



European Union Politics

Editorial Statement

When six states founded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) 50 years ago, only the most visionary observers could foresee the enduring impact that this decision would have. On the contrary, British and American politicians initially believed that the nation states and less ambitious organizations like the Council of Europe would play the central role on the old continent. The history of the past five decades has shown that these sceptics were mistaken. The successor institutions to the ECSC, most notably the European Union (EU), have become major power players which embrace an ever-increasing number of countries and influence all parts of the continent and its surrounding areas.

One of the consequences of the decision to move ahead with a supranational conception of regional collaboration was the inauguration of integration studies as an independent subdiscipline within political science. Admittedly, the new field was rather fragile in the beginning and followed the momentum of the integration process. In the stalemate of the early 1970s, Ernst Haas, one of the patron saints of the field, even went as far as declaring the 'obsolescence of regional integration theory'. However, as in Mark Twain's case, the death announcement was premature. The field of integration studies experienced a forceful and lasting reinvigoration in the 1980s. One unquestionable indicator of maturation is the increasing number of graduate and post-graduate programmes that universities all over the globe devote to the analysis of the European states and, especially, its emerging supranational structure. No one would doubt therefore that, to give the animal another name, European Union Politics is now as established a sub-field in Political Science as American Politics, International Relations or Comparative Politics.

However, the scientific newcomer has not yet fully grown up. To draw

on the jargon of the neo-functional literature, form did not follow function in the institutionalization of the field. Unlike the other sub-disciplines, European Union Politics does not yet possess an outlet that concentrates on the most advanced and methodologically sophisticated research papers on any aspect of the EU from specialists from all over the globe. At the moment, scientific progress still takes place in idiosyncratic edited volumes or general journals that publish papers on the European Union only randomly and sometimes, it seems, arbitrarily.

The major purpose of *European Union Politics* is to rectify this situation and to offer the field a truly international voice. We believe that the past dispersion of European Union research in different fields and in nearby disciplines is increasingly obsolete. On the contrary, what we observe at the moment is a cross-disciplinary convergence towards a unifying approach. We believe that most experts will welcome *EUP* as a major consolidating force.

EUP will include papers from any discipline if the article advances our understanding of the European Union in a systematic and significant way. Most submissions will obviously come from political scientists. Comparativists and specialists in international relations have traditionally been the most active groups in European Union studies. We additionally expect, however, to receive articles from people in political theory, public administration, political sociology, political economy and other fields in the social sciences.

Launching a new journal obviously begs the question of whether or not an additional channel will further the sectarian tendencies in political science. When my co-editors and I discussed the danger of contributing to the disintegration of the field, we were easily convinced that only the highest academic standards can prevent this trend. We have accordingly built a transnational team of board members and referees. Matt Gabel, Simon Hix and I are proud to report that the first 20 or so papers submitted to the journal received more than four reviews on average. All refereeing is, of course, double-blind, and we seek the judgements of experts from around the world.

When the editors started to contribute to the field, integration studies often fell victim to debates between the paradigmatic approaches in International Relations. In the 1980s and early 1990s, it was still possible to launch a career on a two-by-two table which described the 'nature' of the European Union. Fortunately, times are changing and the number of papers which offer general 'theories' of European integration is seemingly decreasing. It is our belief that an intellectual backlash into sterile and indeterminate debates between the proponents of different metatheories is best prevented through the publication of high quality articles with a clear empirical focus. However, every submission has to be based on a clear and hopefully novel theoretical

argument. Whether contributors are worshipping the sun (i.e. political sociology, postmodernism) or the moon (i.e. rational choice, constructivism), does not matter, as long as they justify their theoretical decisions. It should finally be noted that *EUP* is an academic journal. This means that we will only publish articles by EU civil servants or other 'insiders' if their insights truly contribute to a scientific debate.

Referring to Gresham's Law, one might conclude that scientific progress inevitably leads to the differentiation of research. This is not problematic as long as all parties concerned, authors as well as editors, share a scientific outlook that sound and sophisticated research designs are key to advance the study of the European Union. The common denominator of the articles published in *EUP* will be that they are open towards methodological innovations if these techniques are needed for improving our understanding of the European Union. We are devoted to the notion of intersubjectivity and require authors to make their methodological decisions transparent. In particular, we follow the replication standards of other journals and ask authors to indicate where interested readers can find the information and data to replicate the numerical results published in their article.

The existence of the journal is due to the initiative of Fulvio Attinà, Chairman of the Standing Group on the European Union. He was the first to conclude that the time is ripe for a journal that publishes advanced research on the European Union. The journal is, however, independent of this organization that the European Consortium of Political Research helped to create. I would like to thank Fulvio, who is Chair of the *EUP* Editorial Committee, for his fruitful initiative. I am equally grateful to the co-editors, Matthew Gabel and Simon Hix, for their input and their patience with my request to review papers on short notice. Mirja Pöter is an extremely efficient managing editor. I would like to express my gratitude to her and Lucy Robinson of Sage for making the start of this exciting and necessary project possible.

Gerald Schneider
Matthew Gabel
Simon Hix