The Treaty of Rome: Three Pictures

Manners, Ian

Published in:
DIIS Annual Report 2007

Publication date:
2007

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact rucforsk@ruc.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
After 50 years with the European Union, three images are more clearly unveiled. Senior Researcher Ian Manners, Head of the Research Unit on the Internal Dynamics of the EU, on the raison d’être, ‘hybrid policy’, and ‘normative balance’ of the EU.

In 2007 the European Union (EU) celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community. Fifty years after the signing ceremony on the 25th March 1957 at the Palazzo dei Conservatori on Capitoline Hill, Rome, it is rather difficult to say anything new or certain about the contemporary EU. There are, however, three ‘big pictures’ of the EU which can just be seen with sufficient critical distance if one takes a step backwards. These three pictures are only now coming into focus half a century after the signing of the Treaty of Rome and represent images of the ‘raison d’être’, ‘hybrid policy’, and ‘normative balance’ of the EU.

The last fifty years have seen a gradual evolution of the raison d’être of the EU, very much reflecting the global context in which it sits. Taking a broad view, the raison d’être of the EU can be abstracted as the pursuit of peace, prosperity and progress. Hence the immediate post-war and cold war periods 1950 to 1969 tended to focus on peacemaking and returning relative prosperity to EU citizens. Finally, the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, and the European Central Bank. Finally, the EU is also supranational because the role and attention given to non-national and non-supranational institutions and actors within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, all of which represent local and transnational civil society, rather than the member states or the supranational EU. The supranational aspect of the EU is given further importance through the treaty-based references to the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular through the EU’s institutional building.

Since the Treaty of Rome the EU has slowly and hesitantly developed into a hybrid policy which is ‘polycentric’. The EU is polycentric in nature because political power is shared by so many different political entities – hence the EU is regularly described in various contradictory ways such as ‘intergovernmental’, ‘supranational’, ‘multi-leveled’, or ‘regional’. The EU is primarily intergovernmental in the sense that it is the constitutive member states that confer competences on the EU, and it is the member states that maintain important roles for themselves through intergovernmental institutions such as the Council of Ministers and the European Council.

The EU is also supranational to the extent that its ordinary legislative procedure creates supranational law and that it has a number of supranational institutions within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, and the European Central Bank. Finally, the EU is also supranational because the role and attention given to non-national and non-supranational institutions and actors within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, all of which represent local and transnational civil society, rather than the member states or the supranational EU. The transnational aspect of the EU is given further importance through the treaty-based references to the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular through the EU’s external actions.

It is within the political context of its raison d’être and hybrid policy that a normative balance is beginning to emerge within the EU. What the complexities of global interdependence over the past fifty years since the Treaty of Rome demonstrate is that the distinctions between EU internal policies and EU external actions are more permeated than they have ever been. In this world a European balance must be struck between the extremes of communist collectivisation and capitalist individualisation; between the brutalities of nationalism and the problems of globalism. The EU’s normative balance.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS
Manners, Ian: “Another Europe is Possible: Critical Perspectives on European Politics”, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Mark Pollack & Ben Rasmanod (eds.), Handbook of European Union Politics, Sage.
Manners, Ian: “En udefraaikomend perspektiv på 50 år med EU i Danmark”, Catharina Sørensen (ed.), 50 år med EU Danske perspektiver, DIIS.
Manners, Ian, Catharina Sørensen and others, EU25-27 Watch, Critical Perspectives on European Politics, Sage.
Manners, Ian: Another Europe is Possible: Critical Perspectives on European Politics, Rosamond (eds.), EU’s Internal Dynamics, DIIS.

THE TREATY OF ROME: THREE PICTURES

In 2007 the European Union (EU) celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community. Fifty years after the signing ceremony on the 25th March 1957 at the Palazzo dei Conservatori on Capitoline Hill, Rome, it is rather difficult to say anything new or certain about the contemporary EU. There are, however, three ‘big pictures’ of the EU which can just be seen with sufficient critical distance if one takes a step backwards. These three pictures are only now coming into focus half a century after the signing of the Treaty of Rome and represent images of the ‘raison d’être’, ‘hybrid policy’, and ‘normative balance’ of the EU.

The last fifty years have seen a gradual evolution of the raison d’être of the EU, very much reflecting the global context in which it sits. Taking a broad view, the raison d’être of the EU can be abstracted as the pursuit of peace, prosperity and progress. Hence the immediate post-war and cold war periods 1950 to 1969 tended to focus on peacemaking and returning relative prosperity to EU citizens. Finally, the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, and the European Central Bank. Finally, the EU is also supranational because the role and attention given to non-national and non-supranational institutions and actors within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, all of which represent local and transnational civil society, rather than the member states or the supranational EU. The transnational aspect of the EU is given further importance through the treaty-based references to the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular through the EU’s institutional building.

Since the Treaty of Rome the EU has slowly and hesitantly developed into a hybrid policy which is ‘polycentric’. The EU is polycentric in nature because political power is shared by so many different political entities – hence the EU is regularly described in various contradictory ways such as ‘intergovernmental’, ‘supranational’, ‘multi-leveled’, or ‘regional’. The EU is primarily intergovernmental in the sense that it is the constitutive member states that confer competences on the EU, and it is the member states that maintain important roles for themselves through intergovernmental institutions such as the Council of Ministers and the European Council.

The EU is also supranational to the extent that its ordinary legislative procedure creates supranational law and that it has a number of supranational institutions within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Commission, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, and the European Central Bank. Finally, the EU is also supranational because the role and attention given to non-national and non-supranational institutions and actors within its hybrid policy. These supranational institutions include the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, all of which represent local and transnational civil society, rather than the member states or the supranational EU. The transnational aspect of the EU is given further importance through the treaty-based references to the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular through the EU’s external actions.

It is within the political context of its raison d’être and hybrid policy that a normative balance is beginning to emerge within the EU. What the complexities of global interdependence over the past fifty years since the Treaty of Rome demonstrate is that the distinctions between EU internal policies and EU external actions are more permeated than they have ever been. In this world a European balance must be struck between the extremes of communist collectivisation and capitalist individualisation; between the brutalities of nationalism and the problems of globalism. The EU’s normative balance.
reflects these shared experiences and collective memories of the last half-century, however diffuse. Hence while some member states share collective memories of the catastrophic effects of the second world war and ensuing cold war, others have experiences of brutal authoritarian rule, whilst others still have only recently emerged as modern economies.

However thin these collective experiences, they contribute to the emphasis placed on striking a balance between liberalism and socialism as dominant ideologies in post-cold war Europe. Within the EU, the emphasis placed on the liberal normative principles of freedom, democracy, rule of law, and good governance reflect the post-war experiences of creating free democracies and market economies. At the same time, the emphasis placed on social normative principles of human rights, equality, solidarity, and sustainable development reflect the post-war experiences of creating welfare states and mixed economies. Taken together, this normative balance reflects emerging EU politics in a 21st century more safely lived without an uncritical belief in any one ideology.

It has been argued that three big pictures are beginning to emerge of the European Union and the Treaty of Rome after 50 years. These are complex and contradictory pictures with little clarity and are clearly nowhere near being finished – indeed they never will be. Like most compound polities, the EU defies simplification and generalisation but that does not mean we cannot see some emerging clarity after fifty years. However it is equality important that there is engagement between those who either dismiss its importance, or overemphasise its monolithic appearance. Looking at the EU fifty years after the Treaty of Rome with a series of three big pictures helps to bring some colour and light to the impressionistic work of simple dichotomies that so often dominate the discussion of the EU. To conclude, it is worth returning to the words of another impressionist - Monnet (Jean) - who has also been regularly misrepresented:

One impression predominates in my mind over all others. It is this: unity in Europe does not create a new kind of great power; it is a method for introducing change in Europe and consequently in the world. People, more often outside the European Community than within, are tempted to see the European Community as a potential nineteenth-century state with all the overtones this implies. But we are not in the nineteenth century, and the Europeans have built up the European Community precisely in order to find a way out of the conflicts to which the nineteenth-century philosophy gave rise.