

Christian Kaunert: **European Internal Security – Moving Towards Supranational Governance in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.**

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European integration and the dynamics of its governance have been subject to extensive research from a wide range of disciplines. European security and foreign policy in particular have taken over an even more prominent role since the establishment of the European External Action Service in 2010. The European self-perception of itself as a global actor in the field of security has fostered this interest even more, with the European police missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan and the global fight against terrorism highlighting just some examples of the European Union's efforts to make an impact on global politics.

It may therefore be surprising to realize that the research on how the European Union is governing its own internal security regime is far less prominent than the external perspective. It is even more surprising as security has become the most dominant force in the European Union to an extent that some scholars even speak of "securitization" of EU politics. This, of course, affects the external dimension as much as the internal dimension of European security policies. That the internal dimension of the security debate has drawn less, though increasing attention, during the recent debates may have various reasons, such as the highly diffuse EU legislation, the great number of different competencies, or above all, its lack of democratic legitimacy. Another reason could be the dominating attitude among the member states that internal security is, by its very nature, national policy and should remain as a most sensitive matter within the competencies of the member states themselves. Above all, and maybe most importantly, there is the lack of coherent internal security strategy in Europe. Although the strategic efforts have been increased (i.e. the Stockholm Program), the European Union is facing a situation where internal security policies are in large parts highly inefficient and sometimes even catastrophic, as the recent refugees dramas at the European border in the Mediterranean Sea indicate.

Kaunert's book fills this gap in the research about the Area of Security Freedom and Justice in Europe (AFSJ). In this context, his book is a lucid and well-written study of the contemporary developments in the field of European Internal Security. Its ambitious approach using a so-called triangulation of methods comprises of an analysis of the academic literature on the ASFJ and crucial policy documents, as well as using over 100 elite interviews with actors and decision-makers in the area. Kaunert is a professor for political science at the University of Dundee in Scotland and is an expert on the field of European Internal Security with a great number of published articles and books on the topic.

The central thesis of his book is that the European Commission played a significant role in shaping the ASFJ and that external threats such as terrorism have played a crucial role in this process. The commission has managed to channel this process towards developing a “European” rather than a “national” solution, as Kaunert considers the EU institutions as so-called ‘supranational policy entrepreneurs’. This concept suggests a theoretical model based on four streams: the problem, the policy, the politics and the norm stream, all of which operate simultaneously. This theoretical framework is examined in the second chapter of the book. After having set this ambitious theoretical framework, the following chapter continues by focusing on the European Union and sketches out the genealogy of the ASFJ. The reader is provided with a short but complete account of the historical landmarks of the development of the AFSJ.

The fourth chapter, titled “EU Counter-terrorism Co-operation and the Role of EU Institutions”, mainly deals with the political dynamics of the establishment of the European Arrest Warrant. Here, the strengths of Kaunert’s approach can be observed. Although the decision to create the European Arrest Warrant, and by that revolutionizing the European Extradition Law, was already made in 1999 (Tampere Summit), the crucial initiative for its establishment was made by the EU-Commission in the context of the new War on Terror in the aftermath of 9/11. Kaunert gives a detailed account of the political process leading to the European Arrest Warrant by relying in large part on the conducted interviews, which makes the chapter a lucid account of the political dynamics among the key actors in European security policies.

The fifth chapter, written together with Sarah Leonard, thematically succeeds the previous by picking up the EU counter-terrorism efforts with a focus on the growing importance of its external dimension. Here again it is argued that the commission and the Council Secretariat played a crucial role in the policy development, while the wider framework of the young European Foreign policy is included in the analysis.

The following two chapters deal with the second major security threats to European security after terrorism: asylum and migration. Kaunert argues that the European Asylum System even in its first phase remained within the constraints of the Geneva conventions and even strengthened it. Nevertheless, the roles of EU Institutions in EU asylum and migration have been significantly underestimated. Here again, the crucial role of the European Commission as a supranational security entrepreneur is highlighted and made plausible.

Kaunert’s book is a well-written and far ranging account of the European internal security. The work is very well researched and is supplied with an ample bibliography. Its strong fundamentals in political theory makes it an interesting work for readers with background in political science with an interest in security policies and its political implementation on an EU level.

Robin Hofmann, March 2014