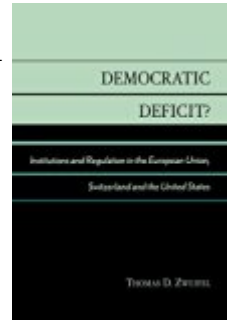


Alasdair Blair. *Companion to the European Union.* London: Routledge, 2006. xvii + 371 pp. \$49.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-415-35897-2.



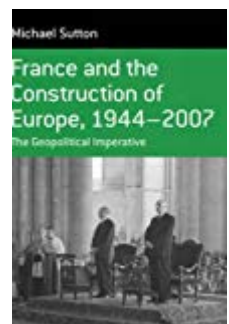
Paolo Foradori, Paolo Rosa, Riccardo Scartezzini. *Managing a Multilevel Foreign Policy: The EU in International Affairs.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007. xxi + 234 pp. \$34.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-7391-1643-2.



Karolina Karr. *Democracy and Lobbying in the European Union..* Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2007. \$42.00, paper, ISBN 978-3-593-38412-2.



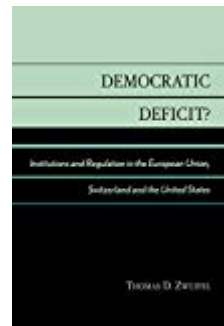
Michael A. Sutton. *France and the Construction of Europe, 1944-2007: The Geopolitical Imperative.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. xiv + 366 pp. \$85.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-84545-393-0.



Duncan Watts. *The European Union*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008. xviii + 314 pp. \$32.50, paper, ISBN 978-0-7486-3298-5.



Thomas D Zweifel. *Democratic Deficit?: Institutions and Regulation in the European Union, Switzerland, and the United States*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004. 170 pp. \$27.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-7391-0812-3.



Reviewed by Jonathan Steinberg

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In an article smartly entitled "Europe's Computer-Dating System Malfunctions" in the *Financial Times* on November 20, 2009, Gideon Rachman asked, "[i]f the answer is Herman Van Rompuy and Cathy Ashton what the hell was the question?" The answer is "European Union! Journalist!!" Rachman labors like the entire press under the absurd illusion that the European Union is some kind of super state that has malfunctioned in choosing unknown compromise candidates for the new posts of president of the European Council and high representative of the union for foreign affairs and security policy. The United Nations knows better, as *European Voice* reported on November 19, 2009. Van Rompuy and Baroness Ashton will stand in the 192nd position of precedence at the General Assembly. As one diplomat stated, "You are not going to have the same status at the UN, if you are not a state." [1] The organization, which has 498,955,350 citizens, has "observer

status" only and comes lower in precedence than member states like Andorra and Monaco. Welcome to "European Union-land," where strange things happen all the time.

If the European Union led a normal bureaucratic life, Alasdair Blair would have provided the perfect guide. This handsome companion, published by Routledge, has 371 pages, including a fine index. Of those pages, 228 are devoted to the best EU glossary I have seen, which includes everything from "abatement" and "bananas" to "Yalta Agreement." There are short biographies of people and places, brief articles on the member states, and on much of the European Union's slang, which I call "Eurospeak." For example, "spillover" is Eurospeak for a neofunctionalist idea, "that sectoral integration on one area would have an impact on other areas. This 'spillover' would therefore have a powerful force on Euro-

pean integration" (p. 278). Neofunctionalism seems to be a EU subset of functionalism that has to do with the process of European integration. The EU generates its own world of theoretical terminology. If you cannot remember the difference between Slovakia and Slovenia, Mr. Blair gives you neat accounts of the two states. He also adds an excellent thirty-two-page chronology. However, his book cannot be the perfect guide because the EU does not lead a normal bureaucratic life. The tens of thousand of Eurocrats, their agencies, the think tanks and lobbyists in Brussels and in national capitals, the national parliaments, the EU Commission, Council of Ministers, and its Court of Justice and Court of Auditors busy themselves changing and, they hope, improving, every aspect of human life in society and reorganizing uninterruptedly the organs that the EU needs to control, direct, regulate, observe, investigate, and legislate. Between the completion of Mr. Blair's book in 2005 and the elections of 2009, the number of Members of the European Parliament rose from 732 to 736. Who can say why? Mr. Blair's book cannot because the number seems to fluctuate since 2005.

The availability of the most extraordinary volume of EU information online and the constant buzz of busy bureaucrats changing every aspect of EU work mean that even splendid and really intelligent guides like Alasdair Blair's *Companion* rapidly become obsolete. The ease of searching terminology via Google even undermines the excellence of the glossary. The book as a form of information begins to give way to the Internet. In his discussion of institutions—and here the Internet cannot replace argument—Blair sees the EU as torn between two different kinds of institution: supranational (the European Commission, the Court of Justice, the European Parliament, the European Central Bank, and the Court of Auditors) and intergovernmental (the Council of Ministers and its subordinate organs). He sums up the conflict this way:

"While decisions are taken by member states, the main method of agreement is qualified majority voting (where votes of a member state are weighted partly to account for differences in size of population), which permits the possibility of a proposal being accepted if it receives the necessary number of votes and similarly being rejected if a sufficiently large number of states vote against it (commonly referred to as a blocking minority)" (p. 4).

Duncan Watts, as an experienced political scientist, has a different agenda and has written, as a result, a very different book. He wants to provide an all-purpose introductory text for the growing number of courses in European studies all over the English-speaking world, and he has done remarkably well. Section 1 offers a very interesting, shrewd, and readable history of the growth of the European integration process from 1945 to 2008, the date of publication. His account makes the story comprehensible and his explanations of turning points, such as the Single European Act, which came into force in July 1987, combine the political forces that created the impetus for the reform and the way it came about and what happened after its adoption. His theoretical section in part 1 provides a very lucid analysis of the theories used to describe the growth of the union. It helped me, at last, to understand functionalism and neofunctionalism. Both argue with different emphases that the EU grew by a constant process of lateral extension, though that is not their term. Once a group of states agrees to cooperate in one field, the interconnectedness of modern government moves them incrementally and often unconsciously to spread that cooperation into other fields, because the logic of complex regulation forces that "spillover" (the neofunctionalist version of the idea). The imposition of a directive in the member states forces the national governments to harmonize definitions of the categories of products, processes, and persons subject to it. It spreads the supranational authority invisibly and, some argue, with the secret connivance of the EU

bureaucracy. Section 2 treats institutions; section 3 addresses representation; section 4, policies; and section 5, attitudes. Every section shows the same qualities of easy prose, coherent analysis, and shrewdness. What a clever idea to have a page devoted to "A day in the life of a Member of the European Parliament" as a way to show what MEPs actually do. Yet even the accomplished Duncan Watts cannot make the EU an easy subject to understand.

Thomas D. Zweifel, who runs an international consultancy, has no doubt about what the EU is: "a regulatory state with centralized government institutions" (p. xii), but unlike many observers, he comes to what he himself calls "a surprising conclusion": "The EU does *not* suffer from a democratic deficit greater than that of most liberal democracies.... In certain policy areas, liberal democracies may even benefit from adopting EU procedures that strike a prudent balance between accountability and independence in the regulatory state" (p. xiii).

He draws this conclusion by a systematic comparison of institutions and laws in the EU, Switzerland, and the United States of America and begins, very properly, by showing how European Court decisions have transformed Article 177 of the original Treaty of Rome into a supreme law of the union, one under which it can tell a member state how to interpret its own constitution. At the end of the first chapter, he sets up a "Taxonomy of Democratic Deficit Arguments" and by comparison with Swiss and American practice, identifies which of the many criticisms of the EU can be considered "valid." He names only three—that its institutions lack transparency, its parliament is weak, and non-elected agencies have excessive power. The rest he dismisses as not valid by rigorous comparison with the other two states. In chapter 3 he compares the three states by various political scientific schemes and finds that the EU not significantly less "democratic" by these formal criteria than the United States and Switzerland. In

chapter 4, Zweifel examines various theoretical models of the "regulatory state" or "bureaucratic democracy" and uses them to test their applicability in two areas of state regulation in the following two chapters: chapter 5, "Regulating Mergers," and chapter 6, "Regulating Biotech," which in this case covers the licensing and controlling of genetically modified foods. Here too the findings surprised me. Zweifel's assessment of both regulatory areas shows that the Swiss bureaucracy is least democratic, the United States most democratic, and the EU in second place in both activities. He concludes this exercise with the following general observation: "As long as European citizens prefer the integration of European economies, but at the same time loath the integration of European politics, a democratic deficit of some size is the inevitable outcome ... the democratic deficit is, in the literal sense, democratically justified" (p. 142).

This paradox arises because the citizens of the twenty-seven European states refuse to give the elected parts of the EU structure the powers they would need to control the bureaucracies in Brussels more intensively. As H. L. Mencken once observed, "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want and deserve to get it good and hard." [2]

If the people get less than they want from the European Union, lobbyists may get more. Karolina Karr in *Democracy and Lobbying in the European Union* argues in almost exactly the same terms as Zweifel that the gap between elected representatives in the European parliament and their constituencies has been filled by interest groups. The account of these matters begins with two theoretical models of democracy, one based on definitions "from the top down," the normative approach with four categories to measure democratic practice; the other based on empirical observation from the "bottom up." Interest groups receive an equally profound theoretical treatment that goes back to the idea of faction in the *Federalist Papers* (1787-88) and contains a variety of the-

oretical categories with which representation of interests may be categorized and built into a system. The European Union appears in part 2. In the three chapters in this section Karr looks at the "definition" debate: what political scientific category covers the EU? She finds that none of them do a good job. Instead she offers her two models, one normative, and the other empirical, as ways to identify and describe what the EU is and how it works. For example, do EU citizens have *equality of votes*? "The answer ... is quite simply no" (p. 95). The heavy overrepresentation of small states makes equality of votes impossible. *Equality of voice* cannot be claimed either because access to influence is "unfair and unequal" (p. 96). The EU fails the *authorization* and *accountability* tests as well. The citizens cannot "throw the rascals out" and usually do not know which "rascals" are which. The consensual or *consociational* way the EU works makes its "democratic deficit" worse, not better.

The complexity of EU governance, the way it keeps changing, and the indirect and consensual way decisions emerge give professional and well-funded interest groups, which can afford full-time EU specialists, a huge advantage. The good EU lobbyist knows who takes what decision in which of the Directorates-General and at which level the initial drafting of directives takes place. In 1996 there were 1,834 registered representative offices; by 2004 the number had grown to 2,081, a growth of 13 percent, of which about a third are European trade and professional associations. Non-profit organizations amount to 15 percent of registered offices and local and regional authorities in the member states have recently opened up offices in Brussels (194 offices out of more than 2000). Labor unions represent 1 percent of the interests officially registered.

Karr compares Brussels to Washington as the two world leaders in lobbying and notes that the Brussels lobbyist treads softly and makes less noise than her Washington counterpart, because

the "addressee" in the EU is normally a bureaucrat, not a politician. The book ends with a variety of measures that might be, or have already been, taken to make lobbying more transparent, competitive, and representative. This valuable and lucid book ends in a hopeful suggestion that the EU can and will control the interests but I doubt it. The peculiarly "internal" bureaucratic evolution of policy, the anonymity of even the College of Commissioners, the complexity of issues controlled by EU legislation, and the range of intrusions into national activities that EU decisions affect, give the lobbyist the perfect set of backdoors through which to slip--not a pleasant prospect.

Paolo Foradori, Paolo Rosa, and Riccardo Scartezzini write for insiders. They introduce their collection of essays on the EU in international affairs with a blizzard of acronyms without the help of a glossary, theoretical terms (neofunctionalism, neo-institutionalism), Euro-expressions (Pillar I, Pillar 2), and neologisms from EU-speak such as "actorness," "communitization," and "brusselisation." The density of the argument makes reading the introduction an exercise in self-discipline. If the lay reader perseveres, this collection attacks a real problem and with no intellectual limits of politeness: how does the EU act in foreign affairs? In its own right? Or as the expression of the sum of the sovereign states which compose it? In their introduction, the three editors, all from the University of Trento--one of the centers of the 1968 student revolts in Italy--use normal words such as "muddled" and "erratic" freely to describe how the EU arrives at its common external policies. In his essay Christopher Hill, director of the Center of International Studies at Cambridge, makes the shrewd point that political science, when applied to the EU, "takes on a political character, and conversely ... competing preferences harness very different 'facts' to make their arguments" (p. 4). It is hard enough to understand the EU in its protean instability but almost impossible if the theoretical tools give us distorted images of that instability.

The EU is, as Hill argues, "a unique entity, half-actor, half-forum" (p. 8).

Managing a Multilevel Foreign Policy contains nine chapters organized under three headings: part 1, "The EU in International Affairs"; part 2, "The EU and Interregional Relations"; and part 3, "Areas of Intervention." This review, already quite long, can only note that the individual essays are lively and provide new information. Emil Kirchner proposes a new theoretical concept, "security governance," both as a normative and empirical way to imagine EU foreign policy. Anton Pelinka says that only a strengthened EU party system could counter the power of the national states and give the EU a genuine European direction. Luk Van Langenhove and Ana-Cristina Costea look at the way globalization and new forms of regional cooperation give the EU a global role in security, development, and trade issues, issues which operate above and beyond the national state, and which allow the EU to act as a single and important actor in world affairs. Fulvio Attinà draws our attention to how many regional security partnerships have emerged in the last thirty years in East Asia, Central Asia, Europe, and Africa. He provides an excellent table that shows which areas of aim are agreed upon in such partnerships and which means to reach those aims have been applied. William H. Kincade looks at terrorism and U.S.-EU cooperation in a variety of areas, from the Proliferation Security Initiative through border surveillance, air travel and container security to freezing terrorist assets. He offers the kind of information that is hard to find in one place and puts it into useable and interesting contexts. Of the remaining four chapters, two (by Vittorio Emanuele Parsi and James Sperling) discuss EU-U.S. relations and two (by Giovanni Bono and Harald Müller) take specific issues: the EU and the use of force, and the EU and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All the authors are academics, not practitioners, but all know their subjects and do them justice.

The final book on the list is a work of history. *France and the Construction of Europe 1944-2007: The Geopolitical Imperative* by Michael Sutton tells a story, in jargon-free English, about France's role in the creation of the European Union from the end of the Second World War to the present. The way France came to dominate the first stages of European integration has been told before, notably by William Hitchcock in his *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954* of 1998. The same characters show up in Sutton's story, especially Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, but the scope of the work covers six decades, not one, and its focus on the long-term consensus about France's place in the world among two generations of French statesmen allows Sutton to reconsider Charles DeGaulle's role as an architect of the new Europe and to consider the part played by less well-known actors.

Sutton knows France and the EU well as an academic and a practitioner. He had a distinguished career in journalism with the Economist Intelligence Unit, covered both France and the EU and has been part of the United Kingdom's foreign policy community. He combines the temporal and the spiritual in a way not often found in Chatham House. He has published work on several main figures on the Catholic right in French politics and on the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr. This background helps him not only to know the actors in French politics but to have a sense of their values and goals. His account of the way Jean Monnet and "Monnet's men" created the scheme for the European Coal and Steel Community in a few days between mid-April and May 9, 1950, and the almost chaotic haste in which Prime Minister Georges-Augustin Bidault pushed it through the cabinet on the eve of Foreign Secretary Robert Schuman's famous press conference makes the actual adoption of the bold plan an astonishing achievement.

Yet, not even Sutton quite explains the peculiar power of Monnet in those years. What charisma of personality made Monnet a kind of irresistible intellectual-political force, who could drop a tremendous project on the French prime minister's desk on May 1, 1950, and see it turn into French policy a week later, or with Paul-Henri Spaak redesign the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) at Messina in 1955, a conference which he was not permitted to attend? Louis-François Duchêne's 1994 biography of Monnet remains the only significant English biography. Since Duchêne was one of Monnet's men, his biography can never be replaced, but there is a case to be made in 2010 for somebody, perhaps Michael Sutton, to write a different kind of life of Monnet, the architect of European integration.

These six books taught me a lot I did not know about the European Union and their presence on my bookshelf means that I know where to look things up. Of the six, Duncan Watt's *The European Union* best meets classroom needs and I shall use it for my next course on Europe since 1945. Both Blair and Watt help the layperson understand the terms in use in the EU and in academic studies of the EU. Michael Sutton's history of France and the EU brought the second tier of French politics to my attention and gave dramatic focus to crucial events from the French point of view. It too, though more challenging for an undergraduate audience, can be used in the classroom. Zweifel, Karr, and Forado, Rosa, and Scartezzini address the specialist audience of fellow experts and engage in the endless effort to use political and social science to understand the unique entity called the European Union.

Notes

[1]. Toby Vogel, "Council President Could Be Sidelined at the UN," *European Voice* (November 19, 2009), 2.

[2]. "H. L. Mencken," [http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/H. L. Mencken](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/H._L._Mencken) (accessed January 6, 2010).

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