

**Intra-disciplinarity and political study of  
regional integration: European Union  
studies, 'new regionalism' and democracy**

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## INTRODUCTION: INTRA-DISCIPLINARY BARRIERS, EUROPE AND THE NEW REGIONALISM

The recent growth of interest in 'new regionalism' might have been considered likely to cause celebration in EU studies circles. Scholars in this field have often had to defend themselves against charges that their chosen area of study was either unnecessary (because the EU was stagnating), or was simply a whimsical off-shoot of more 'serious' work in international relations scholarship. Having had to justify their work or abandon it (as many of the pioneers in the field did during the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, in the face of 'Eurosclerosis'), it was sweet indeed for many in EU studies to have IR scholars return to the fray in the wake of the Single European Act. It was even sweeter to promptly inform them that *their* work was now out-dated because the European Union had become a polity in its own right, and was therefore more properly studied using the tools of comparative politics. Thus, the advent of a whole new range of regional integration projects in the late 1980s should have been the ultimate reinforcement of EU studies, in that it indicated that regional integration was not after all limited to the European sub-continent, and that European Studies had a wider significance than many had dared hope.

Not a bit of it. With a few worthy exceptions, those involved in EU studies have barely made reference in their work to regional integration elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. 'EU studies' has become a sub-field of social science in its own right, where only the more adventurous or the most die-hard theorists use IR work as a frame for their studies. Moreover, those working in the 'new regionalism' (NR) field have tended to undertake their studies using international relations (IR) or international political economy (IPE) lenses, and have often either avoided focus on the EU or used somewhat outdated information on it as a result. Moreover, given the sensitivity in NR circles to the argument that the EU is not necessarily a model for other regional integration projects to follow, a tendency to downplay the importance of the Union for their subject - even as a source of comparative data - has sometimes been apparent.

My aim in this paper is to try to address this problem of two sub-fields of political science 'speaking past each other'. I take the issue of democratization as an example of where scholars of both the EU and NR could usefully learn from each other. I argue that at both conceptual and empirical levels, new regionalist studies would benefit from the mainstreaming of democracy issues, in a similar way to that in which EU studies - 'old regionalism'? - has recently benefited from a 'normative turn' that was partly facilitated by the intrusion of political theory into the IR/EU studies domain. I therefore seek to reinforce the work of certain NR scholars, who have begun to address the importance of studying civil society<sup>2</sup>. In terms of theory-building in NR studies, this step may require a broadening of the way in which 'political' appears to be understood by much of the established literature. In terms of empirical work, using democracy as a key variable is likely to help unpack the impact and extent of the various regional integration projects, and also to help explain why they are supported and criticised in

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<sup>1</sup> I would single out for mention here Ben Rosamond, William Wallace, Mario Telø, Kjell Eliassen and Walter Mattli.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Marchand, Béas and Shaw 1999.

different quarters. EU studies scholars, of course, would also benefit from richer sources of comparative data against which to test, model, refine or dispute their own findings.

In making this argument, I fully accept that NR scholarship usefully embraces several issues which have lately tended to stray outside the mainstream in EU studies, such as repeated exploration of the links between the regional, international and the local, critical engagement with international relations theories as a matter of course, and the clear use of international political economy literature. In the wake of the Treaty on European Union, many EU scholars have focused too narrowly on the development of the EU as a political system in its own right.

This ‘comparative politics’ approach to the EU (Hix 1994, Hix 1998), while both careful not to sever links with international relations scholarship entirely and never espoused by all EU scholars, has produced much useful scholarship and pointed out the benefits of comparing EU policy-making processes to those of (Western) states in order better to understand them. However, by the same token, it has tended to focus on the state-like attributes of the EU, and thus to downplay the respects in which it remains more like an international organization - or other regional integration projects. At its best, such literature emphasises how the EU has become ‘a distinctive model of internationalization’ (Laffan 1998). At its worst, such literature serves to reinforce the separateness, or difference, of EU studies to the detriment of those seeking to improve EU theory or understand its mechanics. Myopia such as this tends to keep EU studies in a theoretical silo, where the infamous ‘N=1’ problem<sup>3</sup> restricts the improvement of the conceptual lenses that scholars use by shutting them off from wider debates in (international) political science (Rosamond 2000: 186-97). Thus, my argument should not be seen as a straightforward and fairly didactic reading-over from EU to NR studies. Rather, it is an attempt to show both EU and NR scholars the importance of mainstreaming democracy issues, and to advocate the utility of dialogue between scholars working in the two fields<sup>4</sup>.

The structure of my paper is as follows. First, I set out what I consider to be the primary benefits and problems of regularly using the EU as a comparator in NR studies, because those are the terms in which EU studies have primarily been brought into the ‘new regionalism’ field. Second, I set out the reasons why democracy must be considered a ‘live issue’ by NR scholars. Third, I take as an example of what EU studies scholars might bring to new regionalism studies (or alternatively, as an example of what NR scholars could usefully integrate into their own work from EU studies) the literature on the EU’s ‘normative turn’, explaining the reasons for its advent and what it has done to change the nature of EU studies. Finally, I seek to set out an initial research agenda for democratization of regional integration which shows how scholars of NR and EU studies might fruitfully learn from each other.

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<sup>3</sup> The ‘N=1’ problem is long-standing in EU studies. It was in great part this notion - that the EU is so unique that meaningful comparisons cannot be drawn from the study of other contexts/systems - that caused the implosion of neofunctionalist regional integration theory in the 1970s.

<sup>4</sup> Having spent the last few years specializing in EU studies, it is apparent to me that many of the most renowned NR scholars would be familiar to those working in IR or IPE fields, but only a few would be familiar to most of those working in EU studies - a sad indictment of the condition of the latter.

## **EUROPE<sup>5</sup> AND THE NEW REGIONALISM: THE BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS OF COMPARISON**

In order to establish the value and limits of Europe as a comparator for other instances of regional integration, it is necessary to address three issues. First, why should NR studies be comparative? Second, is Europe suitable as a comparator? Third, if Europe can be agreed to be suitable in this way, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this particular comparison - and, relatedly, do the former outweigh the latter? I address each of these issues in turn. Before so doing, it is worth reiterating that I consider comparative study of regional integration to bring significant benefits to EU studies scholars, and thus what follows should not be taken as an indicator that the systematic use of the European example in NR studies would be of utility to that field of study only.

### **The Uses of Comparison**

There is general agreement in NR circles that comparative study is likely to be helpful. Although there are obvious differences between the various regional integration projects of the globe - of which the fact that some are heavily institutionalized, while others eschew formal institutions altogether is only the most obvious example - scholars tend to agree that these differences can be exaggerated, and that they certainly do not in themselves preclude comparative study (Eliassen and Børve Monsen 2001). Indeed, given that regional integration in its second wave seems to be a universal phenomenon, it is only by studying comparatively its various incarnations that we are likely to understand either it or its impact upon/causal links from the changing world order (Hettne 2001b). Comparative study can help scholars understand the differences between different regional integration projects (Katzenstein 1996). Such work can thus enable scholars to see both how the various regional integration projects could usefully learn from each other, and also how the international political economy is impacting upon governance in different parts of the globe (an impact which may be universal but which is unlikely to be uniform). Thus, provided that comparative studies avoid giving one particular model of regional integration ideological pre-eminence, taking it as a norm which others must follow, they will tend to be extremely useful (Higgott 1998).

### **The EU as Comparator**

Of course, with regard to the use of Europe/the EU as a comparator, there lies the rub. In 'first wave' regional integration studies, it was often taken as read that what is now the EU was a teleological model for either other regions or indeed the world (Haas 1961: 366-9). In order to succeed, other regional integration projects would have to try to emulate the EU as much as possible; that they did not do so could be taken as evidence of their likely failure. Even today, the fact that the EU is by far the most advanced instance of regional integration can incline scholars to the view that it is innately superior to other regional integration projects - particularly by those who wish to see the EU become a federal United States of Europe. However, if the EU is to have any

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<sup>5</sup> I use 'Europe' here not as a synonym for the EU, but because regional integration in Europe involves many different overlapping institutions, of which the EU is merely the most powerful. I return to this point below.

utility in NR studies, this triumphalism must be explicitly rejected (Hettne 2002; Breslin, Higgott and Rosamond 2002). The fact is that the EU has as often been explicitly refused as a model of regional integration as it has been seen as a source of good practice (Acharya 2002; Hettne 2002). Moreover, as even neofunctionalist EU scholars eventually admitted, taking the EU as the norm, or focusing on it exclusively, produces biased research and inadequate theory (Haas 1975), because it entices scholars to make unwarranted generalizations. Thus, neither EU nor NR scholars have anything to gain by taking Europe as *the* model of regional integration, rather than one among many.

If it can be agreed that the European case is not to be considered a prescriptive model, what value could its study add to the NR field? I argue that the benefits are considerable, and can be grouped into two kinds. First, what might be called study-informing (or quasi-methodological) benefits. Second, what could be termed study-shaping (or [meta]theoretical) benefits.

#### *Study-informing benefits*

First, there is the fact that while it is not a model to be slavishly emulated, the EU's greater historical experience with institutionalized regional integration may still be a source of learning. Not only is the EU capable of being an anti-model (as mentioned above), it is a laboratory<sup>6</sup> in which those outside can see how actors relatively experienced in playing the regional game make mistakes, innovate, evolve, and address the legacies of past (in)action. This may well have a sort of *demonstration effect*, whereby actors in other regions can take what they find useful from European experience, or whereby NR scholars can generate useful data.

Second, there is the fact that even 'new regionalism' began in Europe, with the launching of the single market programme (Schulz, Sæderbaum and Ojendal 2001; Hettne 2001a); thus, the European process can serve as a source of information about why 'new regionalism' was initiated, and how it differs from 'old regionalism'<sup>7</sup>.

A third such benefit from studying the European case is that it can indicate much about two particular defining characteristics of 'new regionalism', namely its multi-dimensionality and reliance upon regional consciousness or identity (Hurrell 1995: 332). The links between politics and economics in European integration are perpetually controversial - witness the single currency project. For this very reason, the continuous re-visiting of the balance between economic and political integration in Europe, and the attempt to pass the latter off as the former, are indicative of the struggles to be expected in any advancing regional integration project, highly institutionalized or not. The EU can thus serve to show both what can happen in later stages of regional integration (a useful source of data for theorists) and what can be done about managing tensions between member states (a useful source of data for practitioners).

A fourth benefit is that using the European case as a comparator alerts scholars to the interplay between different regional bodies, institutions and processes. The EU is but one among several European bodies which govern the continent, and European states differ in their membership of the several bodies (e.g. European Convention on Human Rights, European Economic Area, Council of Europe). There is no uniform

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<sup>6</sup> The laboratory metaphor is borrowed from Nicolaidis and Howse 2003.

<sup>7</sup> On the characteristics of 'new regionalism' see Hurrell 1995: 332.

process of integration in Europe, and if the continent's various experiences and experiments in regional integration are taken together they provide a whole range of potentially illuminating comparisons, both within the continent of Europe and between Europe and elsewhere. To raise two examples, might ASEAN be more fruitfully be compared with EFTA (the European Free Trade Area) than with the EU? Might there be interesting data generated from a comparative study of NATO (an organisation which allows the USA to dominate the security governance of the European continent) and APEC (an organisation which allows the USA to extend its influence over the economic governance of the Asia-Pacific)? At the very least, using Europe as a comparator alerts the scholar of new regionalism to the fact that the various regional integration processes themselves, and not just regional integration per se, may be polycentric and internally variegated.

#### *Study-shaping benefits*

The first study-shaping benefit of using Europe as a comparator in NR studies is that it highlights the evolutionary nature of regional integration, and thus indicates that theorising in NR should be contingent, non-deterministic, and critical. Although Hettne (2002) is right to stress that there is no inherent teleology in regional integration - such projects can advance, deteriorate, advance again, fall apart etc - that should not blind us to the fact that such evolution is possible. Moreover, such evolution is often as much a source of new questions as it is of solutions to old puzzles. This evolution tends to take place (in Europe, at least) at the expense of established ideas of what 'deepening' involves. Two particular issues are interesting here. First, *the EU shows that as regional integration deepens it can often become less rather than more formal* in nature. Thus, the increasingly complex business of policy-making in the EU relies on informal politics and alliance construction between actors in the various EU institutions and member states just as much as it does upon formal processes and procedures (Warleigh 2000, Warleigh 2001b). Second, *approaches to policy making may change and multiply as regional integration deepens*. Thus, the EU's increasing use of soft law, flexibility (the idea that member states can opt out of common EU policy) and co-ordination rather than regulation may indicate that instances of advanced, institutionalised regional integration may have rather more in common with other (e.g. East Asian) models than is often thought.

Secondly, academic work in EU studies can serve as an example of how important issues can be screened out by dominant theoretical frameworks which consider them insignificant. This problem has been present throughout the EU's history, and should not be repeated in NR studies if at all possible. At a meta-theoretical level, it is important that NR studies broadens itself out to encompass not just IR and IPE but also comparative politics and political theory, so that it can address with sufficient depth and rigour the issues such as identity-formation and power transfer that it rightly identifies as crucial.

There are thus many benefits to be gained by using the European experience in comparative regional integration studies. In the next two sections of the paper, I attempt to make this general point more forcefully by looking at a particular issue, democracy, and how its delayed prominence in EU studies can be of use to NR.

## WHY DEMOCRACY MATTERS TO NEW REGIONALISM - AND VICE VERSA

### General Assumptions

The interplay between regional integration and democracy is usually underplayed. There is a general assumption that regional integration bolsters democracy by bringing states within the fold of liberal democracy, and makes states more legitimate by increasing the generation of public goods, thereby making those states seem worthwhile (Mattli 1999). Alternatively, regional integration can be seen as an attempt to reassert national traditions and policies at the regional level, because, in the face of globalization, national action is insufficient (Hettne 1993). Although this is an advance on the treatment of democracy issues in the early literature on ‘old regionalism’, and many ‘new regionalism’ scholars emphasise the importance of identity-building in the regionalization process, explicitly integrating social constructivist ideas into their theoretical frameworks, it is rare outside the literature on the EU to find regional integration studies which focus on democracy as a key issue<sup>8</sup>. In what follows, I draw on insights generated by NR scholars as well as my own work on democracy beyond the nation state.

### Democratic Challenges for New Regionalism

Both conceptually and in terms of real-world politics regional integration can pose important challenges to democracy<sup>9</sup>. Regional integration alters the ways in which public policy is made, political structures are built and used, and individuals relate to both each other and the various political and economic orders in which they live. It takes place against the backdrop of a fundamental and ongoing recasting of the world order, in which state sovereignty is being recast and neoliberal economics are predominant (Hettne and Sæderbaum 2000). Thus, it has huge implications for (national) identity and redistributive policy - one of the key components in generating loyalty to a given state. Regional integration can be a force for (liberal) democratization by imposing (or at least facilitating) new institutional structures on previously undemocratic states (Mansfield and Milner 1999); it can also free up spaces in which either new, more cosmopolitan senses of political identity can be expressed, or previously would-be totalising ‘national’ identities can be deconstructed. Regional integration can also of course be a force for making governance less democratic, *inter alia* by rendering governance structures and practices opaque, empowering a range of non-governmental actors, and making it more difficult for the citizen to play an active role in public life or hold those who really make policy at regional level accountable (Hettne 2000).

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<sup>8</sup> For an exception, see the essays in Anderson 1999 and the work of Lähteenmäki-Smith (2000), who warns that the EU case shows other regional integration projects that regional integration can increase both the bureaucratization of politics and the marginalization of economically peripheral areas within the region.

<sup>9</sup> Democracy is perhaps best understood as the belief that those bound by a political system should have the means of control over it (either directly or via representatives), and that relations between those people should work on the basis of equality (Beetham 1994).



As stated above, one track often followed by states involved in regional integration is to attempt the generation of legitimacy by arguing that regional integration allows the production of more, and better, public goods than would otherwise be possible. This somewhat economic argument ignores two important issues. First, economists often argue that regional integration should be extended as much as possible if the ultimate welfare gains from it are to be enjoyed, thereby privileging public goods over what may be clear public preference (Mansfield and Milner 1999). In EU studies it has been demonstrated that reliance upon public goods production for legitimacy is mistaken; partly because there can be a significant gap between the public goods produced by the EU and those its citizens want from it, and partly because this approach tends to make citizens extremely utilitarian in their attitude to the EU. This leaves the EU open to significant disaffection because it has built up only very shallow and contingent stocks of legitimacy (Gabel 1998).

In new regionalism, democracy is an important issue because one of NR's chief characteristics is its high degree of voluntarism - participant states are not generally compelled to join because of hegemonic pressure or fear of military attack (Schulz, Sæderbaum and Ojendal 2001). This fact gives regional organisations a stock of legitimacy on which to draw, but also implies that they must work democratically in order to avoid member state withdrawal or the alienation of member state publics. After all, states with the ability to choose to take part can also choose to withdraw; and societies which now have to consider nationals of other states when addressing issues of solidarity, identity and redistribution may find that their own preferences are only one, relatively small, part of the issues that policy makers from their own state must examine (Telø 2001)<sup>10</sup>. The balance between domestic interest groups can be shifted; states can 'escape' nationally restrictive links with powerful groups by acting at regional level. Alternatively, non-governmental groups (including players from outside the region itself) can be active shapers of regional integration, in the absence of popular understanding or domestic support (Mattli 1999: 49).

A further issue for democracy posed by new regionalism is its impact on existing state structures. By this I mean not only the tendency to empower the executive over the legislature but also the lessening of pressures which maintain the unity of the state itself. Although perhaps most evident in the EU context, regional integration elsewhere also opens up space for subnational government to extend its range of activities, and also facilitates the creation of cross-border regions and growth poles which can detract, strictly speaking, from the sovereignty of the state (Schulz, Sæderbaum and Ojendal 2001). Of course, this may be no bad thing: what is important is to note its possibility, and the fact that it speaks to issues of identity, state power, intergovernmental relations within a state, and accountability.

Attention must be paid to the impact of regional integration on domestic policy preferences. This can be of enormous import, changing, or at least locking in, a different political system (a thin kind of liberal democracy) or an economic doctrine (neoliberalism) which is otherwise antithetical or at least new to the national tradition (Gamble 2001). A case in point is Mexico's experience in NAFTA. Such changes are

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<sup>10</sup> Of course, the positive side of this, as Telø also notes, is that governments can find it correspondingly harder to articulate or enforce narrow or ethnocentric rules of citizenship or identity.

not necessarily entirely bad from the point of view of development; what counts is the fact that regional integration is used to make, or cement, major systemic shifts which might not otherwise be supported. Furthermore, regional integration may require participant states to sacrifice, or at least downplay, long-standing relations with third countries which involve policies contrary to those of the regional group (for example personal freedom of movement between some of the 2004 entrant states to the EU and their neighbours). The impact on democracy is obvious.

Thus, it is important to acknowledge that new regionalism and democracy are intricately linked. It is possible that they can reinforce each other. It is possible that regional integration can have a negative impact on democracy. It is also possible that democracy can have a negative impact on regional integration, at least as far as its most ardent supporters are concerned - witness the rise of 'Euroscepticism' in Europe, and the paralysing impact upon the EU of the ongoing crisis of the 'democratic deficit'. As a direct result of its perceived illegitimacy, the EU has failed as a polity to develop significantly, devoting its attention to ensuring that the single currency was launched successfully and the mechanics of the enlargement process functioned smoothly. With this example of the importance of democracy in new regionalism in mind, I now focus on the 'normative turn' in EU studies that has arisen in order to develop ways of solving the EU's democracy problem.

## **USING THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE: THE 'NORMATIVE TURN' IN EUROPEAN STUDIES**

### **Explaining the 'Normative Turn'**

In recent years, EU scholars have paid increasing attention to the issue of democracy, giving EU studies a 'normative turn' (Bellamy and Castiglione 2000). This has been for three primary reasons<sup>11</sup>. First, the Treaty on European Union (TEU) of 1992 raised again the idea of a possible federal outcome to the European integration process, a prospect against which many citizens rebelled. Ironically, many pro-integration citizens also began to doubt the quality of European integration, seeing in the TEU's many concessions to national sovereignty the likelihood of institutional incapacity. Second, (European) integration theory has itself been going through a period of renewal, or at least re-examination. Traditional approaches (neofunctionalism; intergovernmentalism) are being re-evaluated and, in many cases, rejected. Thus, there was conceptual space for new issues to be mainstreamed into EU theory, which was being fundamentally re-examined in order to restate its very objectives, focus and relations with other (sub) disciplines (Rosamond 2000). The third key factor is the entry into EU studies of scholars from other (sub) disciplines, who, alerted by the TEU to the fact that the European Union was a novel but highly developed political system, sought to elaborate ways in which its governance could be understood, developed and legitimised.

The product of this 'turn' has been a far more nuanced understanding of the ways in which regional integration - as exemplified by the EU - has an impact on democracy. It has also delivered an understanding of how EU governance might best be

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<sup>11</sup> On the context and contribution of the normative turn, see Warleigh 2003, especially chapter 1.

democratized. This can be characterized as a quadruple balancing act (Warleigh 2004, forthcoming - on which the following paragraphs draw).

#### **Four Balancing Acts: Complexities of Democracy in Regional Integration**

As a transnational system, the EU is unlikely to be suited to the straightforward application of models based on the nation state, requiring instead innovations in the theory and practice of democratic governance (Schmitter 2000). Additionally, those seeking to reform the EU must recognise that it is deeply coloured by a path dependency which affects both the nature of the EU system and the attitudes of actors within it about the possibilities for reform (viz. the generally conservative and self-serving Commission White Paper on Governance of 2001). Attempting to make common policy in the absence of a hegemon, Union decision making has always been characterised by the search for consensus between key actors, defined as those in elites at national and EU levels<sup>12</sup>. Lord (1998: chs. 2 and 5) observes that this 'extreme consensus democracy' has been at the expense of mass democracy, which explains both how perceptions of a democratic deficit have arisen and why the EU's legitimacy crisis of the last decade surprised many in positions of power. However, this culture of consensus usefully demonstrates that the EU must in fact balance both different kinds of legitimacy and the demands of different groups of actors in order to be democratic (Höreth 1999). Thus, although the equilibrium between these different sources and types of legitimacy is clearly in need of revision, it is necessary to acknowledge that the approach itself - the instinct for balance - is both a reflection of the EU's own political culture and likely to remain necessary.

The first balancing act which the EU must perform is between different competing national views of what a democratic Union would constitute. The member states continue to want different things from European integration in terms of both specific policy areas and its ultimate end-point, the so-called *finalité politique*. Consequently they differ in the degree of sovereignty they are prepared to exercise jointly with their partner states, and also over the specific regime they would consider legitimate to erect at EU level. Member states may agree that a certain policy area should be EU competence, but differ enormously about both the nature of the legislation to be made and the constitution of the relevant decision rules. Furthermore, there are differences in political culture which often shape national elite responses to any given issue, as demonstrated most notoriously by the diametrically opposed German and British understandings of the term 'federal' (which Germans consider to mean a decentralised system based on strict separation of powers and strong rule of law, and the British consider to mean a centralised superstate). Moreover, national elite views about the desirable outcomes of the integration process change over time. For example, Italy under the present Berlusconi regime appears to be far less viscerally pro-integration than in the past. Thus, it is clear that this first balance must be constantly revisited, and that no particular view has an inherently greater legitimacy than others: given that each state which joins the Union has formal equality with all other member states, there is no *a priori* reason why, for example, Danish reluctance to sign up to the Schengen

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<sup>12</sup> The composition of this elite has changed over time as the interinstitutional balance of power has altered. For an excellent guide to the history and development of the EU, see Dinan 1999.

agreements on freedom of movement<sup>13</sup> is less legitimate than Belgian enthusiasm for them.

The second balancing act is between the different levels of governance within the EU system. The Union has not replaced or superseded national systems, which continue to reflect different national balances between centre and periphery and various approaches to the welfare state; rather, the EU has ‘fused’ with them (Wessels 1997), leaving (sub)national governments to implement EU policy according to the dictates of national systems. In some member states, such as Germany, Austria, Belgium and Spain, regional/local government is powerful, bolstered by strong normative claims to legitimacy based on the principle of local self-government, often enshrined in national constitutions. As a complex and varied system of multi-level governance (Marks, Hooghe and Blank 1996), the EU needs to reflect the demands and roles of governance at local/regional, national *and* European levels if it is to be legitimate. Moreover, democratising the Union cannot be accomplished solely at EU level, but also requires change at (sub)national level, given that it is through actors and institutions at these levels that most citizens will experience the Union as a policy maker.

The third balancing act is that between output legitimacy and input legitimacy. Traditionally, output legitimacy has been preferred, in the hope that loyalties would be transferred to the Union as a result of its production of public goods which were seen to increase the public welfare. As demonstrated by Bellamy and Warleigh (1998), this approach has been insufficient for two main reasons. First, the EU’s inability to develop the necessary redistributive policy, because the member states have refused to give it the necessary competence and budget (despite the growth in relative importance of EU cohesion policy). Second, the Union’s lack of attention to public participation, which has created, or at best done nothing to remove, a situation in which citizens are generally alienated from the integration process (Eurobarometer 54, Autumn 2000<sup>14</sup>). Thus, democratisation will require a shift in favour of input legitimacy, which will not be easy in the absence of a Europeanised civil society (Warleigh 2001a). However, without the emergence of a self-conscious European demos, it is unlikely that institutional change at EU level will not be perceived as legitimate, but rather as the imposition of a false majoritarianism unrooted in (political) identity (Chryssochoou 2000).

The fourth, and final, balancing act is between different normative views of democracy. There are many different views about how exactly democracy is possible in the context of the EU, which may colour the different and changing national elite positions on the Union’s *finalité politique* as discussed above. However, this issue increasingly goes beyond national cleavages at the elite level to academic and popular debates on the best way to develop institutions such as EU citizenship, or the principles on which policy in newly-vigorous fields such as justice and home affairs or security and defence should be based. In terms of political theory, this boils down to debates over the most appropriate way to mix principles of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, both of which are relevant to the Union given its multi-level and ‘fused’ nature (Bellamy and Warleigh 1998).

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<sup>13</sup> These agreements were made on an extra-Treaty basis in 1985, and incorporated into EU law by the Treaty of Amsterdam (agreed 1997; ratified 1999).

<sup>14</sup> Eurobarometer is a regular opinion poll using a sample of citizens from each member state, under the aegis of the European Commission.

### **The Need for Mutual Learning**

This work in EU studies can serve NR scholars ably. It demonstrates that democratization requires regional integration to be on a 'more-than-a-market' basis. It reinforces the constructivist approach in new regionalism. And it demonstrates the need for, and difficulty of, civil society regionalization. Although clearly it requires revision to suit each case of regional integration, given the varieties of approaches taken to regional organization across the globe, the EU studies work on democratization does give a conceptual framework for the study of democratization processes in regional integration. It draws on, and adds to, political theories of democratic governance, and applies them to the specific case of regional integration. It thus offers variables to study and the beginnings of falsifiable hypotheses which NR scholars could use.

Such work also offers support to those in NR who are seeking to emphasise, or broaden, the attention given to the political aspects of regional integration (Mansfield and Milner 1999; Breslin, Higgott and Rosamond 2002; Marchand, Bøås and Shaw 1999). Its contribution in this regard is all the more significant given that the development of a 'regional society' has been identified as the crucial stage in the development of regional integration projects (Hettne and Sæderbaum 2000); a focus on democratization would help scholars identify just how far a given project has developed rule-based governance, civil society participation, and de facto multi-level governance practices (or structures).

However, this work on EU democratization also shows both the complexity of the task at hand, and the need to adopt an approach which is at least intra-disciplinary (i.e. drawing on several sub-fields of political science) and probably inter-disciplinary (drawing on social anthropology, sociology and psychology). At first blush, this is a great challenge to sub-fields in their infancy such as new regionalism and EU studies. However, viewed more creatively, it is also an opportunity to add important work to those (sub) disciplines, which often fail to integrate new political processes and structures into their own established canons - an opportunity that neither NR nor EU studies are, on their own, likely to grasp with success.

Democratization work in EU studies, then, also shows the need for that sub-discipline to reach outside its boundaries. Not only would such work have been impossible in any other way, it is also unlikely to elaborate further without comparison and dialogue with those studying other regional integration projects, where many of the same dilemmas will arise, but where they may be more successfully addressed. Many working in EU studies could usefully imbibe the explicitly critical approach to regional integration adopted by NR scholars (Schulz, Sæderbaum and Ojendal 2001: 6-7). They would also benefit from more structured use of the NR literature in order to question some of the emerging ideas in EU studies (such as the EU's role as a 'normative power' [Manners 2002]), which tend to stress the EU's role as a model rather than see it as one variant of regional integration among many.

## **CONCLUSIONS: FOR A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN EU AND NR STUDIES**

In this paper I have tried to show that a rigid division between EU and NR studies is artificial and to the detriment of scholars in both fields. I have explored the justified concerns of NR scholars about intellectual imperialism on the part of those in EU studies, and argued that as both comparator and source of research-enriching ideas/data the EU can ably serve those working in the 'new regionalism'. I have also argued that EU studies scholars would benefit from a deeper engagement with NR literature, in order to test their own assumptions, and discover ways in which the EU is, or is not, a source of generalizable strictures on regional integration. By taking the example of democratization, I have shown that EU scholars can be openly intra/inter-disciplinary, and also that this work has produced much that could be taken up usefully by NR scholars. I have not tried to argue that the two fields of study should be merged. Although greater dialogue between them may eventually lead to that outcome, it may also be that, for example, the EU's state-like features necessitate an openness to state-based comparative politics which NR scholars find unhelpful.

Thus, a sensible way forward would be for EU and NR scholars to collaborate on the development of joint research agendas, where an explicitly international, critical and comparative focus seeks to question, test and develop insights developed by scholars in both fields. Democratization is a clear example of where such collaboration would be fruitful. It is no coincidence that the greater the number of voices heard, the greater the likelihood of finding out the truth of who gets what, how, when and why - the old, and in my view still the best, way of defining why we study politics at all.

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