277) and can be adapted to changes in policy priorities and circumstances (Van Vooren 2012: 209). In the EU context, flexibility is becoming an important feature as EU competences grow and the legislative process becomes increasingly more burdensome (Terpan 2015: 89). With regard to external migration relations, flexibility is particularly relevant in the context of multi-level decision-making involving the EU, its member states and third countries (Reslow and Vink 2015).

Carrera and Hernández I Sagrera (2009: 31) have observed that member states decide to participate in a mobility partnership because the aim of the negotiations is in line with their own national policies and the projects they propose reflect their policy preferences (cf. Reslow 2012a: 226-227). The list of projects proposed in the Annex to the mobility partnership can evolve in line with emerging policy priorities and new projects can be proposed if new policy priorities arise. Therefore, the mobility partnership can play a role in continuing discussions between the EU and third countries. New policy priorities on both the EU and third countries' side can lead to negotiations about the implementation of new initiatives.

EU mobility partnerships are presented in the literature as soft law instruments or defined as being of a 'soft legal nature' or 'non-legal nature' (Carrera and Hernández I Sagrera 2009: 28; Koutrakos 2011: 164-165; Van Vooren 2012: 209-210). As noted by Senden (2005: 23), one of the main criteria defining soft law is the existence of legal effects. In her definition of soft law, she distinguishes between the norm's 'legal effects' and its bindingness, an idea also explored by Snyder who argues that legal effects are not linked to the fact that an instrument is legally binding (1996: 461-463). The external legal effects of soft law relate to the legal effects in the legal orders of third countries (van

Vooren 2012: 181). The external effects of EU law have been discussed from different perspectives. A first example is 'territorial extension' where the EU tries to impose EU law on activities that are happening abroad (Scott 2013). Secondly, Bradford (2012) discusses the normative power of the EU at the global level, also called 'The Brussels Effect'. Thirdly, the EU can actively try to impose its norms on third countries (Lenz 2012) or, by contrast, third countries can voluntarily adopt the EU's institutional model (Jetschke and Murray 2012). Lavenex (2004: 89) has observed the existence of external effects for eastern and central European countries related to European integration. The enlargement had direct consequences for these countries, since it required reforms to their border regime, for example, as part of the EU accession conditionality.

The exercise of conditionality by the EU and its member states vis-à-vis third countries without a realistic membership scenario draws on other sources of power, for example development aid, which can have direct consequences for migration policies in third countries. Lavenex and Uçarer (2003: 11) note, however, that although in some cases third countries are put under pressure to adapt to EU policies, this does not mean that such adaptation is always opposite to the domestic priorities of the third country. When applying these distinctions to mobility partnerships we can consider that they can have a 'differentiated relevance'. Differentiated relevance means that in some cases legal and policy changes can be imposed by the EU, while in other cases they can be supported by the EU according to the will of the third country. The level of influence of the EU in the legal and policy developments, as well as in the content of the new legal acts or policies, can be differentiated depending on external factors. One of these factors is the power of negotiation of the third country. The influence of this factor on the relevance of the mobility partnership with Morocco is the focus of my analysis.

CONDITIONALITY AND REVERSED CONDITIONALITY

Several authors argue that mobility partnerships are not balanced partnerships and that there is no real cooperation between the EU and member states and the third country. Chou and Gibert (2012), for example, argue that the EU uses an 'our-size-fits-all' approach with third countries or what Reslow and Vink (2015) would call a 'take it or leave it' approach. Reslow (2012b: 395) highlights the 'take it or leave it' approach taken in the cases of Moldova, Cape Verde and Senegal, where the same mobility partnership text was unilaterally proposed by the EU to these third countries with little room for negotiation. This view is supported by Lavenex and Stucky (2011: 132) who argue that the 'scope for third countries to express their concerns [is] limited' in the negotiations of the mobility partnerships. Triandafyllidou (2013: 8) argues that mobility partnerships replicate power relations 'where the EU sets the rules of the game and third countries have to abide by these rules'.

The first mobility partnerships were concluded with third countries with a weak leverage vis-à-vis the EU and only after the Arab Spring did this pattern change. Nevertheless, the relations between different parties to a mobility partnership may be more dynamic than is often assumed. Reslow (2012b: 394) argues that third countries are prominent players in the EU's migration policy. Taking the example of Cape Verde and Senegal, she discusses the role of domestic preferences of the third country in its decision to participate in a mobility partnership with the EU and the cost/benefits calculation of their cooperation with the EU. Others have also pointed out that third countries have their own priorities when negotiating with the EU and the member states (Chou and Gibert 2012; Sayad 2004).

Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2004: 661) note that the use of conditionality by the EU in its relations with third countries is a way to disseminate its norms and stimulate third countries to adopt new laws or different behaviour on specific issues. Political conditionality is defined by Smith

(1998: 256) as the 'perceived benefits for another state (such as aid [trade concessions, cooperation agreements, political contacts, or international organisation membership]), to the fulfilment of conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles'. In practice, the application of conditionality by the EU has been limited with regard to Southern Mediterranean countries (Balfour 2012: 16). This can be explained by the importance of migration control in the region as well as other strategic and security priorities which made it difficult for the EU to adopt a strong position towards countries with which strategic cooperation was needed (Cassarino 2007: 191-192). Cassarino calls this phenomenon 'reversed conditionality' (2007: 192). He illustrates his argument with the refusal, until 2006, of Morocco to sign an EU Readmission Agreement (EURA) unless the EU concluded further EURAs with other countries in Africa (Carrera et al. 2016: 5-7; Wolff 2014: 69).

Since the Arab Spring, political cooperation between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries has gained significant political appeal. The new 'more for more' conditionality includes financial and technical assistance, trade and mobility incentives (Balfour 2012: 21). Mobility partnerships are a good example of this approach, as they can enhance mobility for third country nationals, but also draw financial means for specific projects and capacity building initiatives which are financial and technical incentives (Balfour 2012: 21-22). In practice, the partnerships can be used as a tool to materialise conditionality since they are presented by the EU as a way to enhance mobility for third country nationals, as they include incentives to move, but they also provide financial means for specific projects and many capacity building initiatives which are financial and technical incentives. For example, the SPRING programme (Support for the Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth) can finance specific projects included in a mobility partnership, aiming at supporting concrete reforms in the third country (Balfour 2012: 21).

With the conclusion of mobility partnerships in the Southern Mediterranean region, the externalisation of the EU's migration policy seems to have taken a new turn. The EU accomplished this shift by means of subsidising an approach of externalisation of the reception of migrants and refugees in neighbouring third countries (Carrera et al. 2016). The introduction of 'more for more' conditionality, together with the increased interdependence between the EU and a third country on border management and the fight against irregular migration, has shifted power relations in favour of some third countries. I argue that some countries with a high power of negotiation can impose reversed conditionality on the EU. The reversed conditionality towards the EU can be embodied by the refusal to conclude agreements with the EU or to comply with the expectations raised by the EU's external migration policy. It is generally agreed in the literature that mobility partnerships are one-sided and put more pressure on the third country than on participating member states (Carrera and Hernández I Sagrera 2009 and 2011; Limam and Del Sarto 2015). However, since third countries bring specific interests to the table, they may also strategically exploit what they can offer in terms of the objectives of the EU's external migration policy. Given that the EU prioritises the control of migration, third countries that cooperate with this control agenda gain a more strategic position from which to negotiate their own conditions. In concrete terms, the negotiation of a readmission agreement can be a strong bargaining chip for a third country and allows it to negotiate a broader spectrum of positive incentives through the mobility partnership. Such a situation where the third country takes over the bargaining initiative and demands financial and political support in return for cooperation with the EU can be seen as 'reversed conditionality'. The use of reversed conditionality thus provides third countries with the possibility to put forth their own interests and the ability to counterbalance the disadvantages linked to their cooperation with the EU, leading to more dynamic relations between the EU and a third country than is often pictured.

Cooperating with the EU provides benefits not only for the EU but can also give political leverage to the governments of third countries. First, the conclusion of a mobility partnership suggests the

willingness to negotiate an EU Readmission Agreement, even though there is no obligation to conclude one. Since 1999, the EU has strived to conclude EURAs with third countries including the obligation to readmit third country nationals. The conclusion of these agreements has subsequently been a political priority for the EU (Trauner and Kruse 2008). Mobility partnerships can be seen as tools to provide leverage to the negotiations of EURAs with third countries by proposing a whole set of initiatives. As a response to the 'migration crisis', new financial instruments (EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, Facility for Refugees in Turkey) have been created to help support the policy of externalisation of immigrants and refugees' reception. The latter instruments are aimed at involving third countries in the procedure of reception of asylum seekers (European Commission 2005) and sharing the 'burden' of asylum seekers and refugees with neighbouring third countries (Lavenex and Wichmann 2009: 91). Certainly, the increased reliance of the EU on third countries to fight against irregular migration and cooperation on border control has a price; third countries are gaining a strategic position giving them the authority to pose their own conditions to the EU and member states. Similarly, neighbouring countries of Syria have been using migration as a bargaining chip in their relations with the EU since the outbreak of the migration crisis, Turkey being a blatant example. Özler (2012: 51) argues that Turkey was using reversed conditionality in its negotiation of a EURA with the EU, affirming that they would only conclude it if the EU would offer them visa liberation in exchange. Finally, a report by the Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (ACVZ 2015: 25-26) shows that reversed conditionality was the main reason countries of origin do not cooperate on forced return.

In summary, mobility partnerships are soft law instruments with potential legal and political relevance for third countries. They are flexible instruments that can be adapted to new political priorities and while they are commonly presented as one-sided and reflecting asymmetric power relations between the EU and third countries, there is room for third countries to negotiate with the EU on a more equal level, on the basis of reversed conditionality, and present their own conditions in their cooperation with the EU.

CASE SELECTION, DATA AND METHODOLOGY

As this discussion so far suggests, this article analyses the legal and political relevance of EU mobility partnerships in a third country context, by investigating the case of the mobility partnership between the EU and Morocco. The scope of the article is limited to the MENA region after the Arab Spring. The rationale for this is that, after the Arab Spring uprisings in Southern Mediterranean countries in 2011, the EU had to adapt its strategy, considering the increasing migration flows coming from the region as well as the potential security threats that could arise from the political unrest. There are two main reasons to choose Morocco as a case study. First, Morocco was the first Arab state in the Mediterranean to conclude a mobility partnership. This agreement is notable due to Morocco's known reluctance to conclude a EURA with the EU (Carrera et al. 2016: 5-7; Wolff 2014). The conclusion of a mobility partnership implies agreement from the third country to negotiate a EURA, which could create a new dynamic between the EU and Morocco. Second, Morocco has strong bilateral ties with some member states such as France and Spain. The potential influence of these bilateral ties on the implementation of the mobility partnership and the production of legal or political effects makes it a striking case study.

In order to identify the most relevant projects aiming at supporting the NSIA, analysis of the projects in the Annex (Council of the European Union 2013) and in the corresponding scoreboard has been conducted. A scoreboard is an Excel document used to 'monitor' the implementation of the different projects proposed. The scoreboards for Morocco have been provided by DG Home Affairs, the EU

Delegation in Morocco and the German Ministry of the Interior, with the latest version being from September 2015. In the Annex to the mobility partnership to Morocco there are 105 projects. The scoreboard for Morocco is composed of 115 projects, of which 21 are new. New projects are projects proposed after the conclusion of the mobility partnership.

The main source of information for the analysis of political and administrative dynamics in this article are a total of 38 interviews held in Europe and Morocco for a larger research project, of which 16 set of interviews are used here (see Annex 1).[1] The interviewees were EU representatives involved in the conclusion or implementation of the mobility partnership with Morocco as well as staff members of international organisations, such as the United Nations, in charge of the implementation of specific projects. On the Moroccan side, interviews were held with officials of ministries directly involved in the negotiation and implementation of the mobility partnership and involved in the development of the NSIA as well as representatives of sub-Saharan migrants' associations, which are the main beneficiary group of the NSIA. The results of these interviews were used in the analysis of the implementation of the NSIA, providing preliminary insights about transit and permanent migrants in Morocco. Further data was obtained from primary sources (i.e. official statements, reports, newspaper articles or legal documents) and secondary sources.

The next section briefly describes the content of the NSIA. Subsequently, the relationship between the NSIA and the mobility partnership with Morocco is analysed with a view to the different interests during the negotiation and implementation of these instruments.

MOROCCO'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM (NSIA)

In 2013, major changes in Morocco's position towards migration and asylum occurred. First, in July, the National Human Rights Council (CNDH), the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights and the International Organisation for Migration in Rabat, published a critical paper on the state of migrants' rights in Morocco (2013). In addition, the CNDH published a report putting forth measures to improve the situation of refugees and asylum seekers, of irregular migrants and the fight against human trafficking (CNDH 2013: 8-11). The conclusions of this report were presented to the King, Mohammed VI, on 9 September 2013; the next day the King announced a series of 'High Orientations'. In October, the Moroccan Ministry for Moroccan Residents Abroad and Migration Affairs (MCMREAM) was created as the first national institution dealing with migration issues. On 6 November, the King called for a new global policy on immigration and asylum and recognised Morocco, for the first time, as a country of immigration, declaring that there was a need to review the migration and asylum policy. The regularisation of asylum seekers in November 2013 as well as the launch of the regularisation campaign held from January to December 2014 are direct consequences of this new policy. It is in the frame of this new policy that the NSIA was launched in December 2014 and supported by three new (proposed) laws, on migration, human trafficking and asylum. Law 27-14 on human trafficking has already been adopted.[2] Bill 26-14 on asylum and Bill 95-14 on migration have not been adopted at the time of writing. The NSIA has been divided into 27 specific objectives and 81 actions that have been defined in eleven programmes (Stratégie Nationale d'Immigration et d'Asile 2014). A significant component of the NSIA is the integration of the newly regularised migrants and refugees.

The strategy significantly impacts the Moroccan policy and legal framework on migration and asylum issues: legally, because it aims at developing and adopting three new laws on migration, asylum and human trafficking; practically, through the modification of policy and therefore the behaviour of Moroccan authorities towards immigrants and refugees. Following the launch of the new migration policy, two main developments occurred: the UNHCR in Morocco started examining asylum claims

and issuing refugee cards to successful applicants (interview 9) and a regularisation campaign for migrants was introduced. By the end of the regularisation period in December 2014, 17,916 out of 27,332 migrants had been regularised (Abushi and Arroud 2016) and 643 out of 2,937 asylum seekers had been granted refugee cards by the UNHCR (UNHCR 2015). A second regularisation campaign was introduced in December 2016 and lasted until December 2017.[3]

Finally, before moving to the analysis of the political dynamics between the NSIA and the EU-Morocco mobility partnership, it is important to set out the main projects proposed in the mobility partnership by the EU and the member states to support the implementation of the NSIA. First, two MIEUX projects are included in the mobility partnership and aim at strengthening the capacities of the Moroccan authorities in the implementation of the NSIA. MIEUX is a facility funded by the European Commission and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). It facilitates capacity building and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. The first project concerns support for the drafting of a strategy for the reception and integration of refugees. The ICMPD works with the CNDH and the MCMREAM in the mapping of the integration of refugees and the creation of a refugee profile. The second project aims at supporting the drafting of a Protocol on human trafficking (legal relevance). Additionally, the project, 'Promoting the Integration of Migrants in Morocco' is key and has clear political relevance for immigrants and refugees in Morocco as it aims at supporting the MCMREAM with the implementation of the NSIA. This project was introduced into the mobility partnership in 2015 and benefited from ten million EUR. Finally, the Sharaka project influences the lifting of the authorisation requirement for access to the labour market for migrant workers.

THE NSIA AND THE EU-MOROCCO MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP

When analysing the relationship between the mobility partnership and the NSIA, it is crucial to identify clearly the sequential order of the relevant political developments. The mobility partnership was concluded first. Shortly after, the King launched a series of new policies on immigration and asylum that would later materialise under the NSIA. Even though the EU had pushed for this direction for several years (interview 6), it was globally accepted by the interviewees that the mobility partnership did not influence the new policy orientations. Concurrently, EU officials were surprised by the launch of the strategy (interviews 6 and 7). One official added that during the negotiation of the mobility partnership, the reference to the Geneva Convention was a problem because Morocco did not agree on its dispositions in relation to migrants' rights or asylum rights (interview 7). The launch of the NSIA seemingly implies a complete reversal of the position of Morocco during the negotiations of the mobility partnership.

The understanding that the EU takes a reactive position, by supporting its implementation *a posteriori*, rather than a proactive role, is shared by both the EU and Moroccan interviewees, officials and academics (interviews 5, 6, 7, 13, 16 and 17). Indeed, Morocco sets its policy orientations and indicates its needs to implement the NSIA effectively. Morocco is using reversed conditionality in order to influence the EU and member states to propose projects that would financially or technically support the NSIA as a condition for effective implementation of the strategy. Spain argues that as the NSIA was not foreseen, it had to change all the projects proposed in the framework of the mobility partnership because it has a high interest in the strategy as it prevents migrants going to Europe (interview 17). New projects were included in the mobility partnership after its conclusion in order to support the NSIA, a policy development initiated by the Moroccan King.

Morocco's new policy is a strategy of opening up towards EU and Africa. First, it improves its image. Indeed, there was a strong international mobilisation on the issue of the mistreatments of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, relayed by several reports from civil society and international organisations and through documentaries. Morocco was accused of severe breaches of human rights and mistreatment of migrants. The northern region of Morocco in particular constantly attracted media and activists' attention. Morocco wanted to appear to the EU as a 'good student' (Abushi and Arroud 2016).

The Moroccan policy shift was also a way to win a better image internationally and show sub-Saharan countries that it improved the treatment of sub-Saharan migrants. Having good relations with Africa is a new priority for Morocco (Aman 2016), which wants to be a major interlocutor on African issues and strengthen its economic relations with the African continent (interviews 10 and 12). This is in line with Morocco's 'Politique Africaine' (Royal Institute for Strategic Studies 2015). Improving relations with African countries of origin was one of the main reasons for the adoption of such a strategy in the first place (interviews 5 and 6).

Finally, Morocco is using reversed conditionality to benefit from important amounts of EU and member state funding for the implementation of the NSIA. Morocco is taking advantage of the interest of the EU in the implementation of the NSIA by requesting funds in exchange for making progress in the implementation of the strategy. From the very beginning, the CNDH (2013: 9) underlined the necessity of financial aid from the EU and added that this should be a priority of the mobility partnership. Indeed, the SPRING programme unlocked ten million EUR, specifically for one new project to support the implementation of the strategy. Moreover, a new programme of 35 million EUR aiming at supporting Morocco's migration policy and the NSIA was accepted in December 2016 (European Commission 2016b). Part of the funding of this project is subject to the EU condition of the adoption of the new law on migration. Morocco has long since taken the opportunity to modernise its own equipment and benefit from foreign expertise when cooperating with the EU or individual member states, particularly on border management (Wolff 2012: 138-139). Through the mobility partnership, Moroccan staff working in relevant ministries or civil services can benefit from training and capacity building financed by the EU on issues such as international law, refugee rights and capacity building to give them the tools to implement the three new laws following their adoption. As we saw previously, since the launch of the NSIA, funding has increased extensively as immigration issues became more policy relevant but also because Morocco was in a better position to ask for funding.

Looking from the other side, it appears that there are two main benefits for the EU. First, the EU wants to avoid irregular immigrants or asylum seekers from reaching its territory. To achieve this goal, the EU uses its policy of externalisation of immigrants and refugees' reception. For over a decade, the EU externalised some of its migration control to neighbouring third countries to fight the entry of irregular migrants onto its territory, converting them into the EU's 'gate-keepers' (Lavenex 2004: 94). The implementation of the Regional Protection Programme (RPP), in line with the European strategy of externalisation of refugees' reception, aims at involving third countries in the procedure of the reception of asylum seekers (European Commission 2005). As noted by Lavenex and Wichmann (2009: 91), the RPP is a way for the EU to share the 'burden' of asylum seekers and refugees with neighbouring third countries such as Morocco. Boswell puts it plainly and declares that the EU supports 'refugee protection in countries or regions of origin, so that they would not be obliged to seek asylum in Europe' (2003: 624). The EU's support for Morocco's new strategy can therefore be seen as a way for the EU to externalise its migration and refugees' reception, keeping Morocco in its usual role of 'gate-keeper'. Indeed, the Moroccan strategy, by regularising immigrants and improving their access to work and basic rights such as minimum health care, access to the labour market and education, could influence migrants to settle in Morocco.

These migrants may have initially only intended to transit through Morocco in the hope of entering Europe. However, the strengthening of borders combined with an improvement in the immigrants' situation and rights, has transformed the transit situation into a more permanent settlement (interviews 5 and 18).

In some way, accepting reversed conditionality is the price to pay for the EU to maintain a good relationship with Morocco. Mobility partnerships are a means of dialogue with third countries, according to an EU official, who adds that even though the results of the implementation of the NSIA are not major, it is necessary for the EU to keep on supporting the strategy because of the signal that it conveys (interview 30). In practice, Morocco's reversed conditionality might be even stronger than the EU's conditionality. According to two EU officials, the new programme of 35 million EUR, previously mentioned, should have been launched following the adoption of the three new laws (interviews 6, 7 and 30). However, the project was ultimately launched without this EU condition being met.

The second interest of the EU lies in the conclusion of a EURA with Morocco including third country nationals. Morocco has rejected such an agreement for almost two decades (Carrera, den Hertog and Parkin 2012: 14). Mobility partnerships can be seen as tools to provide leverage to the negotiations of EURAs with third countries. Indeed, they can propose a full set of initiatives including migration and development and legal migration possibilities, to counter-balance the burden of a EURA including third country nationals. An EU official emphasises that the EU realised that they needed a more balanced approach to give the EURA a chance to work (interview 29). Member states did not want to give any positive incentive if Morocco had not accepted the resumption of the negotiations of the EURA; while, inversely, Morocco did not want to restart the negotiations if no positive incentive was forthcoming from the member states (interview 29). The mobility partnerships therefore provided the EU the opportunity to give the negotiations of the EURA a more balanced perspective. Indeed, it was the first time that the EU proposed a visa facilitation agreement to a Southern Mediterranean country (Wolff 2014: 72), going hand in hand with the conclusion of the EURA. As such, the proposal of a visa facilitation agreement to Morocco is 'revolutionary' (interview 6) showing evidence of a third country leveraging its position to win major concessions from the EU. This has resulted in some costs for the EU, which has been criticised for striving to conclude a EURA with a country that does not respect migrants' rights, nor has a proper asylum statute. Indeed, the European Parliament (Cogolati, Verlinden, and Schmitt 2015) drew attention to the fact that in some cases EURAs do not conform to human rights obligations. Nevertheless, the NSIA can contribute to having a well-functioning asylum system recognising the status of asylum seekers and refugees and recognising their rights; the new law on asylum will help the strategy materialise. Thus, the EU has an interest in supporting the NSIA as it will enhance its legitimacy to negotiate such an agreement.

Finally, member states with strong bilateral ties with the third country play a prominent role in the proposal of projects shaping the content of the mobility partnership and have their own interests in the NSIA. The main reason why the Commission must accept member states´ preferences lies in the nature of mobility partnerships itself; member states are free to participate or not. To have enough member states participating in a mobility partnership, proposing and implementing projects, the Commission must give priority to member states' preferences (interview 29). Carrera and Hernández (2009: 31) argue that national migration policies are at the heart of mobility partnerships. This argument has been confirmed both on the part of the member states and of Morocco (interviews 8, 10, 13, 14, 16 and 17). In other words, a member state would agree to participate only if it furthers its national policy. An EU official declared that Spain and France exploited the mobility partnership to promote and implement their own national policies (interview 29). Both have a long history with Morocco and firmly established interests in the country. They also share primary concerns; the fight

against irregular migration and internal security threats. This explains why they have been willing to support the implementation of the NSIA. However, the interest of member states is not limited to those with pre-existing historical ties. With the Arab Spring, the way of thinking about EU-Moroccan relations started to change and the EU and the member states had to give a strong signal to Morocco (interview 29). Nonetheless, EU support came at a price. The condition was for Morocco to put its promises into practice or it would lose the EU's financial and political support (European Commission 2011; Limam and Del Sarto 2015: 11). Yet, since the EU was not able to make a credible threat, as an EU official pointed out, due to limited political support, the conditionality mechanism was weak and ineffective (interview 29).

CONCLUSION

This article has evidenced how the EU and its member states support the development and implementation of a new national migration strategy in Morocco, through the implementation of the mobility partnership. The mobility partnership is a flexible instrument and new projects aiming at supporting Morocco's new strategy are being included at later stages. The EU takes a reactive position by supporting the implementation of the NSIA *a posteriori*. Indeed, the adoption of the NSIA was surprising for EU officials and member states representatives, which needed to adapt their activities to their new interest in supporting the NSIA.

This study has shown that mobility partnerships are soft law instruments with potential legal and political implications for third countries. Moreover, they are flexible instruments allowing their content to be adapted to new political priorities. The Annex of proposed projects is a living document and therefore mobility partnerships can play a role in continuing discussions between the EU and third countries. This is what happened in the case of Morocco. New projects supporting the NSIA have been included in the mobility partnership at a later stage, following Morocco's priority changes. Then, the importance of financial conditionality proposed by the EU to the third country, through the 'more for more' approach was discussed. Conditionality, however, is not limited solely to EU relations with a third country and we saw that third countries can use 'reverse conditionality' to negotiate with the EU. The importance of migration issues and particularly of the negotiation of readmission agreements, puts Morocco in a stronger position to demand increased EU funding. Even though mobility partnerships are considered one-sided, the case of Morocco and the NSIA illustrates that third countries can make use of reversed conditionality to strengthen their domestic political agenda.

While limited to the Moroccan case, this article aims to provide inspiration for future studies and advocates more research on reversed conditionality and the strategic position third countries can have in negotiations with the EU. With the 'migration crisis' and the greater interest of the EU for the externalisation of its migration control, the notion of reversed conditionality can play an increasing role. The findings of this article provide insights into the dynamic relations between the EU and third countries in the implementation of a mobility partnership. Indeed, third countries can use the mobility partnership tool to support the development of their own national strategies for migration and asylum. Further analysis of the case studies of Cape Verde and Tunisia, for example, could be interesting as they have both concluded a mobility partnership and launched a similar national strategy. The analysis of different but related case studies could generate new insights into the dynamic cooperation patterns between the EU and third countries in the field of migration policy.

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CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Fanny Tittel-Mosser [fannytittel@gmail.com].

ENDNOTES

[1] Full list is available upon request.
[2] Dahir n° 1-16-127 du 21 kaada 1437 (25 août 2016) portant promulgation de la loi n°27-14 relative à la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains [promulgating law no. 27-14 relating to the fight against the trafficking of human beings].
[3] Official numbers of regularisations are not yet available.

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*Two respondents attended.

Book Review

Katja Biedenkopf, University of Leuven

SIMULATIONS OF DECISION-MAKING AS ACTIVE LEARNING TOOLS. DESIGN AND EFFECTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE SIMULATIONS

Editors: Peter Bursens, Vincent Donche, David Gijbels and Pieter Sporen

Abstract

This edited volume provides practical guidance for and presents academic research on the design, implementation and effects of various types of simulations in different contexts, ranging from classroom teaching to policy design. It brings together academics and practitioners whose complementary insights illustrate the multiple facets of simulations.

Keywords

Simulations; Active teaching methods; Simulation design; Simulation effects

Many university professors and school teachers are preoccupied with the challenge of preparing their students well for their future careers in a complex and rapidly changing world. Skills and attitudes such as critical thinking, inter-personal interaction and multi-disciplinarity have become ever more important in future-orientated teaching. Simulations can be a promising tool in this regard, complementing traditional teaching methods by placing students in quasi-real-life scenarios in which they 'experience' the teaching material rather than merely reading about it. The book Simulations of Decision-Making as Active Learning Tools can be a useful resource for those who wish to delve into the use of simulations. It provides practical guidance for and academic research on the design, implementation and effects of various types of simulations in diverse contexts. Through its comprehensive scope, covering multiple aspects of simulation, the edited volume offers an excellent entry point to readers who are new to the topic, as well as thorough analysis to readers who wish to deepen their knowledge.

The book consists of two parts: the first describes various elements of simulation design and includes a range of useful and practical considerations for planning and implementing one's own

simulation. The second part presents the results of a number of surveys analysing the learning effects of simulations. Scholars from Europe and the United States shed light on a multiplicity of aspects pertaining to the use of simulations. They illustrate the plurality of simulation designs and their uses in settings as diverse as classroom teaching and policy design by public administrations. The book focuses on the European Union. All simulations that are used as examples or subjects of analysis are concerned with the EU and its policy-making processes.

The volume highlights some under-researched elements, especially the challenge of reflecting reality in simulations (chapter 6) and blended approaches that combine online and person-to-person interaction within the same simulation (chapter 7). Most notably, chapter 8 breaks ground by introducing an assessment method that had not been applied to simulations before the authors' experiment: the comparative judgment method. The book also makes a major contribution by discussing the challenge of measuring the impact of simulations. Most teachers intuitively assume that simulations have a beneficial learning effect but, in the majority of cases, they do not necessarily know what effects exactly and how they materialise. Bringing various impact studies together, the book's editors gathered insightful findings that help bridge this knowledge gap. The book differentiates between and sheds light on various types of effects, ranging from heightened student interest and increased factual knowledge, to changed student perceptions, attitudes and skills.

The book mainly speaks to scholars of political science and school teachers but also contains some insights for readers who wish to simulate different policy implementation options before taking final decisions. Chapter 4 by John T. Ryan provides an interesting account of a capital markets union simulation that served the purpose of identifying and testing policy solutions that could possibly be implemented in real life. The other chapters describe simulations that serve educational purposes. While chapters 3 and 5 are detailed descriptions of individual simulations in their entirety, chapters 6-9 delve into specific design and implementation aspects. Andreas Sobisch et al. (chapter 3) describe their Mid-Atlantic European Union Simulation Consortium and find that it predominantly stimulates student engagement, more so than fostering knowledge acquisition. Rebecca Jones (chapter 5) outlines the EuroSim EU simulation and confirms the finding that simulations stimulate affective learning. Pierpaolo Settembri and Marco Brunazzo (chapter 6) discuss in great detail the challenge of verisimilitude, which is a simulation's resemblance to reality. This aspect is crucial for any simulation design but has received scant academic attention so far. The authors recommend a number of useful design features to achieve verisimilitude. Simon Raiser et al. (chapter 7) venture on another under-researched area: blended simulation formats, which can combine the strengths of online and offline interaction. Pierpaolo Settembri et al. (chapter 8) outline a systematic and rigorous method to assess students' performance through team-based comparative judgment that aims to increase the reliability and lack of bias in evaluation. Simon Usherwood (chapter 9) discusses a number of other ways in which assessment can be included in simulations to evaluate knowledge acquisition, skills development and critical reflection.

Part two then turns to measuring the effects and learning outcomes of simulations. While they all pursue a similar aim of measuring effects, each of the chapters follows a slightly different research design, including qualitative and quantitative approaches. Sophie Wulk (chapter 11) finds that, through their activating and experiential dimensions, simulations have the potential to increase students' ownership of political issues. Monika Oberle et al. (chapter 12) demonstrate that simulations can help overcome pupils' lack of interest in politics. By reducing prejudices, the studied simulations changed pupils' perceptions that EU policy lacks relevance to their everyday lives and that the European Union is hyper-complex. Morten Kallestrup (chapter 13) finds a motivational effect of simulations whereas he detects only a limited objectively measurable learning effect. Dorothy Duchatelet (chapter 14) focuses on the unfolding of learning during a simulation, showing

some differences between male and female participants as well as fluctuating learning curves over time.

The bipartite structure of the book allows it to serve the double purpose of providing practical advice on how to design and implement simulations as well as presenting insights from impact studies that critically analyse the learning outcomes of simulations. This is a major strength since the edited volume offers a comprehensive account of multiple aspects of using simulations as active learning tools. At the same time, this structure somewhat fragments the book since it contains two conceptual frameworks at the beginning of each part (chapters 2 and 10). Those chapters, however, do not present a straitjacket for the individual chapters, which explore a variety of complementary aspects. This diversity greatly enriches the book while also resulting in some repetition pertaining to discussions of the benefits of simulations in various chapters. In chapter 10, the editors propose a schematic consisting of four building blocks that can offer a systematic framework guiding not only part two of the book but also future research on the use of simulations as an active learning tool.

Simulations of Decision-Making as Active Learning Tools demonstrates that crafting a simulation is a strategic exercise that needs to be tailored to the respective target group and the desired learning outcome. It provides valuable guidance and research results in this regard. The edited volume's comprehensive account from a European and North American perspective and the analytical framework that it proposes could be explored in the context of using EU simulations in other geographical regions such as Asia and Africa. This could be an interesting next step, building on the book's solid and enriching analysis.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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