

Book Review: European Security in Integration Theory: Contested Boundaries by Kamil Zwolski

In European Security in Integration Theory: Contested Boundaries, Kamil Zwolski revisits the archive of two theories of international and European integration – federalism and functionalism – to show their relevance for understanding the dilemmas facing Europe today. As early integration theories may return as part of current debates, this book will be of use to academics and policymakers, finds Anna Nadibaidze.

European Security in Integration Theory: Contested Boundaries. Kamil Zwolski. Palgrave Macmillan. 2018.

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The eruption of armed conflict in Ukraine in 2014 has presented a new puzzle for practitioners and academics studying European security. With the help of various International Relations theories, they have been trying to explain the return of war to the European continent. What is often missing from the debate is an empirical-normative focus which allows policymakers and scholars to not only analyse the causes of the conflict, but also to reflect on how other actors in the European security sphere should react.

This empirical-normative character can be found in early international integration theories introduced during the interwar period, argues [Kamil Zwolski](#), based at the University of Southampton. In *European Security in Integration Theory: Contested Boundaries*, Zwolski revisits the archive of theories on international and European integration with the goal of demonstrating their relevance for ‘the understanding of the dilemmas facing Europe today’ (2).

The book looks specifically at two theories: federalism and functionalism. Early federalism, proposed after the First World War, involves the idea of uniting Europe politically and economically in order to be protected against external threats. Geopolitical boundaries played a key role in early federalist thought. However, theorists had different visions of which countries would be part of this united federation, depending on what they saw as the end goal of integration. Some focused on restoring Europe’s power in the world, such as Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, who suggested that European member states should form a defensive alliance against Soviet Russia and an economic alliance against the US. Others advocated for a political alliance based on ideology, formed against totalitarian powers.

Meanwhile, in [functionalism](#), associated with political theorist David Mitrany, the integration of states is based on a functional purpose, rather than on territory. The end goal would be to create technical supranational agencies with authority given by member states to respond to their needs.





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Both of these early theories are linked in the book with two contemporary research programmes. First, Zwolski shows the links between international federalism and the 'Europe as a global power' scholarship, which developed in the 1970s with the goal of studying the ways that a more unified Europe could project its power abroad. Both theoretical approaches explore the role of Europe as a geopolitical territory which protects from the 'others' located outside its boundaries. Second, there is some degree of continuity between functionalism and the 'European security governance' research. While there is no direct link between functionalist and security governance theories, they both 'emphasise solving international problems rather than drawing geopolitical boundaries' (135).

The security governance programme focuses on solving international security issues through governance, which includes a range of institutions and regimes, both private and public. One example of security governance given in the book is the network created by the EU's policy on the proliferation of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons. This initiative includes secretariats, projects and networks of experts at both regional and national levels all functioning with the goal of addressing a specific security threat: the proliferation of CBRN weapons.

Following the theoretical part of the book, the author looks at the relevance and significance of early integration theories for the case of EU-Russia relations and the ongoing Ukrainian crisis. The main argument is that international federalism and functionalism 'represent alternative empirical-normative perspectives of the European-Russian security order' (204). They stand in contrast with the most used theoretical perspectives which analyse the causes of the war in Ukraine. Some attribute the conflict to an expansionist Russia adopting a more aggressive foreign policy, while others point to the expansion of the Euro-Atlantic community into Eastern Europe, an area which Russia sees as its sphere of influence. Meanwhile, federalism and functionalism offer not only an explanation of the causes, but also recommendations for ways forward, which make them particularly useful for policymakers who are asking themselves how to respond to Russia's actions.

For most early federalists, Soviet Russia was not part of a united Europe, either for practical or ideological reasons. For instance, in Coudenhove-Kalergi's theory, Russia was not only excluded but also a threat and a reason for European states to unite. Federalists would therefore recommend strengthening and deepening European integration in order to resist the threat from Russia.

Mitrany's functionalism, however, envisages a more practical regional security system in order to deal with problems efficiently, without letting their 'ideological differences prevent them from seeking practical solutions' to solving common issues (188). There are some similarities between this approach and the 'greater Europe' security governance, where the continent's security would be dependent on a more inclusive group: for instance, through the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) rather than exclusive clubs such as the EU and NATO. Proponents of the 'greater Europe' would argue that European security would be better protected if there were a pan-European zone of cooperation which would include Russia, suggesting a more pragmatic and inclusive approach in terms of policy recommendations.

In contrast to theories which are focused only on explaining the causes of conflict, federalism and functionalism have normative aspects. An empirical-normative nature is useful as it 'allows developing precisely the kind of theoretical propositions, which can combine explaining causes with prescribing solutions' (191), and makes it 'more suitable for providing a valuable contribution for those who are concerned with the practical aspects of politics and international relations' (4). Given the added value of these theories, the author suggests using these lenses more often in International Relations by shifting to a more comprehensive research agenda, including both explanatory and normative elements.

As noted in the conclusion, just as during the interwar period with Soviet Russia, the question of integrating Russia within the wider European security community remains relevant. As this issue 'will not disappear' (209), bringing back theories which contain a normative side to them to the academic debate seems relevant in the long term. By revisiting the theories of federalism and functionalism developed in the interwar period, Zwolski contests the current boundaries of European integration studies. At the same time, it would also be important to look at the relevance of early integration theories for the study of security orders elsewhere in the world. As the author suggests: 'the value of early integration theories for contemporary research agenda will depend on their applicability to other problems of international relations' (209).

Remaining on the European continent but shifting away to the West, it might also be relevant to revisit these theories when looking at the future place of the UK in European security after it leaves the EU structure. It is interesting to read in Zwolski's historical review of federalism that several proponents of the early theories did not advocate for Britain to join European integration projects. These arguments could well resurface in the near future, and early integration theories could once again be part of the debate and relevant for both academics and policymakers.

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Note: This review gives the views of the author, and not the position of the LSE Review of Books blog, or of the London School of Economics.