

BOOK REVIEW

Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Teorii și practice ale integrării europene [Theories and Practices of European Integration]*, Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2015, 176 pages, ISBN:978-606-8330-43-3

Adrian Daniel STAN*

Teorii și practice ale integrării europene [Theories and Practices of European Integration] is a genuine contribution to understanding how the European Union's particular character has been adjusted in more than half of century of institutional growth and development. Professor Ivan's key argument for this book is that the European Union has been shaped as a functional project taking into consideration the diverse heritage and traditions of its Member States.

The opening chapter of this book focuses on the particularities of international relations discipline after the Second World War in order to introduce the theme of European Integration Process. This chapter must be analysed in a series of contributions dedicated to the European Integration process and to the theories that made this integration possible because professor Ivan has previously published books such as: *Statele Unite ale Europei [The United States of Europe]*, *Sub zodia Statelor Unite ale Europei [Under the Sign of the United States of Europe]*, in which he debates the origins of the European construction and brings forward arguments to support the importance of each theoretical and functional pillar of this "Common European Project".

The concept of solidarity and the unity of the European continent have been dealt with in an organic and chronologic manner because the author starts his debate on the European foundations by using functionalist and neo-functionalist filters. Then, he addresses the behaviourist theories of the 1950s showing that the use of quantitative methods was able to develop the European Community in the right way.

Federalism, functionalism and transactionalism have managed to further develop the theoretical welfare state of European societies because all three theories were aimed at finding ways to maintain peace and to bring more cooperation among Europeans. The federalist main argument of "function follows form" was reversed by functionalists, who were less preoccupied with predefined forms of governance, but rather insisted on defining some tasks and rules for

* Adrian Daniel Stan is researcher at the Altiero Spinelli Center, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania; e-mail: adrian.stan@ubbcluj.ro

cooperation among states and other organisations. Ensuring the function of governance was the key attribute for the functionalist proponents. On the other side, Transactionalism (also associated with Communication Theory) focuses mainly on the area of social integration, being clearly interested in how communities are built, and in how local or regional populations find a common referential. At this level, building a social community is at least as important as building a political one.

The realist and neo-realist theories have shaped the future of European integration mostly by making the dialogue between states a lot more difficult. The accent placed on protecting your own interest, and the whole *realpolitik* philosophy made very little sense to the fathers of European construction. That is why the author mainly emphasized the intergovernmental debate which is applied to the whole decision-making process in the European Communities and, then, in the European Union.

The European construction process has faced moments of explicit sovereignty, such as the ‘empty chair crisis’ in 1965 or mutual adjustments immediately afterwards, through the Internal Market creation. The fine alliance balance between norms, European Institutions and private interests have determined the launch of new programs in science, technology, telecommunications and energy.

Professor Ivan combines different references from various countries and languages, thus being able to comprise all mainstream theories of European Integration while keeping a fine balance between their application and the specificity of some local or regional arrangements.

The constructivist theory, together with the socio-constructivism, brings forward a more scientific light to the approach of international politics. The structure- agent relationship redefines the very essence of international relations paradigm, where the importance of normative structures as material structures and their connection with the role of identity in redefining the interests of actors help to have the mutual construction of both the actors and structures redefined.

The debate around European Governance, its pedigree, the current trends in policy-making and the interest in public policy elaboration represent another focus of this book. Within the common framework of the European governance system, we can also bring into discussion “good governance”, network governance, democratic governance, as well as global governance as part of a greater systemic approach to international politics. The analytical approach also addresses the Governance White Paper and other similar initiatives on behalf of European Institutions.

Although a rather technical book, professor Ivan`s contribution manages to show in a subtle way the avatars of the European Construction process, giving us the possibility to understand the European dynamics in close relation with the political realm that constantly forges our identity and conscience, as European

nations. The author is faithful to the message of the founding fathers of the European Union but is also proficient in reconnecting those ideas with the current debates regarding the future of the European construction.

The book is a valuable source of information for graduate and undergraduate students in International relations, political and social science, being also an important source of inspiration for people working in the European and central administration.

The author also captures the essence of the main Treaties of European integration, explaining why the architecture of the European Community has been adjusted from the three pillar structure into a more dynamic and integrated framework due to the Treaty of Lisbon.

Very few arguments have the power to convince an audience that the European Union is still on the right path to development, and has not lost its balance along the way, but for everyone who reads this book, there are clear signs that the principles and rules of good conduct established within the boundaries of the European Union are here to stay. Either we talk about some basic principles of European integration, such as subsidiarity, proportionality, or we refer to the Charter of Human Rights of the European Union, the common beneficiary is still the European citizen who needs to assume both the difficult moments of the European integration process, and its triumphs. The theories of European Integration, as well as their practical use, provide us with a few additional filters, which are in fact complementary, mainly to emphasize the need for a strong legitimacy, not only for European Institutions, but also for the regional and local communities, and, why not, for the individuals themselves.