

Book Review

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The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy: The Quest for Democracy
by Helene Sjursen (ed)

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This volume edited by Helene Sjursen was originally published as a special issue in the *Journal of European Public Policy* in November 2011. It examines the main structures, the institutional setting and the procedures that govern decision-making in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This is accomplished by means of a focus on the question of democracy and the wider challenges it poses in this field of policy-making. Whereas some of the book's contributors address the significance of intergovernmentalism as a conceptual tool, others highlight the contested problems of democracy and legitimacy that exist in this policy area. Intergovernmental decision-making has been equally essential to both the EU and the CFSP. In this context, it is argued, a move beyond intergovernmentalism, if it occurs, should be accompanied simultaneously by democratic control and accountability. The aim of the eight chapters in this contribution is to examine and evaluate developments in the CFSP by applying perceptions from democratic theory and international relations studies.

Sjursen begins by setting out the aims and scope of the collection. In the next chapter, she engages in an exploration of the key elements of democratic intergovernmentalism, assessing its empirical status. She recalls the significant elements of intergovernmentalism where power and authority was originally conceived as residing entirely at the national level. Sjursen's argument is that the CFSP may have moved beyond intergovernmentalism, implying a fragmentation of national governments' accountability and autonomy has occurred, particularly with regard to decision-making. This makes it more difficult to determine who decides, as well as where decisions are made and who should be accountable. Sjursen proposes an analytical scheme which facilitates identification of a potential move beyond intergovernmentalism as well as its supposed democratic challenges.

The following two chapters highlight the core principles of intergovernmentalism by concentrating on specific actors. Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska investigate the role of officials from working groups in the Council of the EU, as well as officials from the Council Secretariat dealing with EU external relations. According to the authors, these two case studies need more empirical attention which they aim to provide by uncovering the continuous process of Brusselization and socialization taking place in the CFSP. Their analysis determines the impact of individuals' socialization, meaning the effect a collective identity has on the decision-making process, as well as how socialization affects cooperation patterns and influences individual and national roles and positions. This contribution is followed by Federica Bicchi's analysis of the CORrespondence Européenne (COREU) network. Like the previous two case studies on the Council working groups and the Council Secretariat, the author finds empirical application in respect of COREU to be limited. She aims to go beyond intergovernmentalism, maintaining that officials involved in CFSP policy-making can be perceived as a group of people who regularly share day-to-day practice and communication, thereby integrating diverse national systems. Her research shows that the actors involved have established

a common language and routine which has contributed to the diminishment of a purely national dimension of foreign policy.

Thus far, the various chapters in the book engage in a theoretical discussion and empirical investigation of the core elements of intergovernmentalism. The fifth contribution by Christopher Lord changes this focus by addressing the question of democracy. Lord uses democratic theory to identify the need for democratic control in foreign policy in general as well as specifically focussing on the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Furthermore, his contribution highlights the question of whether democratic control requires parliamentary control and parliamentary participation. Jutta Joachim and Matthias Dembinski widen the actor-centred approach by assessing the political participation of non-governmental organisations in the case of the European Code of Conduct/Common Position of Arms Export. Providing several empirical observations, this chapter comes to the conclusion that the processes involved in developing the Code are in line with intergovernmental approaches. Any further developments since the actual adoption of the Code, however, seem to follow a governance perspective. This chapter's focus on the intergovernmental versus governance approach leaves the authors with limited space to dedicate to democratic challenges or implications. This, however, is picked up again in the next contribution by Erik Oddvar Eriksen who stresses the limits of the democratic governance approach in balancing the role of expertise and accountability in security policy. Contemporary issues, such as the global financial crisis, present the EU with complicated and interwoven security threats. The author finds that the EU is currently underdeveloped with regard to the separation of powers and decision-making, which creates a challenging environment in which to secure democratic accountability. The final chapter by Ben Tonra, aims to address the weakness of democratic accountability in foreign, security and defence policies. Tonra argues that the lack of democratic accountability is due to the poor narrative foundation in Europe; currently, there is no sound linkage between national and European narrative constructions. This has ultimately led to a missing sense of ownership and collective identity over the international actions of the EU.

In summary, the book makes a good contribution to understanding the EU's foreign, security and defence policy making. Although the issues discussed within the volume are not new, it provides a satisfactory account of intergovernmentalism and the questions drawn from the related democracy debate. As such, this is a useful book for both students and practitioners interested in the EU's CFSP and CSDP. That said, the book does have several shortcomings. First of all, it does not include a concluding chapter. This is an unfortunate omission. Such a chapter could have provided the reader with a summary that delivered a comprehensive comparison of the arguments and approaches set out by the contributors. It could also have delivered some guidance to understanding the extent to which the collection's aims were fulfilled and given some hint also as to where further research should be directed. Secondly, the authors only apply or refer back to the editor's analytical scheme introduced in chapter two on a very limited basis. A more stringent application of that scheme would have benefited the reader and added coherence to the collection. Thirdly, although the book does deliver insights from both Democratic and International Relations theories, it unfortunately does not explain the logic or added value of a concentration on intergovernmentalism and democratic theory alone. The approach adopted does provide the reader with an understanding of the issues concerned. However it fails to broaden perspectives in the direction of other significant theories that offer contrasting perspectives regarding the quest for democracy in the EU's CFSP.
