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European Integration: Achievements and Perspectives

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Review of: *European Integration between History and New Challenges*, edited by Ariane Landuyt. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014, 596p. ISBN 978-88-15-14715-8.

In order to face the perils that have appeared both internally and externally, key political actors have started a process of forming a common European body, by integrating the many parts of Europe; however, it has proven to be a long and winding one, with a continuous search for its identity and for its aims and challenges. For the analysis of this process, there is a major interest from researchers, coming from many domains, to find the best possible solutions.

The analysed book offers a comprehensive approach of the history of European integration, its evolving ideas from different national perspectives, actors such as trade unions, the industrial milieu, transnational parties, policies as for example regional development, gender equality, environment protection, external relations, as well as an insight into its development. It is a valuable study, obtained through the collaborations of researchers from several countries, by using both a thematic and an interdisciplinary approach.

The first part of the volume discusses the European Union history and its concepts, tackling the issues of its historiography, citizenship, the concept of regions and the geopolitical perspective of the EU enlargement. Historians tackled considerably the history of European integration, only after the 1980s, according to Daniela Preda in her paper „Between document and monument: the historiography of European integration amidst the challenges for change”. An obstacle that they had to surmount, has been that the analysis was done based on a national state framework. But, there was an impetus for its change, because of the similarity between the national and European Union interests, analysed on dynamic and pragmatic bases. The changing Europe started to be analysed in a diachronic view, with reference to institutions, diplomacy, and also other societal domains. European integration became an object for research when it was recognised as a novel historical process. Up to the 1990s, the historians had to carry a search process for the archival documents, as these were not organised systematically. However, the research process was supported by the collaboration of the historians who launched research organisations, focused on the “initiative factor”. The gradual opening of the archives and their systematic organisation have been very important. After the 1990s, the historians have studied the European integration process, also from the perspective of the “execution factor” and the perspective on the “founding fathers”. The author is describing the Italian case, picturing the European unification activities, that have been so far largely not presented, of many political and non-institutional actors.

George Contogeorgis in his analysis „Citizenship and Political Action. The Case of Political Europe” affirms that citizenship is interpreted in terms of nationality, not as subject citizen, reflected by the concept of European citizenship, as seen in the European

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community legal framework, as the European political system is representative of its state members, not their societies. There is an increasing deficit of democracy in the modern political system; a barrier to the direct connection between citizen and the state, in the opinion of Contogeorgios, is represented by the interest groups. The citizens are not satisfied by all these forms of representation, and they start to move in the direction of forming a cosmo-citizenship. The author reminds the concepts of governance / civil society, designed to mend the broken link between the social and political areas, but raises his doubts about it.

Paul Allies (“Denationalization’ of Europe: the evolving concept of the «Europe of Regions» in the European construction”) presents the evolving concept of European regions; at the end of 19th century, it was conceived as the ideology of resistance to industrialisation and to national assimilation. This has led to claims for political reforms, favouring decentralisation. In France, at the beginning of the 1900s, the institutional regionalism was in compliance with the organisation of the nation-state; however, this was dependent upon the transformations of the states, as they were part of an integrationist movement and regions got institutional rights; the structural funds gave them enhanced importance. The EU policies addresses considerably structural and cohesive policies, in line with the New Public Management; after 1980s, it has become more institutionally formalised, culminating with the formation of the Committee of Regions. This was the peak of the demands egalitarian evolution, of the peripheric / poor regions.

One of the goals of Amaral's paper entitled „Europe of the Regions – Europe with the Regions” is to clarify the meaning of regionalism and Europe of regions. One of these is a ideology that sets its goal on destructuring the state, replacing it with autonomous regions, in a European federation. Their proponents argue that states will power / war, while region aim for freedom / peace. Another view is one in which regionalism is only a temporary instrument used to achieve a federal union. A more recent trend is to view regions as partners of EU.

Herslund, in his paper „EEC / EU enlargements in a geopolitical perspective”, asserts that the enlargement of EU should be studied in the framework of the history and geography, hence in a geopolitical perspective. Enlargement was thought as necessary in order to achieve the main EU goals, peace, democracy and prosperity; these can be met only when the union is as inclusive as possible. Another reason was the threat represented by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, there were concerns regarding the enlargement. The author argues that the enlargements followed a logic regarding their direction related to the core: every enlargement has opened a geopolitical space that needed to be completed.

The next part presents the ideas of Europe, from different national perspectives, such as the Iberian, Scandinavian and Central-east European ones. Maria Manuela Tavares Ribeiro, in „Ideas of Europe: Portugal and Spain” shows the different Portuguese ideas of building a new Europe. However, some of them distrusted a European federation, and rather supported a Europe of Christian nations and a collaboration oriented toward the Atlantic and African area. However, after the colonial war, Portugal shifted its orientation toward Europe. The supporters of European integration thought that this would be helpful for Portugal political and economic system, while its contenders said that it would obstruct the collaboration with Portuguese-speaking countries. In Spain, Europe became an important topic after the beginning of the XXth century, when some of the 98 Generation thinkers, as Jose Ortega y Gasset, promoted ideas of European integration. During the regime of Franco, Spain was isolated, at least at the beginning, from the European project. But, starting with the 1960s, Spain reconnected more and more with Europe. The Europeism movement became the dominant trend. The Spanish society required

increasingly a democratic regime, that was a prerequisite for joining EEC. After the death of Franco, Spain moved decisively toward democracy. All the societal segments agreed with the country application at the beginning of the process, but their support declined gradually after that.

Nordic countries have been rather sceptical regarding the creation of a European supranational governance system, according to Froland's study „Euro-scepticism. The Idea of Europe and Policies towards European Integration among the Nordic Countries”. Their policies favoured an economic cooperation, not a political one, at the beginning of the European integration process. Generally, they promoted their national interests, and only by pressure, have been willing to be open to the European integration process. Still, in addition of the economic reasons, Nordic countries followed geopolitical strategies that oriented them toward Europe. A strong antifederalist movement have existed in the Scandinavian countries. They based their refusal on the premise that, by giving away a part of their national sovereignty, this will lead to a democratic deficit. The Nordic countries preferred several alternative economic partnerships, especially with Great Britain.

Bielanski, in the paper „Ideas of Europe in Poland: federalist projects for East and Central Europe”, starts by pointing out the difficulty of defining the East-Central Europe term. In the 1930s, Poland tried to create a block of states that would resist to the influence of soviet and fascist regimes, but this was not an easy task as it did not have good relations with its neighbours. However, after the breakout of the WWII, their leaders realised that they had to cooperate to fight / resist the foreign invasion / influence. Great Britain was in favour of creating a federation of Central and Eastern European states. One of the influent figures that promoted the idea of European integration was Hieronim Rettinger, that was also one of the initiators of the Bilderberg group.

In Romania, after 1918, the intellectuality was a supporter of the national ideas, by re-evaluating the cultural standards, in the interest of serving the Romanian ideals, affirm Horga and Şipoş, in the paper „The perception of Europe and European values in Romanian culture between 1919 - 1945”. Two trends have emerged, one promoting the maintenance of our traditions, and the other one, wishing a profound restructuration. The authors presents the work of prominent thinkers, and some of the examples are: Eliade, who analysed the context in which evolved the Romanian culture in its history, showing what have been the obstacles in its development; Iorga examined the Romanian past, to identify the factors that lead to the Romanian vitality; Cioran, asserting that Romanians have to change, to realise their goals. Most of the intellectuals have been attached to the Romanian values, and to a less extent, to the European ones.

The third part exposes the history of European community actors and policies, namely trade unions, the industrial millieux, transnational parties, the regional, gender equality, environmental and technological policies.

Andrea Ciampani in the paper entitled „Trade Unions as Workers' Associations in the History of European Integration” considers that the trade unions have played an important role in the European integration process. The author presents the history of the social Europe and of the European Trade Union Confederation. There is a link between the national and international trade union movement in securing the workers rights. The trade unions have fought to be politically independent, for the freedom of trade union association, to obtain social and economic rights; inside these organisations, the European problems have been debated. The trade unions have been willing to participate in the process of European integration, to shape a social Europe, and in the same time, the European community decision factors were progressively ready to integrate these demands into their policies.

Two groups of scholars, the historians of international relations and the federalists, according to Petrini in „The historiography on industrial milieu and European Integration. Bringing the social conflict back in”, have considered important to analyse the influence of the economic interest groups in the construction of the EU integration and the problem of its common identity. It was suggested that the roots for this origin, were a defensive reaction to the foreign / non-European competition, the logic of the economic system and the continuation of the cartel system. Between the imposition of new economic regulations and their implementation by the private sector, there was a time gap between. The studies on the industrial milieu had, to a large extent, a national approach, and to a lesser extent, a transnational one, the latter one being presented in the study.

Piermattei believes that the study of the transnational federations of the European political parties needs an interdisciplinary approach, that of the history and of the political sciences (in „European Integration and Transnational Parties: A Look at the Historical Perspective and Current Studies”). The development of the federations has been influenced considerably by the process of European integration and it can be divided in several phases; the inception, followed by the formation of the European political parties after setting up of the direct elections for the European Parliament, continuing with the period that has the Maastricht Treaty as its turning point, and finally, with the contemporary phase. After the second phase, there has been a growth of studies on European elections, with two strands, one claiming that they are still mostly related to the national issues, while the other one, asserting they are centred on issues at the European level. The author thinks that the federations of the European parties have a transnational element, but, they have a limited political action at the European level.

The paper of Grazi „Regional and Cohesion Policy in the History of European Integration. Research Trends and Future Perspectives” aims to describe the history of the European regional policy. Its importance lies in the fact that it builds the European Social Model, that tries to harmonise the economic growth with attaining the social objectives, of improving the living conditions of the disadvantaged categories. The first regional studies appeared at the beginning of the European integration process, when even if there was no official regional policies, there were provisions that refer to the need to adjust the regional economic disparities. The formal regional policy regulations have been preceded by studies on the European regional problems. After the 1990s, the regional policy has been much more developed, illustrated by the creation of the European Regional Development Fund, in order to respond to the new societal changes, such as the economic hardships, the prospect of the European economic integration and the accession of new countries. Initially, the ERDF had several shortcomings, but it went through a series of reforms, the most significant one being in 1988, that emphasised the importance of the territorial criterion and of the multigovernance concept.

The European integration process had a positive influence on the situation of the women rights, as it is illustrated by Di Sarcina („Historical Studies on EEC / EU Gender Equality Policy: A Balance Sheet and some Perspectives”). Nowadays, the gender policy is one of the horizontal policies of EU, enforced by the Amsterdam Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty. The new provisions refer to the concept of gender mainstreaming, that require the inclusion of gender equality in all policies. The fight for the women rights originated from the social policies, that included, among others, equal pay between men and women for the same job. After the mid 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of gender related studies, many of these, underlining the important work done by women who had key political positions.

According to Scichilone analysis „The EEC / EU Environmental Policy. The Historical Perspective between Environmental History and European Integration Process”, the protection of the environment is one of the most important issue, that society have to face nowadays, and also, difficult to solve, as it requires the international and national cooperation of the political actors. As EU is one of the important players in the international scene, its role is very important in dealing with the environmental issues. The European environmental policy has been tackled from different perspectives, such as economic, social or legal ones. The economic approach has offered interesting and original insights, such as the theory of environmental economics. The author underlines the importance of examining the relationship between man and nature, of the transformations that man have done to the natural environment, in order to improve its human environment. The intensification of the production mechanisms changed drastically the impact of man activities upon the environment.

When analysing the EU technological policy, it is important to distinguish between the intentions and the actual programs achieved; the latter, can be traced, from the public documents and from the specific studies. The historical studies related to the European technology, concern with technoscience, which is a mixed concept, formed from scientific knowledge and innovation. The cooperation in the techno-scientific area has two directions: the first is the institutional / integrationist one and the second being the intergovernmental one. Against the backdrop of foreign competition, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation at the EU level among the research networks, as the study „Historiography on European Construction and Technology as Element of ‘Integration’” of Burigana concludes.

The final part is focused on the EEC / EU external relations and international studies on EU, related to the United States, the Soviet Union and Australia. Starting with the Treaty of Rome, EEC has built its external relations policy, dealing with states from all the continents, ascertains Laschi in the paper „The European Integration Process and the External Relations”. However, the historiography on this theme is still sparse and it had rather focused on the external relations of the states regarding the accession to the EU. The foreign policy of the EU has been formalised only in the Treaty of Maastricht, before that, was adopted by different community institutions and by the member states. It is important to observe the action at the national / intergovernmental level, at the European institutional level and the results from their mixture. The EU has developed an external relations policy, firstly, but not only, because of its existence as an international actor. The study of the EU external relations policy should make reference to periodisation, the enlargement process, the relations with the partner states and the external consequences of the internal policies.

Denis Rolland analyses the Schools of Political Sciences, established by the Council of Europe, in order to promote and consolidate the democratic values and the human rights in the former Communist countries, in „Promoting a democracy written on sand and a European identity in the transparency of the horizon: writing the history of the Council of Europe and schools of political studies”. Next, it is disentangled the confusion that often appears when people think about the Council of Europe identity, its role and activity. The organisation did not manage to promote a deeper political integration of its members. However, after 1990s, its activity has been revived, as it assumed the role of spreading the democratic values in the ECE / Balkans / Caucasus countries. Practically, it had become the anteroom for entry in EU, with the mission to prepare the candidate countries to fulfil the political admission criteria. One means of achieving this goal was by establishing a network of political schools, that are based on four pillars: European

integration, democracy, rule of law and human rights, followed by the presentation of the concepts. The schools do not have a single identity, but rather these have adapted to the local context.

The origin of the American identity has been created in opposition to the European one, more exactly, with distinct values. However, the two global wars from the XXth century, approached America to Europe, leading to the formation of the Atlantic alliance. This strong cooperation continued until the fall of the Communist regime. Nowadays, nevertheless, we observe, yet another change, as Europe distances from the interventionist policy of America. Bitumi Alessandra in the paper „The United States and Europe in the Mirror: Notes on the Origins and Evolution of the Transatlantic Relationship” presents the EU – US relation seen through the crises that have taken place. At the beginning of the Cold War years, US were a strong supporter of EU economic and political integration, as illustrated by the Marshall Plan. To a certain extent, Europe adopted the American way of life, and US imposed as a hegemonic power. But, in the following decades, as Europe have become stronger, asserted its own identity, so that the two partners have distanced one from the other.

Researchers have considered, usually, that the relation between EU and Soviet Union should be analysed in the context of the bipolar power structure, asserts Lara Picardo in her paper „Sources and Studies on Soviet Union and European Integration”. Nonetheless, the research process is still not well developed, as the archival resources have been scarce. After the nationalisation of the archives by the Russian Federation, it had ups and downs, with an opening up, by president Yeltsin and a partial closure by president Putin. Despite these difficult conditions, there have been researches that have analysed the relation between EU and the Soviet Union. The biased view in researches have started to change, under the Gorbachev leadership, gaining impetus after the fall of the Communist regime.

The study „In Search of European and EU Studies in Australia: Challenges and Opportunities” by Winand, Kalfadellis and Witzleb shows that Australia have become interested by the European situation, in the context of the European integration and EEC / EU policies, as these had the potential to affect Australia, especially through the Common Agricultural Policy and by the balance of the exports to EU. Hence, European Studies centres have been set up across Australia; these have disseminated the knowledge on the European culture and promoted the reciprocal cooperation. Undergraduate and graduate programs, European centres and Jean Monnet chairs have been established across Australia with the financial support of the European Commission, but also, of the Australian universities, based on the interest of the researchers community. However, even if many Australian universities teach European studies, only a few teach EU studies; also, there has been a rise in the interest for the Asian Law / Business Studies, in the context of the increase of economic exchanges with Asia.

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