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TAKING STOCK OF INTEGRATION THEORY¹

Antje Wiener

Abstract

This concluding chapter of the third edition of *European Integration Theory* (OUP 2018) takes stock of the updated mosaic of integration theory. The chapter is organised in three sections. The first section offers a comparative perspective on the book's chapters. To that end, it presents the preferences of each approach from a comparative perspective, against the backdrop of three leading metaphorical perceptions of the EU. The second section addresses the absence of security crises in the book's contributions. To explore, how security crises may be brought into focus in integration theory, it distinguishes the impact of integration along two dimensions. These include first, the horizontal regional comparative perspective and the 'litmus test' of the applicability of integration theory to other regions; and second, the vertical dimension which connects normative crises in EU sub-units with global conflicts. And the concluding third section asks how integration theory fares sixty years on from the Treaty of Rome, and points out potential issues and themes for the future of European integration theory.

The Author



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¹ This Working Paper will be published as: Wiener, Antje forthcoming: *Taking Stock of Integration Theory*, in : Wiener, Antje/Börzel, Tanja A./Risse, Thomas (eds): *European Integration Theory*, 3rd Ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.

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1. Introduction

Like the previous two editions, this book seeks to achieve two goals. First, it has been compiled to assess the state of the art in European integration theorizing. To that end, we have brought together a group of scholars who are able to present and reflect upon the core theoretical contributions that have been developed since the early stages of analyzing European integration. Second, it is conceived as a platform which facilitates advancement of and critical discussion about the object of theorizing European integration as such. To that end, each contributor was asked (1) to present the general concepts, methodological tools and objectives of their respective approach, (2) to engage with the reception of that approach in the field, and (3) to apply the approach to empirical research on “crisis” with regard to the present economic, migration and security crises. This book’s contributions once again reflect the variation of the field quite nicely. They represent a range of distinct methodological approaches including “wider” or “narrower” understandings of “integration” (compare Diez/Wiener forthcoming). Relatedly, they put a different emphasis on contingency, i.e. the historical context of theorizing is given different weight.

Together, the book’s contributions demonstrate both the relevance and the changing substance of processes of regional integration today. In addition, they sustain the value-added of conceptualizing integration theory as a “mosaic” that is constituted by a range of approaches, instead of a battle among paradigms (Diez/Wiener 2003: Chapter 1, and forthcoming). As this chapter’s stock-taking exercise discusses and explains in some more detail below, it is interesting to observe that, out of the 11 contributions, not a single one chose to address “security crises”. While this is not surprising when placed in the wider historical context of European integration, this does raise some questions for future research on regional integration in Europe and elsewhere. For example, is the absence of “security crises” in the book due to a short-coming or a gap in integration theory (i.e. is it a lacking tool-kit for studying security crises), or, does the objective of studying security in fact belong to a distinct issue area altogether (i.e. requiring the mosaic to change and/or to expand)?

To take stock of this updated mosaic of integration theory, the remainder of this chapter proceeds in three further sections. The first section offers a comparative perspective on the chapters. To that end, it presents the preferences of each approach from a comparative perspective, against the backdrop of three leading metaphorical perceptions of the EU. The second section addresses the absence of security crises in the book’s contributions. To explore, how security crises may be brought into focus in integration theory, it distinguishes the impact of integration along two dimensions. These include first, the horizontal regional comparative perspective and the “litmus test” of the applicability of integration theory to other regions; and second, the vertical dimension which connects normative crises in EU sub-units with global conflicts. The concluding third section asks how integration theory fares sixty years on from the Treaty of Rome, and points out potential issues and themes for the future of European integration theory.

2. Comparing the Approaches of the Mosaic

This section recalls the main achievements of the mosaic European integration theory with reference to each chapter's contribution based on the respective central theoretical advances, critical conceptual reflections, and propositions for dealing with current crises (compare Table 1). In the first two editions, we compared the range of theoretical approaches with reference to their respective capability of dealing with a "best case" issue of their choice and the "test case" issue of enlargement. The present edition pitches the range of theoretical approaches against their capability of analyzing a "crisis" of their choice. By presenting European integration theory as a mosaic rather than "grand theory", the first edition sought to lead beyond the shadow of the stale-mate of grand theorizing that followed the battle over leading paradigms. That battle left students of European integration with the risk of missing out on theoretical advancement in the field that was to be generated through reflexive engagement with advances of the actual process of regional integration.

As demonstrated by the revival of aspects of neo-functional theorizing (Hooghe/Marks 2018; Stone Sweet/Sandholtz 2010), on the one hand, and propositions for deploying a new intergovernmentalist approach to better account for changes in politics and policy-making in the post-Maastricht EU (Bickerton et al. 2015b; Hodson/Puetter 2016; for a critique see Schimmelfennig 2015), on the other, robust and competent assessments of critical junctures in the process of European integration depend on the field's capability to adopt not a single, but a range of distinct theoretical standpoints. This, however, would expect EU scholars to look beyond their disciplinary confines and draw on insights garnered from the International Relations discipline more broadly. International Relations (IR) theory not only rids the EU of its quality *sui generis* and allows for comparison with other regional political orders, but it is also premised on the idea that change has always been the more constant condition in global politics than stability. Accordingly, it has developed the theoretical toolkits to study both the rise and possible decline of political orders across time and space (compare, for example, Lebow 2018). At a time when the EU is faced with a "poly-crisis" (Juncker 2016)¹, if not the crisis of the EU project itself, theorists of European integration are therefore well advised to adjust their toolkit to advance theories capable of studying European disintegration since "[d]isintegration is much more common" than regional integration (Vollaard 2014: 1142).²

While we are unable to represent the full range of these, the concept of mosaic reflects theorizing from a selection of distinct theoretical standpoints with specific conceptual approaches and methodological frameworks, and is intended for students to obtain a clearer perspective on what is at stake when studying European (regional) integration. By and large, all contributions speak to one another. This does, however, often occur in mediated ways. For example, one chapter may constitute theoretical interfaces with several others which, in turn, share interfaces with third chapters, and so on. For example, the respective contributions on discourse theory (Wodak forthcoming) and constructivist theory (Risse forthcoming) share an emphasis on the methodological importance of applying discursive methods. In turn, the latter values the

1 Compare: Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the Annual General Meeting of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), Athens, 21 June 2016, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-2293_en.htm; 8 March 2018.

2 This discussion draws on conversations with Maren Hofius, I am thankful for the comment.

impact and role of institutions in relation with politics and policy-making with the contribution on rational choice and institutionalism (Pollack forthcoming), and so on. Each contribution's standpoint takes their own perspective to ask questions about European integration; each reflects their relation with regard to the larger narratives about agents and context of European integration that underlie the capabilities of their respective approach to analyze the phenomenon of crisis; each focuses on distinct objectives, pending on choice of crisis and approach.

It is probably no coincidence that the distinct standpoint from which a theoretical approach departs, is well-reflected by the reference to seafaring metaphors as applied by some leading integration theorists. While in distinct publications, all authors refer to the metaphor of a vessel, each deploys quite distinct types of vessel, thereby revealing a difference regarding purpose, progress and agency: compare, for example, Moravcsik's "ship of state"³ with Checkel and Katzenstein's "cruise-ship"⁴ and Neyer and Wiener's "sailing vessel"⁵, respectively. Moravcsik uses Dirksen's prize-winning painting of a vessel with twelve flags. This setting conjures the image of a crew of twelve with no captain to take over command at the helm. While that image fares well with concepts of state-based membership in international organizations, to the seafaring reader, it represents a situation of mayhem and quite possibly disaster, given that no one is in charge (i.e. a potential "may-day scenario"). In turn, Checkel and Katzenstein refer to the image of passengers enjoying cocktails on the deck of a cruise-ship. In their setting, the ship is perfectly well constructed, and the passengers are not expected to engage in helming or running it. The vessel is complete, the route is predictable, and no dissensus about the conditions on deck is expected. After all, each passenger agreed on deck-conditions prior to boarding (i.e. a saturated "cruise scenario"). By contrast, Neyer and Wiener's vessel is helmed by sailors who are used to entering uncharted waters, that are often out of reach of modern technology. This setting conjures possible situations where, especially in the absence of electronic chart-plotters and charted territory, the sailor has to rely on previous practice of speed and distance to estimate progress, while taking into account changing wind and weather conditions (i.e. a method which is called "dead-reckoning" in light of a contingent "practice scenario").

The metaphors are not exhaustive to be sure, and over time, students of European integration will probably add others. Yet, each one of them indicates distinct standpoints that reflect the theorists' respective emphasis regarding the predominance of the concept of the "state", the "community with a given identity" or "practice in relation to standards and norms" when studying European integration. In the introduction, we propose a comparison of the theoretical approaches to the analysis of European integration included in this volume according to the preferred approach and its central concepts on the one hand, and the selected crises the respective contributions address, on the other. We argue that together the different approaches constitute a mosaic providing a multi-faceted and incomplete picture of European integration and governance. To demonstrate this, in this third edition we asked the contributors to engage with one or more of the current crises, and then to elaborate how their respective approach would contribute to

3 See Moravcsik 1998, the book's title image is titled *All Our Colours to the Mast* and has been painted in early 1950 by Reyn Dirksen.

4 See Checkel/Katzenstein 2009, where the title image presents flags which are viewed from the perspective of a passenger in a deck-chair on a cruise-ship.

5 See Neyer/Wiener 2010, where the title image entails charts, navigation instruments and a light-house.

handling them. Our expectation was that contributors would focus on different concepts and methodologies to tackle different aspects of European integration and governance as well as distinct types of crises. Furthermore, we expected that they would each approach the analysis of the selected crisis situation from different angles, depending on the main tools of their respective approach, and focusing consequently on different aspects of crisis management. Taken together, this enterprise can therefore be viewed as each theoretical approach shedding a different light on European integration and governance, and therefore adding another stone to the mosaic of integration theory.

Table 1

Chapter	Author	Approach	Concepts	Crises
2	Kelemen	Federalism	Comparing federal systems	Finance, Democracy (Rule of Law)
3	Niemann, Lefkofridi, Schmitter	Neofunctionalism	Explaining integration outcomes (in cycles)	Finance
4	Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig	Liberal Intergovernmentalism	Explaining integration outcomes (snapshots)..	Finance, Migration
5	Börzel	Governance Approaches	Analysing structures and processes of policy-making and assessing the effectiveness and legitimacy	Finance, Migration
6	Pollack	New Institutionalism	Explaining executive, judicial and legislative politics	Finance
7	Risse	Social Constructivism	Understanding the construction of European/national identity	Finance, Migration
8	Wodak	Discursive Approaches	Explaining/critically assessing policies towards integration	Refugee
9	Galligan	Gender Approaches	Explaining/understanding and critically assessing policy, politics and theories of European integration	Economy
10	Bellamy and Lacey	Political Theory	Understanding and scrutinising processes of polity formation according to normative standards of legitimacy	Refugee

11	van Apeldoorn and Horn	Critical Political Economy	Explaining economic policy (especially Single Market) in order to highlight societal problems	Finance
12	Börzel and Risse	Regional Integration	Comparing European integration with other forms of regional integration around the world to explain emergence and institutional design	'Poly-crisis'
13	Wiener	Taking Stock: Impact, Comparison, Outlook	Assessing interrelation and impact of crises in historical and global context	Security, rule of law, normative

Source: Author.

As the overview provided by Table 1 demonstrates, overall the chapters have met these expectations. With a few exceptions, the conceptual and methodological tool-kits differ widely, and where they overlap, they focus on different aspects of the integration process, which are not mutually exclusive, even though their relative importance can be tested empirically. It should be obvious that such an account is incomplete in a double sense: it can only address a selection of the most pressing questions that have been raised for European integration theory so far, and many others will present themselves in the future. With this caveat in mind, Table 2 represents an attempt to approximate what we call a “mosaic of European integration theory” by filling in the boxes of Table 1. Whatever the limitations of such an exercise, we do suggest that a debate about where one would preferably place each approach, is helpful to generate a better understanding about integration theory, both from the perspective of the editors and that of the readers.

Table 2: The Functions and Areas of (Integration) Theory

	POLITY	POLICY	POLITICS
EXPLANATORY/ UNDERSTANDING	Neofunctionalism; Liberal Intergovernmentalism	Discursive Approaches; Critical Political Economy	New Institutionalism; Social Constructivism
ANALYTICAL/ DESCRIPTIVE	Federalism; Governance Approaches	Governance; Gender Approaches	Governance; Gender Approaches
CRITICAL/ NORMATIVE	Federalism; Governance Approaches; Normative Political Theory; Gender Approaches; Critical Political Economy	Discursive Approaches; Gender Approaches; Critical Political Economy	Gender Approaches; Normative Political Theory; Critical Political Economy

Source: Author.

Three features of the above table immediately catch the eye and need to be addressed. The first and probably least problematic feature consists in the fact that classical integration theories appear only once,

whereas governance, gender approaches and critical political economy appear multiple times. In these chapters, there is a differentiation between different strands that result in more radically different variations than in the case of, for example, neo-institutionalism. Among the discursive approaches, there is a split between those trying to explain member states' policies towards integration and those problematizing the assumptions on which integration policies are based, although in practice both enterprises often go hand in hand. Gender analysis, critical political economy, and governance are clearly the most prolific approach, generating multiple perspectives on the theory and practice of European integration. The table sustains our argument that it is preferable to see integration theory as a mosaic in which different perspectives come together in their own right. In turn, earlier integration theories were focused on one research objective only, namely, how to explain a state's decision in favour of supranational institution-building. In pursuing this question, intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism targeted one of the many mosaics of today's integration theory. Ultimately, the problem with the grand theory route that tries to combine different approaches into a single framework, is that it has to impose particular ontological and epistemological assumptions on the analytical possibilities included within this framework. Those closer to a narrow scientific understanding of theory may see this as a good thing, but it does not conform with the spirit of theoretical diversity, and doing justice to the different purposes and areas of theory as set out in the introductory chapter (Diez/Wiener forthcoming).

The second and perhaps most obvious characteristic of Table 2 is—except for gender approaches, governance, and, to a lesser extent, federalism—the absence of entries in the “analytical/descriptive” row. In chapter 1, we proposed that it was one of the functions of theory to provide new conceptualizations of particular social and political phenomena, and that this was particularly important in relation to the EU as a new kind of polity. We further argued that European integration theory evolved in phases, starting, after a period of normative pre-theorizing, with an explanatory phase, which was then followed by an analytical phase as the EU was taken more seriously as a polity of its own right in the 1980s, and then by a renewed interest in normative questions, and, following the epistemological debates in the wider social sciences, in problematizing European integration and governance and particular policies. A revised model of the three phases of theorizing would locate the approaches within the historical context of integration. From a hermeneutic standpoint, it is interesting to observe how these phases reflect distinct theoretical foci in relation to the relevance and place of institutions in theory and practice. Thus, European integration theory develops gradually including the three phases of explaining integration as supranational institution-building, analyzing governance, and constructing the polity. Table 3 summarizes the three phases and their respective focus on institution-building.

Table 3: Three Phases of theorizing European Integration

Phase	Focus	Place	Dynamic
Prior to 1960	Normative pre-theorising	World politics	Inter-state
1960–1985	Integration	Supranational level	Bottom-up
1985–	Europeanisation	Domestic, regional level in member and candidate countries	Top-down
1993–	Politicisation	Euro-polity	Trickle-across, bottom-up, top-down
2008–	Crises	Euro-polity & World politics	Trickle-across, inter-national, inter-regional, global

Source: Author.

A closer look at the respective contributions on governance and rational choice institutionalism demonstrates that they do take integration and the EU as a new kind of polity as a given, and therefore shift the emphasis from explaining or advocating integration to questions about how governance within this new polity works. Yet, it also emerges from these chapters, that none of these approaches is content with the provision of new conceptualizations of governance alone, although this was an important contribution to the debate. Instead, they strive to explain specific phenomena within this system of governance, such as particular policies or particular aspects of its politics. While they are, in this sense, analyzing governance rather than explaining integration as such, they are moving beyond the analysis of governance in the sense of a purpose of theory as set out in chapter 1. As Table 2 highlights, the predominant purpose of theoretical approaches within European integration theory is to explain or understand either the process of integration and its outcomes, or particular aspects of European integration and governance. Even an approach such as discourse analysis, the roots of which can be traced to post-structuralism, is used at least by some in European integration theory to understand member states' policies towards integration, and although its usage of the term "explanation" is different from its usage, say, in liberal intergovernmentalism, the purpose is sufficiently similar to the latter's—indeed, Wæver (1998: 103–4) in his own work sets out explicitly to bridge the gap between critique and explanation. This heavy bias towards explanation may be seen as one symptom of the tendency to make claims beyond the scope of one's theory, which we have identified as problematic in our introduction.

As the regional comparative chapter shows, however, European integration theory passes the "litmus test" of being applicable beyond Europe, insofar as it facilitates a valuable tool-kit for analyzing regional integration elsewhere. As the new "lessons learned" chapter (see Börzel/Risse forthcoming) has pointed out in some detail, at a horizontal level European integration and relatedly, European integration theory, have achieved a novel visibility and purpose within the broader context of distinct processes of regional integration on a global scale. Even though, for the time being, the EU represents the comparatively most advanced outcome of regional integration with regard to political and legal institutions, and the related policies that frame the EU polity's activities, other processes of regional integration such as ASEAN, Mercosur, the Arab League and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) keep progressing. As the book demonstrates, based on the range of different theoretical perspectives which represent the mosaic, European

integration theory offers a robust and capable framework with the capacity to refine its tools and reflect historical contingency. This is well reflected by both keeping with the “classic” approaches to European integration (with revisions and regular updates) and integrating new approaches in each revised addition.

3. The Absence of Security Crises

This book’s contributions demonstrate that they pass the test of being applicable to analyze current political issues of regional integration, insofar as they offer convincing analyses of two of the three current crises, i.e. economic, migration and security. Taken together, the mosaic also passes the “litmus test” of being applicable beyond Europe. As Börzel and Risse show with reference to the level of horizontal comparison, “(W)hile the EU is still in a league of its own, the broadening and deepening of regionalism elsewhere, has made it less unique and more comparable” (Börzel/Risse forthcoming). With regard to applying the mosaic’s theoretical capability on a vertical dimension, the value-added of integration theories remains to be demonstrated, however. This is notable with reference to absence of analyses on security crises in the book. While economic and migration related crises are widely addressed by the book’s contributions, no contributor chose to focus on security. With a view to the value-added of integration theory, this raises a more general question about context both for “doing” integration theory, and analyzing the process of regional integration.

Consider, for example, that the European Union’s roots are situated within the post-world war II context. At this time, integration was indicated by the move towards founding the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, and motivated by the need to prevent future security threats based on the means of economic collaboration. Given these two industries’ key role with regard to war-faring, regional collaboration was a strategic decision in order to build a lasting peace. This constituted the motivation for regional integration. Considered from that point in time, grand theories with their interest in explaining extended supranational institution-building and enhanced economic collaboration in other sectors, that were agreed with the Single European Act in 1987, appeared reasonable and logical. By contrast, the decision towards enhanced constitution-building that followed from Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on Political Union prior to agreeing on the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, is not.

The security issue harks back six decades ago, when the motive for integration consisted in maintaining peace, whereas the means to prevent war as the central security threat, consisted in economic collaboration. By contrast, integration scholars writing today, engage in revision and advance of European integration theory against a background which has changed along two dimensions. First, the EU has evolved into an advanced polity which rests on a distinct normative order, sophisticated legal institutions, a quasi-constitutional treaty, and a degree of socio-cultural connectivity that remains unmatched by other regions. And second, the global context has been consolidated by the expansion and consolidation of the UN system during the cold-war period, on the one hand, and which has been confronting manifold challenges during the during the post-cold-war period. Against this background, the capability of analyzing crises, as well as developing tools to explain and understand them, on the one hand, and devising adequate policies to handle them, on the other, let alone developing concepts to prevent them in the future, will invariably imply a

quite different perspective on integration. This comes with novel challenges for integration theorists.

As this book's contributions demonstrate quite well, at the present time, integration theorists examine crises in a context which is marked by both lasting peaceful relations in Europe, on the one hand, and a considerably larger and more deeply integrated polity. Given the constant security threat in world politics, the "cost of non-Europe" remains too high, as it were (Wallace 1998). This is well demonstrated by current security crises at the EU's borders, especially, with the ongoing Ukraine crisis (Hofius 2016). While six decades ago, the decision to build joint institutions was established to counter security threats, now crises are analysed against the backdrop of these institutions' capability to address them. For today's integration theorizing, therefore, the historical perspective on the interplay between regional integration as a means for keeping security threats at bay, implies that, in the main, the institutional setting of regional integration must be preserved. It follows that, notwithstanding speed or depth, regional integration is taken for granted by most integration theorists (but compare recent discussions about "integration theory after the fall" that contemplate the scenario of post-Brexit and multiple-exit EU (Hodson/Puetter 2018; Börzel 2018). This includes research on the politics of opting-out of the EU (Adler-Nissen 2014). Yet, as both the current Brexit negotiations and the discussions about whether or not to trigger Article 7 (i.e. the "nuclear option" in Euro-speak; Hofius 2017) demonstrate, exiting is not as straight-forward as a mere academic reading of the TEU's provisions may suggest (Armstrong 2017; Outhwaite 2017; Shaw 2018, Alexander et al. 2018).

In this book, the choice for analyzing crises which are represented echoes the security rationale of maintaining the balance between the erstwhile motive for and means of European integration. As Börzel and Risse note, "functional theories of cooperation and integration – such as federalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, and neofunctionalism (see Kelemen forthcoming, Moravcsik/Schimmelfennig forthcoming, as well as Niemann et al. forthcoming) – are able to account for regional integration – or lack thereof – in many parts of the world. But we have to amend them beyond economic interdependence as enabling condition and include security interdependence (e.g. in Sub-Saharan Africa) as well as the survival interests of regimes, both democratic (Latin America) and authoritarian (Eurasia). Historical institutionalism (Pollack forthcoming), governance approaches (Börzel forthcoming) and social constructivism with a focus on collective identities and community-building (Risse forthcoming) add to these accounts" (Börzel/Risse forthcoming).

This said, the absence of security-related crisis scenarios in this book does raise some questions that matter for the future of European integration theory. Two of these shall be highlighted here. First, how does European integration fare within the context of wider global change? Relevant research objectives beyond the comparative perspective on regional integration on a horizontal level, as addressed by Börzel and Risse (forthcoming), include the vertical interplay among different normative orders involving different scales of global society. These interactions center on the renegotiation of principles and fundamental norms of governance on a global scale including legality, moral authority, and obligation (Brunnée/Toope 2011; Dunoff 2011; Reus-Smit 2011). Current seminal cases in this regard include the Kadi case debates, where the EU's normative order was pitched against the UN's (de Búrca 2010; Kumm 2009; Wiener 2018). Pending issues will invariably involve the broad and largely under-researched field of big data and digitalisation (Benvenisti 2018; Pernice 2018). These debates situate European integration within a historical process, and as embedded in big structures, and as part of large global changes (Tilly 1984).

Second, does European integration theory facilitate the conceptual tools to analyze security threats which may evolve from crises about fundamental norms? How do we address situations when norms that lie at the EU's constitutional core, spill-over into other member states as sub-units of the EU's normative order, or turn into regional, or even global norm conflicts? Examples involve the rule of law crisis in Poland and Hungary. The point is illustrated with reference to potential threats that evolve against the backdrop of the rule of law crisis which is currently, most visible in Poland and Hungary (compare Kelemen forthcoming). Available instruments which have been invoked in this crisis include the rule of law mechanism, and, in light of continuous breaches of the rule of law, the pressure to trigger Article 7 rises. The TEU stipulates both compliance with the rule of law as a condition for membership in Article 49 TEU and mechanisms that allow for political scrutiny of member state performance regarding the implementation of the EU's fundamental norms in Article 2. To confront member state breaches with the rule of law, the rule of law mechanism was proposed by the European Commission "to resolve future threats to the rule of law in Member States before the conditions for activating the mechanisms foreseen in Article 7 TEU would be met"⁶. The European Commission is also the political organ to initiate a "structured exchange" with the member states in breach with the TEU.⁷

The present Polish situation sheds light on the effect of these mechanisms. Thus, when the Polish government objected to the rule of law, by substantially reducing the independence of the country's constitutional court respectively ignoring its decisions, it effectively challenged the rule of law as a fundamental norm of the EU's normative order as agreed by the signatories of the TEU including Poland.⁸ Next to the European Commission's inquiry, Poland received a public political warning by the Venice Commission which found: "(N)ot only is the rule of law in danger, but so are democracy and human rights."⁹ If similar breaches of fundamental norms occur in several sub-unites, and contestation spills over into other sub-units, it becomes likely that they turn into a norm regional (or global) norm conflict and therefore become an issue for the larger unit. Such spill-over is likely to create regional or global norm conflicts which, in turn, bear potential security threats. Compare for example, Guy Verhofstadt, the president of the ALDE group in the European Parliament, who noted that "(T)wo EU members in particular, Hungary and Poland, are now jeopardizing hard-won European democratic norms – and thus undermining the very purpose of European integration."¹⁰

6 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law /* COM/2014/0158 final.

7 Communication from the Commission to the Council, Brussels, 19 March 2014, COM(2014) 158 final/2; for the document see: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/files/com_2014_158_en.pdf; 8 March 2018. The mechanism was first triggered on 13th January 2016. See BBC News, 13 January 2016, in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35303912>; 8 March 2018.

8 According to Frans Timmermans, vice-president of the European Commission "(T)he binding rulings of the constitutional tribunal [Poland's highest legislative court] are currently not respected, which I believe is a serious matter in any rule of law-dominated state." The Guardian, 13 January 2016, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/13/ec-to-investigate-polish-governments-controversial-new-laws>; 8 March 2018.

9 See The Guardian, 11 March 2016, in: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/11/rule-of-law-poland-communism-democracy-europe>; 8 March 2018); The Venice Commission was founded in 1990 to promote the implementation of what it calls the "three ground principles of European constitutional heritage": democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

10 Guy Verhofstadt, President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group (ALDE) in the European Parliament, in a contribution to Social Europe, in: <https://www.socialeurope.eu/2016/04/europes-rule-law-crisis/>; 8 March 2018.

The likelihood of regional or global norm conflicts which evolve through spill-over of breaches of fundamental norm into other sub-units become viable when the normative opportunity structure in a given sub-unit becomes unsustainable (i.e. access to democratic institutions is threatened). In the EU, such breaches of fundamental norms have been observed in a number of member states. The spill-over from national “rule of law crisis” into a scenario of regional – or even global – norm conflict becomes more likely. While the EU’s introduction of a rule of law mechanism indicates awareness of constitutional issues and political crises, the instrument itself stands contested by its addressees. These country-based crises of a fundamental norms as stipulated by the TEU, represent a looming security threat, in so far as a spill-over of the rule of law crisis into other member states is likely to pose a threat to the very legality of the EU’s normative order. That is, they ultimately have a potential impact on the wider EU and, relatedly, on the global order as codified by the current UN systems legal treaties and conventions. This concern holds that the accumulation of similar crises that evolve from breaches of the EU’s foundational norms, is likely to generate a spill-over into global norm conflicts. If not dealt with in an appropriate manner, these crises bear the potential of spill-over and across into other EU sub-units, other regional units, or, indeed amounting to global normative conflicts. Do we, therefore, need to broaden the mosaic of integration theories to add the capability for dealing with the constitution and contestation of normative orders? These could center on more robust research on contested norms, conditions of access, and stakeholdership in global governance (Krook/True 2012; Draude/Risse 2017; Wiener 2017) on behalf of integration theorists. Here, recent work that critically engages issues of democratic governance, political responsibility, citizenship and/or legal obligation could play a central role (Bickerton et al. 2015; Hofius 2017; Hodson/Puetter 2017; Benvenisti 2018; Shaw 2018; Pernice 2018).

From this brief exploration into the wider spatio-temporal frame of European integration, we can summarize that questions about the underrepresentation of security crisis scenarios in this book push findings about the growing comparability of regional integration on a global scale beyond the research objective of analysing processes of regional integration as such. To be sure, the comparability of regional integration has advanced against the background of a notable sophistication of European integration theories, as well as a rising interest in successful aspects of EU politics and policy-making in other regions (Alter et al. 2012; Wiener 2015). However, in the absence of theoretical approaches that are apt to recall the EU’s original motive for putting economic collaboration as the means towards that end into place, the mosaic’s theoretical tool-kit remains better suited for inward-oriented analyses of the EU and its sub-units than for outward-oriented analyses which are capable of assessing its impact on other processes of regional integration. As Börzel and Risse (forthcoming) find, the lack of enhanced integration, for example in the ASEAN context which is rife with security threats, is puzzling.

Drawing on insights from norms studies, global norm conflicts emerge when we observe objections to breaches of fundamental norms such as the rule of law, democracy, citizenship or human rights, in an increasing number of sub-units of a larger normative order. As reactive contestations indicating such breaches of norms come to the fore in a single sub-unit of a larger order, the problem is considered as falling under the obligation of that sub-unit (i.e. a member state). Accordingly, it is understood as an issue which is to be dealt with by that sub-unit’s political, legal and constitutional institutions. In cases of advanced breaches of fundamental norms, international compliance mechanisms are activated (Chayes/Chayes 1993; Checkel 2001b; Koh 1997). For example, as the literature on breaches with the human rights norm in global society

(compare Risse et al. 1999) as well as the literature on compliance with fundamental European norms in the process of EU enlargement (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmeier 2006; Lerch/Schwellnus 2006) demonstrate, in these cases, the sub-unit where the breach of a norm occurs, is expected to comply due to their respective treaty-based obligation.

While this reflects due procedure with reference to the law, to be sure, it nonetheless may miss out on “seeing” and therefore, understanding the potential for spill-over of such breaches. After all, strategies to achieve or enforce compliance and/or reverse breaches of fundamental norms are by and large measured against changes that occur within the sub-unit, and not within the regional or global order that rests on these norms. In the best-case scenario, these strategies generated through affected stakeholders’ access to contestation. For it is through this mutual engagement that shared recognition of norms becomes sustainable in any given normative order. This inward-oriented perspective is likely to overlook outward-oriented spill-over of norm contestations. Yet, in light of regional and global connectivity that is sustained by rapidly expanding digitalization, use of social media and enhanced border crossing, this becomes increasingly likely. In sum, a problem arises when breaches of fundamental norms occur in a growing number of sub-units. Such a scenario is likely to trigger objection to the very norm itself rather than to breaches of it. Given the enhanced means of cross-border communication through social media activities, such objection to norms entails a high potential for spreading horizontally into other sub-units. In such situations, resort to political decisions or legal processes in order to invoke regulatory mechanisms to enforce counter breaches of norms and/or enhance compliance are likely to lose clout.

4. Outlook: Theorizing Regional Integration

How do integration theories fare sixty years on from the Treaty of Rome? What is the state of the discipline which has now developed an impressive corpus of texts, produced a stable research context based on international learned associations, and has, last but not least, generated a widely-acknowledged teaching profile? The discipline now encompasses a broad spectrum of theoretical approaches ranging from the period of normative pre-integration theorising that emerged largely from US-American IR theory (see, most prominently, Mitrany’s as well as Deutsch’s work) via grand theory debates (Hoffmann; Haas; Schmitter; Deutsch; Lindberg and Scheingold) to a more refined set of approaches in the early twenty-first century. This book presents a selection of core approaches (compare Table 1). The overview of the distinct facets of the mosaic of European integration theory and, especially the regional comparative chapter (Börzel/Risse forthcoming) suggest that, as an increasingly independent subfield in the social sciences, integration theory has come to fruition beyond coming full circle, for it has been able to move on towards the proverbial higher plane. At the same time, however, the book’s contributions point to several crises that affect the EU, and, as this chapter has argued, some of them bear the potential for political spill-over, such as the rule of law crisis in Poland and Hungary. In addition, the ongoing Brexit negotiations, and their impact on possible other exit calls as indicated by the domino scenario which could follow a soft-Brexit (“have cake and eat-it”) remain to be addressed in a more in-depth fashion.

Given that in the early days of integration theory, it appears that in the light of today’s clearly discernible

and distinguished, albeit interdisciplinary European studies discipline, theoretical approaches to integration have moved on. Since the first edition of this book, we have added chapters on normative issues, political economy, governance, methodological discourse theory and comparative regional integration. The expansion reflects progress towards a shift from a normative perspective on world politics that built on the idealist Grotian tradition in IR, towards studying conditions of democratic governance in regionally integrated political orders. The earlier strong footing in a broad change in IR theories regarding the acceptance of institutions in world politics has now given more space to institutional approaches which developed both inside and outside European integration theories and which have contributed to a widely-accepted role of — “hard” — institutions such as international organizations, treaties, conventions, and written agreements in world politics (March/Olsen 1989, 1998; Hall/Taylor 1996; Ruggie 1998; Onuf 2002). In particular, the various new institutionalisms have been able to sustain the role of institutions in world politics as enhancing cooperation among states, monitoring policy implementation, facilitating information, and safeguarding norms (Keohane 1988; Garrett 1992; Goldstein/Keohane 1993; Pollack 1996; see also Pollack forthcoming and Risse forthcoming, respectively).

During the first fifty years, supranational European integration evolved from the pre-integration time of cooperation under anarchy, the decision to collaborate in the ECSC, then a long period of cooperation towards integration, a long but largely invisible period of constitution-building up to the TEU. Whether this phase turns out as sustaining and furthering a more active role for the EU in international politics, remains to be seen. Certainly, during the first two decades of the 21st century, the EU has taken on a more substantial role as a civilian or, as some would argue, “normative” power on the world stage (Manners 2002, 2006; Diez 2013; Nicolaïdis/Whitman 2013; Whitman 2013). This is quite a surprising turn taking into account the policy documents of the 1970s when the search for a “European Identity” and a role as an “actor in world politics” was actively on (for summaries, see Dinan 2006; Wiener 1998; Checkel/Katzenstein 2011; Risse et al. 1999; Risse 2010). In light of the world economic crisis and the cold war politics that structured most of the world’s international relations at the time, the then European Economic Community’s influence was rather minimal. The turn towards the EU’s emergent impact on world politics as a normative power is less surprising in light of the mosaic of integration theories presented in this book. For example, the discussion of normative standards, the role of identity, the input of routinized procedures and policy practices which is presented pretty much across the board of this book’s contributions, allows for a comprehensive understanding and for concise explanations of this change in the EU’s role within the wider global context.

With the looming constitutional crises in Poland and Hungary and ongoing Brexit negotiations since Article 50 was triggered, constitutional politics has bounced back onto the European agenda, and may evolve into a political issue (compare, for example, Schmidt 2018 on the contested issue of “over-constitutionalisation” through the European Courts). In distinction from assumptions about states that cooperate under anarchy in world politics, EU member states have been cooperating towards integration in order to maintain peace. This cooperation has increasingly involved a wider set of non-state actors such as European political institutions, NGOs as well as national, regional and transnational interest representations. By stipulating Union citizenship with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the principle of inter-state cooperation was notably surpassed, and with the Lisbon Treaty (now the reformed TEU and TFEU) a shared constitutional agreement was put in place. This long constitutional turn has developed against changes that were constituted by the process of integration through law with land-mark rulings such as Van Gend en Loos (1963) which

effectively marked the transfer of member state sovereignty to the supranational level (compare the concept of “pooled-sovereignty”: Craig/de Búrca 1998; Haltern 2003), among many others. While the EU is clearly not a state, akin to most national states and agencies that are part of today’s UN system, it does operate on the basis of core constitutional norms such as the rule of law, fundamental and citizenship rights, and the principle of democracy (Art. 6, TEU) nonetheless. These fundamental constitutional principles have evolved over time in interrelation with the constitutional principles and practices of the EU’s member states. Their substance carries meaning. This meaning is however fundamentally contested. For it was largely created through a process which involved the “old” member states as constitution-makers, while the “new” candidate countries were expected to take on the role as compliant norm-followers. The outcome of this unequal participation in the re-constitution of substantive constitutional meanings during the long decade of massive EU enlargement is a community with deep differences. This quite significant process often remains under-estimated, especially by politicians and political scientists. In itself, it carries an invisible security threat. Obtaining more robust knowledge about this threat remains a task for future contributions to integration theory.

5. Conclusion

This book’s contributions have demonstrated that theorizing European integration involves at least three main factors. They include the choice of the research object (polity: supranational institution-building; policy: specific EU policies or member states’ policies towards integration; politics: quality of integration), the analytical research purpose (explanatory/understanding; descriptive/analytical; normative/critical), and the context in which the research project has been designed (historical and disciplinary perspectives). The choice of research object and purpose does matter. It generates a distinct theoretical focus and impact which is highlighted by the book’s organization in three parts presenting at least three core theoretical perspectives in three different phases of European integration. These phases are distinguished according to the respective analytical focus on explaining integration, analyzing governance, and constructing the Euro-polity. In order to substantiate the main message of each approach, the contributors have been asked to identify their approach’s main concepts, critically engage with the perception of their approach from the wider context of integration theory, and then apply their approach to one or more contemporary crisis scenarios of their choice.

While theoretical approaches do indeed raise general questions that are shared by a range of different approaches, for example the questions of how to explain institution-building above the state, how to account for governance as a process that develops across national boundaries, and how to assess the emergence of a socio-political system critically, their respective ways of addressing these questions are not necessarily competitive. They are first and foremost complementary in style. These observations, above all, invite students of European integration not to think in closed boxes and traditions, but creatively about theorizing European integration and governance, and not to dismiss other approaches all too easily. They also ask those engaged in this process of theorizing to perhaps be humbler than has been the case in the past, and to be aware of the scope of the approach proposed and its place in the overall mosaic of European Integration Theory. As a stable but reflexive frame, the mosaic of European integration theory

remains incomplete and open towards incorporating the changes triggered by contingency. In order to keep providing fresh and relevant perspectives, however, it will have to be pushed forward by creativity, self-reflexivity, and the study of fundamental issues underlying the core debates of past, present, and future.

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