

Introduction

Piers LUDLOW

This open issue of the *Journal of European Integration History* contains five pieces, each adopting a rather distinctive approach, and each dealing with very different subject matter. It is hence an issue that underlines the variety of research strategies and methods adopted by those seeking to understand the development of the integration process since the Second World War, as well as demonstrating how fertile can be the interchange between historical research and political science.

The first piece, by Wilfried Loth, examines the recurrent temptation amongst European statesmen to contemplate the notion of a ‘core-Europe’, in other words an approach to European integration in which certain states move ahead rather further and faster than others. As the article shows, this notion is as old as the integration process itself – indeed in some ways the launch of the Europe of the Six in 1950 was the successful prototype that others have sought to replicate. But it is also a tactic that has mutated over time: in the 1960s, core Europe ideas tended to centre on political cooperation; in the 1970s they were more economic in focus; whereas in the 1990s the unifying theme was the desire to attain a more balanced and far-reaching institutional framework at a time when broad institutional advance was blocked within the wider EU. Loth argues, however, that such plans can be sub-divided into two broad categories, distinguished from another by the likely duration of the divide between the fast and the slow in a multi-speed Europe. Thus in some schemes, like those associated with the former German Chancellor, Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, or the French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, those pushing ahead and those lagging behind were envisaged as staying apart for some time. In others, notably the ideas advanced by former Chancellor Willy Brandt and by the former German Foreign Minister, Joschke Fischer, the advance party is seen as playing a ‘pioneering’ role but the expectation was that those left behind would soon be persuaded to follow the pioneers. In neither case though is the core Europe strategy likely to be effective, according to Loth – although it could perhaps be argued that the proliferation of British and other opt-outs, followed, more importantly by the emergence of the Euro-area within the wider EU has brought about a somewhat different manifestation of a multi-speed Europe.

Lorenzo Ferrari, meanwhile, focuses on the rise of European Community interest in human rights promotion during the 1970s. The originality of his approach, however, is that he concentrates not on the fairly well-known EC efforts to promote human rights and democracy amongst those European states like Greece, Spain and Portugal that aspired to a close relationship with the Community, but instead on European attempts to promote human rights in the developing world. Such efforts began in the early part of the decade with attempts to put pressure on Pinochet’s Chile, before turning to Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular in the mid- to late 1970s. Of particular concern was how to exercise leverage over Portugal, in the last phases of its Southern African empire, apartheid South Africa, and white-ruled Rhodesia.

Ferrari concedes that the effectiveness of such European efforts was relatively low, but argues convincingly that these attempts were important staging posts towards a more systematic, proactive – and effective – policy of human rights promotion. Crucial, for instance, was the largely British-led effort to include a degree of negative conditionality in the revised Lomé Convention. This did not succeed in the short term, but more recent agreements between the EC/EU and its African, Caribbean and Pacific partners have included human rights clauses.

The article by Natalie Martin, meanwhile, seeks to use political science research techniques to understand the 2004 EU decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey. In order to do this she uses Schimmelfennig's theory of 'rhetorical entrapment' – in other words the idea that by posing conditions on an applicant's advance towards EU membership, EU member states can find themselves obliged to allow progress towards membership when the applicant succeeds in meeting the conditions set. The originality of Martin's approach, however, lies in the case that she builds to show that some EU-insiders, notably the British Foreign Office and Gunther Verheugen's DG Enlargement actively manoeuvred so as to promote this sense of rhetorical entrapment and thereby advance the cause of Turkish membership despite the ongoing misgivings felt by many other European leaders. The British Ambassador in Ankara meanwhile became a highly effective advisor to the AKP government, suggesting ways in which European conditionality could be met. The more recent stagnation of Turkey's European hopes may therefore reflect the disappearance of this internal European coalition promoting Turkey's EU aspirations, as well as developments within Turkey itself.

Thomas Birkner turns his attention to the European ideas of the recently deceased German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt. Schmidt's European policies have been extensively written about before, of course, a fact of which Birkner is highly aware. But he differentiates himself from much of the earlier scholarship by approaching Schmidt not primarily through his words and actions while holding power in Germany – although he does discuss this period briefly – but instead by analysing his prolific output as a political commentator and journalist both before his rise to the Kanzleramt and since his 1982 resignation. Doing this brings out some important continuities in Schmidt's thought, in particular his belief in the importance of strong German ties with France and, more recently, with Poland also. Equally apparent, though, are some important changes in Schmidt's thinking over his lengthy career. Notable in this regard was his mounting caution about EC/EU enlargement – something that he feared was increasingly getting in the way of the deeper European integration for which he hoped – and his ever-stronger disillusionment towards Britain. The politician who had famously voted against the Treaty of Rome because he could not support a Europe from which the UK was excluded, had towards the end of his life become deeply disappointed by Britain's role within the EC/EU.

Finally, Karl Johansson offers a first attempt to provide a detailed analysis of the role of the European People's Party in influencing the debate about EU reform in the 1990s and the early years of this century, and in particular of shaping the 1997 Treaty

of Amsterdam. Johansson's starting point is the persuasive assertion that the role of transnational European political parties – or Europarties as he styles them – has not been looked at sufficiently, especially outside of the context of European elections or voting behaviour within the European Parliament. He therefore seeks to reconstruct in some detail the way in which EPP leaders sought to coordinate their approach to EU institutional reform, especially in their pre-summit meetings, and thus maximise their ability to shape the course of the member state discussions about treaty change in general and the intergovernmental conferences in particular. His overall conclusion is that while the EPP leaders like Helmut Kohl, Wilfred Martens, or John Bruton, did not fully attain all of their European objectives during the 1990s – and indeed fell a long way short – their interaction and coordination did have an impact on the treaty outcomes. The case study therefore suggests the utility of further research on the role of Europarties beyond Strasbourg.

All told, the five pieces contained in this issue demonstrate the geographical spread of current research on integration history, the methodological heterogeneity, and the variety of interesting topics. We therefore hope that they are both of interest to our readers, and act as spur for even greater diversity in future research projects.

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ISBN 978-3-8487-1970-9

eISBN 978-3-8452-6114-0

(Studien zur Politischen Soziologie.
Studies on Political Sociology, Bd. 31)

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ISBN 978-3-8487-1847-4

eISBN 978-3-8452-5854-6

(Europawissenschaftliche Schriften der
Europa-Universität Flensburg | Miscellanies of
the Europa-Universität Flensburg, Bd. 4)

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