



Failing under the 'shadow of hierarchy': explaining the role of the European Parliament in the EU's 'asylum crisis'

Ariadna Ripoll Servent

To cite this article: Ariadna Ripoll Servent (2019) Failing under the 'shadow of hierarchy': explaining the role of the European Parliament in the EU's 'asylum crisis', Journal of European Integration, 41:3, 293-310, DOI: [10.1080/07036337.2019.1599368](https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2019.1599368)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2019.1599368>



Published online: 16 May 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 2273



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 19 View citing articles [↗](#)

ARTICLE



Failing under the ‘shadow of hierarchy’: explaining the role of the European Parliament in the EU’s ‘asylum crisis’

Ariadna Ripoll Servent 

Department of Political Science, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

ABSTRACT

One of the main proposals to solve the ‘asylum crisis’ of 2015–2016 was to reform the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and, in particular, the Dublin regime. However, the European Council conclusion of June 2018 exposed the failure to find an agreement on the CEAS reform. This article examines the conditions for policy failure – focusing on how crises affect inter-institutional negotiations and the role played by the European Parliament (EP) in particular. It shows how the EP successfully managed to form a united position and frame the crisis as a failure of previous CEAS reforms, but that this was not sufficient to break the deadlock among member states. Therefore, it demonstrates how the ‘shadow of hierarchy’ cast by the European Council may be a sufficient condition to explain policy failure, which may potentially lead to the gradual disempowerment of the EP in EU policy-making.

KEYWORDS

Asylum crisis; policy failure; EU decision-making; European Parliament; bicameralism; new intergovernmentalism

Introduction

On 29 June 2018, at 4:35 a.m., the European Council eventually agreed to a set of measures aimed to ‘solve’ the European Union’s (EU) ‘asylum crisis’. These measures ranged from intensifying cooperation with the Sahel region, Libya and Turkey, opening new ‘controlled centres’ on EU territory, to strengthening the operational and budgetary resources of the European Border and Coastguard Agency (aka Frontex) further. In comparison, the legislative reform of European asylum laws that had started in 2016 received only a passing mention: ‘A consensus needs to be found on the Dublin Regulation to reform it based on a balance of responsibility and solidarity... Further examination is also required on the Asylum Procedures proposal’ (European Council 2018). The failure to find a solution to the shortcomings of the Dublin system was confirmed some days later when Sebastian Kurz (as head of the Austrian presidency) declared that ‘his ministers would push in Brussels for a swift compromise on five of seven files related to the asylum debate that are ready for adoption *without waiting for a compromise to be found on the contentious rest, mainly the reform of the Dublin rules*’ (Politico 2018c, emphasis added).

Why is this relevant? First and foremost, because it is a clear example of policy failure in a context of crisis: while many factors contributed to the ‘asylum crisis’, the failure to reform the Dublin Regulation – which determines the member state responsible for

providing international protection – underlines the difficulty in finding solutions based on solidarity and shared responsibility (cf. Scipioni 2018). Despite the attempts made by the European Commission (hereafter Commission) to reform the Dublin Regulation, the European Council conclusions pushed the revision of Dublin into the background and condemned it to a slow death. This decision was all the more surprising given that the European Parliament (EP) had already reached an internal compromise on how to revise the system – one that received the support of almost all political groups. Therefore, this example of policy failure can tell us a lot about how crises shape EU decision-making – both in terms of content (why some solutions succeed while others fail) and form (which conditions determine the success or failure of EU legislators and the EP in particular).

Hence, this article examines how the context of crisis surrounding the legislative reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) has affected the EP's ability to participate and successfully use its legislative power to address the weaknesses of the EU's asylum system. It aims to explain policy failure by focusing on the chances that the EP had to shape policy outputs and break the deadlock in inter-institutional negotiations. To this effect, it compares two competitive explanations regarding the role of the EP in EU decision-making: on the one hand, it builds on a 'standard account' of EU decision-making that situates the EP in the framework of a bicameral political system (Ripoll Servent 2018a; Hagemann and Høyland 2010; Costello 2011). It understands bicameralism as a game in which EP and Council need to find intra- and inter-institutional compromises to pass legislation. The 'standard account', however, presupposes that, as long as the EP manages to build winning coalitions among its political groups and frame policy solutions in a persuading or legitimate way, it will enjoy high chances of success.

In contrast, the growing literature on 'new intergovernmentalism' confronts some of the basic assumptions of the 'standard account'. It argues that, since Maastricht, national actors working on the EU level avoid delegating powers to traditional supranational institutions, notably the Commission and the Court of Justice (CJEU). Therefore, we see a new form of 'integration without supranationalisation' (Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015; Fabbrini and Puetter 2016). This phenomenon is linked to the transfer of competences in areas of 'core state powers', that is, policies that concern the core components of a state, such as monetary policy (taxation and budget), internal security (control of the territory) or even cohesion measures (solidarity). As a result, EU policies have become more salient on the domestic level and open to contestation (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2016). This new type of integration has affected the *modus operandi* in day-to-day policy-making since the sensitivity of these issues emphasises the need for deliberation and consensus among national actors. As a result, the European Council has become the dominant EU institution during both the agenda-setting and decision-making stages. However, 'new intergovernmentalism' has failed to explore the effects that this change in day-to-day decision-making may have on supranational institutions, especially the European Parliament.

Therefore, this article develops new theoretical expectations that can help us explain the success or failure of the European Parliament in times when the 'ordinary' *modus operandi* does not apply. The analysis of negotiations is based on documentary analysis (amendments, debates, media interventions, etc.) and 14 semi-structured elite interviews with experts involved in the negotiations from all three EU institutions (for more details,

see the list provided at the end of this article). This study shows that the EP successfully managed to form a united position and frame the crisis as a failure of previous CEAS reforms, but that this was not sufficient to break the deadlock among member states. Therefore, the intervention of the European Council is crucial to explain the failure of negotiations and shows how the ‘shadow of hierarchy’ may be a sufficient condition for policy failure – leading to the gradual disempowerment of the EP in EU policy-making.

How to explain the EP’s influence under a crisis situation?

The effects of crises on day-to-day decision-making remain a largely unexplained phenomenon in the EU literature. Those accounts that focus on inter-institutional negotiations tend to focus on ‘ordinary’ times and try to account for the gradual empowerment of the EP as a legislative actor (Thomson 2011; Ripoll Servent 2018a; Rittberger 2012). In contrast, most accounts of crises focus on ‘history-making’ bargains among member states – obviating the fact that these deals generally need to be translated into ‘ordinary’ legislation (Ioannou, Leblond, and Niemann 2015; Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015). This section complements these accounts by situating them in the context of ‘extraordinary’ or ‘crisis’ day-to-day decision-making.

Standard approaches and crisis policy-making

‘Standard approaches’ to co-decision base explanations about success or failure on a bicameral understanding of the EU; this means that, under normal conditions, the EP enjoys a formal veto power that allows it to potentially block policy outputs. For those authors who adopt a rational-choice institutionalist perspective, the success or failure of the EP depends largely on its capacity to find internal majorities: the larger they are, the more leverage the EP will enjoy in inter-institutional negotiations. These explanations put actors’ sensitivity to failure (BATNA) to the forefront of causal explanations; therefore, it is those actors who have less to lose and can spend more time negotiating that will have higher chances of success – especially if they have alternative arenas where they can pursue their goals or if they can threaten their opponents with future legal sanctions (Farrell and Héritier 2007; Hagemann and Høyland 2010; Costello 2011). In comparison, constructivist institutionalists emphasise the role of institutional norms and legitimacy to explain the actions of actors. They consider how and why political actors attribute legitimacy to certain behaviours – such as acting responsibly in order to achieve inter-institutional compromises or presenting claims that can justify their actions vis-à-vis their constituency (Ripoll Servent 2015; Maricut-Akbik 2018b; Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). Therefore, from this perspective, the chances of success improve if the EP is able to frame solutions that are difficult to reject without losing legitimacy (Trauner and Ripoll Servent 2016).

How might crises affect the ability of the EP to form a united position? Crises might politicise European policy-making and the matter of integration, which in turn leads political actors to direct their claims towards national audiences. This makes reaching consensus among EU decision-makers more difficult (Börzel and Risse 2018; Maricut-Akbik 2018a, 2018b), particularly for the EP, since its composition has become more ideologically diverse after the 2014 elections – both on the left-right divide as well as on the pro-against

integration dimension (Ripoll Servent 2018a, 201–204;261–264; Whitaker, Hix, and Zapryanova 2017). Therefore, in crisis situations, MEPs might face more conflicts between the position of their EP group and their party back home (Meserve, Robbins, and Thames 2017) – especially if their national party is part of the government and if their country has been particularly affected by a crisis (Mühlböck 2012; Finke 2014).

If, despite polarisation, the EP manages to build strong majorities around a common position, this will give it more leverage in inter-institutional negotiations. However, this position will not have many chances if the EP cannot convince the Council that it represents a legitimate solution to the substantive problems raised by the crisis. Indeed, providing a narrative of what is a legitimate frame (and what is not) and how urgently it should be tackled might help EP actors discredit potential counter-frames (Boin, Hart, and McConnell 2009; Schmidt 2016; Kingdon 1984). In this case, it means that the EP will have better chances of succeeding if it manages to frame the crisis as a failure of past policy solutions (i.e. Dublin and previous CEAS reforms) and claims that there is a need to urgently ‘learn lessons’ (Trauner and Ripoll Servent 2016). If the origins of the crisis are blamed on external factors, it is more likely that policy stability prevails and that the EP finds it more difficult to provide a counter-frame, especially if the latter blames other institutional actors for the crisis (cf. Boin, Hart, and McConnell 2009).

New intergovernmentalism and crisis policy-making

New intergovernmentalism approaches EU policy-making from the assumption that the increased level of polarisation over European integration has led to forms of integration that bypass supranational structures – especially in areas that affect ‘core state powers’ and which are more likely to become politicised (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2016; Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015). As a result, Heads of state and government have become key decision-makers, casting a shadow over agenda-setting and day-to-day decision-making – what is known as the ‘shadow of hierarchy’. How do these two elements shape the EP’s chances of success or failure?

First, crises often reveal dormant forms of contestation around the nature of integration – notably on whether further delegation is seen as necessary to solve the problem. Comparisons between the Eurozone and Schengen crises have underlined the importance of examining how a problem is linked to integration. Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2016, 2018) have noted that areas related to ‘core state powers’ raise distributive conflicts, which – compared to processes of market integration – cannot be solved merely with regulation. Biermann et al. (2019) have remarked that, when examining ‘core state powers’, we need to make a difference between problems that require further integration so as to avoid a ‘common bad’ (e.g., the breakdown of the Eurozone) and those where there is no agreement on what the ‘common bad’ might be (as in the case of the Schengen crisis). The latter encourages free-riding and a bias towards the status quo, especially among those member states less affected by the crisis. Therefore, if the EP manages to frame the problem as one of market integration and/or not affecting the sovereignty of member states, it might be more successful in pushing integration further. However, this might prove more difficult if the crisis is seen as being linked to a ‘core state power’ with very clear winners and losers; in that case, the EP might find it difficult to advance integration beyond very weak forms of cooperation (cf. Trauner and Ripoll Servent 2015; Bickerton, Hodson, and Puetter 2015).

In addition, the EP's chances of success might be reduced in times of crisis if negotiations are perceived by (some) member states as so sensitive that nothing can be decided without the intervention of the European Council. Therefore, the 'shadow of hierarchy' might condition the ability of the EP to set the pace and timing of negotiations and might make it difficult for Council representatives to commit themselves to an agreement without checking first with the European Council. In addition, the 'shadow of hierarchy' might also affect shared norms of consensus and compromise – raising the stakes of policy outputs and questioning the legitimacy of the EP as an equal partner in co-decision (Ripoll Servent 2015; Trauner and Ripoll Servent 2016; Bressanelli and Chelotti 2018). This means that, if a problem is seen as particularly sensitive, the EP might be asked to behave 'responsibly' and subordinate its positions to the wishes of member states. New intergovernmentalism, therefore, problematises the issue of integration as a potential source of conflict among member states, reducing the zone of agreement and making it more difficult for the EP to go against member states' wishes.

In order to evaluate the expectations of these two alternative accounts, the following section examines the position of the EP in the reform of the CEAS, which can be clearly situated in the area of 'core state powers'.

Reforming the Common European Asylum System after the crisis

What has come to be known as the 'asylum (or refugee) crisis' is a complex phenomenon that has often been presented as originating in external factors (notably the conflict in Syria). However, the crisis has served, first and foremost, to confirm the weaknesses of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS): this system is based on a 'responsibility principle' rather than a 'capacity principle', which means that those member states that let asylum-seekers into the Schengen territory are made responsible for them (Thielemann and Armstrong 2013); this has led to a disproportionate burden on 'frontline' member states bordering the Mediterranean. The imbalance between core member states with strong asylum systems (e.g., Germany and Sweden) and border countries with weak asylum systems were at the core of the last revision of the CEAS (concluded in 2013) but could not be successfully addressed (Ripoll Servent and Trauner 2014; Zaun 2017).

During this crisis, member states were reluctant to abandon the 'responsibility principle' in favour of a 'capacity principle' (e.g., relocation quotas). Instead, there was a tendency to externalise the crisis and find solutions outside the CEAS – notably with the EU–Turkey deal and the reinforcement of border control (Slominski and Trauner 2018). Procedurally, the European Council dominated the main attempts to break the impasse: the initial agreements on temporary relocation quotas reached in September 2015 (2015/1523/EU and 2015/1601/EU) took the form of Council decisions, which meant that the EP was only included under the consultation procedure. Similarly, the EU–Turkey deal of 18 March 2016 has been repeatedly criticised for its dubious legal basis, since it is only a European Council statement. This means that the Commission did not enjoy a role as EU negotiator, the EP was not asked to give its consent, and it cannot be impugned by the Court of Justice (Lehner 2019).

At the same time, these deals are often 'imperfect' and need to be complemented by 'normal' legislative measures decided under the co-decision procedure. Therefore, as a follow up, the Commission set to reform European legislation in three waves (see [Table](#)

1). The decision of the Commission was not uncontested, since most of the legislative measures decided in the previous recast had not yet been fully implemented (interviews #3, #14). However, it was also the only chance to include the various ideas to resolve the crisis that the EP had proactively proposed in an own-initiative report (2015/2095/INI).

The Commission tackled the problem of solidarity in the Dublin system head on by proposing an automatic mechanism of redistribution. At the same time, it upgraded two of the key elements of the CEAS (Qualifications and Procedures) by transforming them into Regulations; this aimed to further harmonise member states' asylum policies and avoid secondary movements (i.e. cases where asylum-seekers do not apply in the first country of arrival) and 'asylum shopping' (applying in several member states to maximise the chances of getting international protection) (European Commission 2016, interviews #6 and #11). Finally, it also reinforced the operational capacities of Frontex and EASO, providing them with stronger monitoring powers and even the ability to intervene in member states (Ripoll Servent 2018b). Except for the reform of Frontex (Regulation 2016/1624), the rest of the proposals were treated as a legislative 'package', which means that their success or failure was not independent of each other.

How can we then account for the failure of the CEAS reform – especially when it comes to modifying the core principle of 'responsibility'? How successful has the EP been during the negotiations of the 'asylum package' and where has it failed to exert influence? The next two sections review the 'standard account' and the 'new inter-governmentalism account' to see to what extent they can explain the failure of the CEAS reform and help us identify the conditions for the success and failure of the EP.

Table 1. CEAS reform proposals.

Commission proposal	Aim of the proposal	Date of proposal	EP rapporteur	Stage of negotiations (July 2018)
European Border and Coast Guard agency (2015/0310/COD)	Reform of Frontex	December 2015	Artis Pabriks (EPP)	Regulation 2016/1624/EU
European Asylum Support Office (2016/0131/COD)	Reform of EASO	May 2016	Péter Niedermüller (S&D)	Political agreement ¹
Eurodac Regulation (2016/0132/COD)	Fingerprints for registering migrants and purpose extension	May 2016	Monica Macovei (ECR)	Trilogues
Reception Conditions Directive (2016/0222/COD)	Reception conditions for applicants	July 2016	Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)	Trilogues
Qualifications Regulation (2016/0223/COD)	Standards of qualification for international protection	July 2016	Tanja Fajon (S&D)	Trilogues
Resettlement Regulation (2016/0225/COD)	Resettlement of refugees from third-countries	July 2016	Malin Björk (GUE/NGL)	Trilogues
Dublin Regulation (2016/0133/COD)	Criteria to attribute member state responsible	May 2016	Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)	EP report/No Council common approach
Procedures Regulation (2016/0224/COD)	Common procedure to decide on international protection	July 2016	Laura Ferrara (EFDD)	EP report/No Council common approach

¹The Commission proposed an amended version of the Regulation on 12 September 2018 (COM(2018)0633), which included the amendments agreed in the political agreement and reinforced the Agency's competences in providing operational and technical assistance.

Standard account: unity in times of crisis

Bicameral accounts have shown how unity inside the EP is a necessary condition for success; therefore, to what extent did the EP manage to form a common position (and how broad was the support) in the different CEAS files?

Figure 1 shows the position of the different groups in the final roll-call votes at the committee level (civil liberties, LIBE).

Figure 1 shows that, although the EP was highly divided in many of these issues, most rapporteurs managed to find broad support for their reports. In Eurodac, the European Conservative and Reformists group (ECR) pushed for a more restrictive approach, which might explain why the left-wing groups were generally against it. The same logic applies, the other way around, for Resettlement, where the radical left (GUE/NGL) adopted a very rights-based approach. These results, however, show that most rapporteurs managed to go beyond the traditional left-right divide present in the LIBE committee (Ripoll Servent 2015) and formed coalitions that gathered most of the mainstream groups. This is, of course, largely due to the balance of power in the 2014–2019 EP, where left-wing groups do not have enough members to build a winning coalition on their own (Interview #8); it also reflects a widespread perception that these issues are too important, so that an attempt should be made to include as many groups as possible in the final EP position (Interviews #4, #6, #13).

These numbers, however, hide different patterns of division within the groups – especially the European People’s Party (EPP), which found itself isolated in the committee or supported only by the ECR (Interviews #6, #9, #13 and #14):

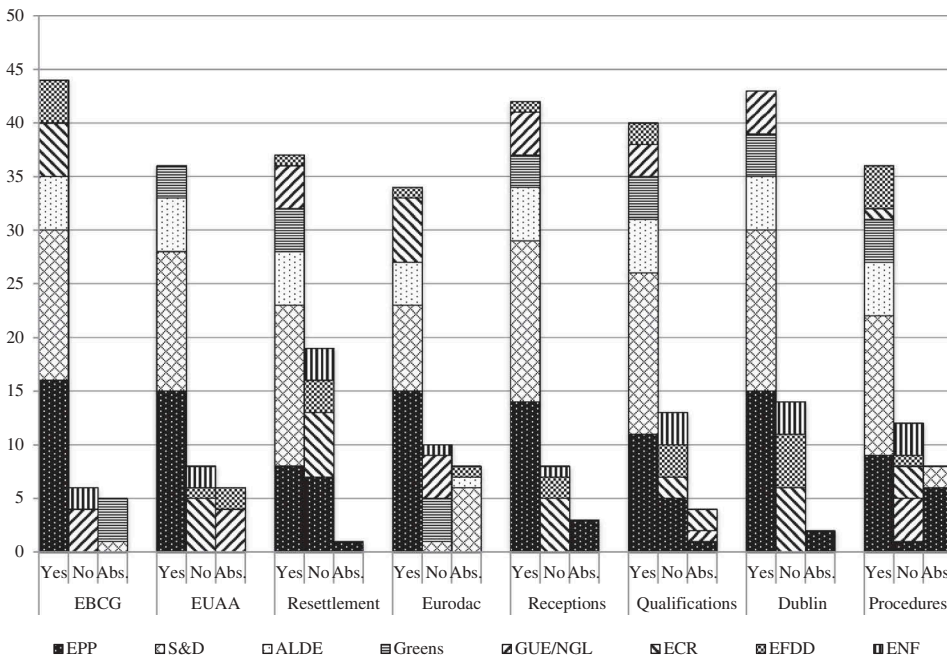


Figure 1. Committee votes in CEAS reform.

A key dynamic in the Parliament was the EPP group, where everybody recognised when something is as important as this you have to have all the political groups on board, especially the largest political group. But there was reluctance from some parts of the EPP to really reform the CEAS. (Interview #4)

Indeed, the EPP struggled to find a cohesive position in these matters and was divided mostly along national lines. These cleavages were similar to those found in the Council, with opposition coming especially from frontline countries and the Viségrad group (Czechs in particular, Polish, Slovaks and Hungarians). Although the influence of national politics was visible in most political groups, it was particularly visible inside the EPP, which has bigger delegations from these countries (Interviews #1, #2, #9, #11, #12, #13).

The process of negotiations also played a role in the management of internal conflicts – with the EPP becoming more belligerent as time went by. For instance, the Procedures Regulation suffered from being the last file under negotiation: the rapporteur (Laura Ferrara, Italian MEP from the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy [EFDD]) came from a small group that often suffers from lack of trust and authoritative-ness – which did not help when it came to negotiating with the bigger groups. In addition, under her leadership, the EFDD had voted against Dublin and criticised the compromise for electoral purposes back at home. Therefore, the liberal shadow (Cecilia Wikström, who was rapporteur in Dublin) was not predisposed to make it easier for Ferrara. This malaise in negotiations was compounded by the behaviour of the EPP shadow rapporteur (Jeroen Lenaerts), who adopted an increasingly restrictive position on the matter. In the end, the deadlock could only be overcome through bilateral package deals agreed between the S&D and the EPP and the shift of the more centrist sectors of the EPP towards the positions of the centre-left (Interviews #1, #3, #4, #14).

Despite these different splits, most EP rapporteurs managed to gather broad majorities that gave them stronger legitimacy in inter-institutional negotiations. For instance, a consensus on the Qualifications Regulation was reached relatively easily because the EPP was almost absent from negotiations and the rapporteur (S&D Tanja Fajon) managed to listen and incorporate the comments of the other (mostly left-wing) groups. This unity and consensual views on the matter made the EP's position stronger in inter-institutional negotiations (Interviews #3, #5 and #11). Indeed, the EP used its ability to find compromises (especially in difficult files like Dublin) to blame the Council (Interview #13):

We in the parliament have a two-third majority and have gathered the five groups and altogether more than 220 political parties from the European Union. 28 ministers should come up with one common text. (Wikström in Euobserver 2018)

Therefore, the EP's unity helped in negotiations with the Council and put it in a more legitimate and comfortable position during trilogues. This unity is all the more surprising given the very different perceptions of the crisis and its solutions among EP political groups. Indeed, although a majority of parties agreed that 'the important part is to set out a clear vision for a revised common European asylum system based on a new Dublin system that works with a distribution key' (Interview #12), there were strong divergences on the extent to which this should be accompanied by a pro-migrant or pro-security vision. For instance, the left-wing groups criticised that the crisis had been used to push

for a link between migration and terrorism and an emphasis on the externalisation of migration (Interview #1, #3, #8 and #14):

I think the proposals that came out were extremely affected by this crisis mode and the thinking of how do we make it as difficult as possible for people to come to Europe to seek asylum. (Interview #10)

In comparison, the EPP evaluated the crisis as the direct result of free-riding among asylum-seekers and their tendency to bypass the rules set by the Dublin system:

The aim for doing that [sanction secondary movements] is to give a clear signal that if one person is assigned to one member state in particular, this person needs to stay in that member state. (Interview #9)

Despite these differences, there was one thing that most EP actors could agree on, namely that the migration crisis had underlined the inefficiency of the existing asylum system and the need to reform it (Interview #12). As an ALDE MEP assistant put it: 'now we have a window of opportunity to actually change it to a system that could fundamentally work instead of this broken down system that we have today... I think that was important to get everyone on board' (Interview #2). Indeed, the previous rounds of negotiations had left many MEPs unsatisfied:

The politicians [MEPs] were not a hundred per cent behind what they signed off in the last reform. But they did it. They gave the Council and the Member States the benefit of the doubt and they feel like they were proved right. (Interview #4)

Therefore, the EP saw this as a chance to introduce further changes (Interview #11), particularly in the reform of Dublin, where all mainstream EP groups were keen to find an alternative to the 'responsibility principle' in order to avoid a complete failure of the Schengen system (Interview #14). The wide support given to the EP report reflected a carefully crafted compromise that balanced both internal cleavages on the left-right dimension as well as inter-institutional cleavages along geographical lines. To this purpose, the rapporteur included two new proposals: first, instead of limiting relocation to those asylum-seekers located in frontline member states, it was enlarged to cover all member states; second, asylum-seekers were given a choice of the member state of destination, but they had to show a meaningful connection to the country. These aspects managed to please the left-wing parties – which saw it as a way of enhancing the agency of asylum-seekers – and the centre-right forces, because it offered incentives for migrants and member states to follow the rules (Interview #2).

The most difficult file to solve was the Procedures Regulation. This was partly due to timing: any issues that had not been agreed in other files (notably Dublin), ended up in Procedures (Interview #13, #14). Also, many interviewees underlined the lack of impact assessments and implementation reports, which made any discussions about alternative solutions very difficult to justify (Interviews, #3, #6 and #14). This was particularly problematic for this file, since it has a direct impact on the organisation of national administrations and carries potential costs, not only for those authorities responsible for determining the status of asylum-seekers but also for border and police corps as well as the judicial system. Therefore, the regulation underscored the cleavage between rights and security,

which led to long discussions about the inclusion of a common list of third countries considered as safe (particularly whether Turkey should be included in it) and whether people could be sent back to a country through which they had transited (i.e., how to prove that they had a meaningful link with that country). In the end, the rapporteur tried to strike a middle ground so as to ensure as much support as possible, although some groups, like the EPP were highly divided (Interview #13, see votes in [Figure 1](#)).

It is, however, striking that, despite the substantive divisions present in the EP – that is, the traditional cleavage between left-wing pro-migrant groups and centre-right pro-security groups –, all files received wide support and showed the Council that a compromise was possible. Indeed, the EP actively used the crisis to emphasise the necessity and urgency in reforming the CEAS if the EU wanted to avoid the collapse of Schengen and a repeat situation in case of new migration influxes. This served to find a common cause that helped to rally most EP political groups and made it possible to avoid a likely deadlock, especially on the Dublin and Procedures Regulations. Therefore, the ‘standard account’ seems to show that all the conditions for EP success were present: widespread unity behind a common position and strong legitimising arguments that underlined the necessity of the reform and proposed solutions that could serve as a starting point for inter-institutional compromises. Why then did the reform of the core principles CEAS end in failure?

Failure under the ‘shadow of hierarchy’

The ‘asylum crisis’ is a good example of how the expansion of EU competences and activities in the area of ‘core state powers’ has furthered politicisation around issues of European integration. This issue has shaped many recent domestic elections, especially in Germany and Italy. It is thus not surprising that the ‘shadow of hierarchy’ has been highly present in the reform of the CEAS, with the European Council paying regular attention to the crisis. However, how has politicisation affected debates inside the EP and with the Council? To what extent can it account for the failure to reform the CEAS and, particularly, the Dublin regime?

When it comes to the issue of integration, there was indeed an overall preference for more supranationalisation among a majority of EP groups (Interview #3); however, it became increasingly difficult to agree on what integration meant and to what extent it was desirable. This debate was largely linked to the nature of the policy field and the fact that regulating asylum is not just a matter of products but has consequences for the rights of individuals as well as the sovereignty of member states. While, during the last recast exercise, the EP had generally (albeit without much success) pushed for more harmonisation (Ripoll Servent and Trauner 2014), here left-wing actors started to raise questions about the implications of harmonisation:

The main controversy [in the CEAS revision] would be at what cost does harmonisation come at ... in our view, this cannot come at the cost of asylum-seekers to present their claims properly or to get a just examination of their case. (Interview #10)

These debates were particularly strong in the Qualifications Regulation, given that it affects individual decisions on who should benefit from international protection,

which means that member states have more room for manoeuvre when implementing these provisions (Ripoll Servent and Trauner 2014). However, left-wing groups remarked that more harmonisation might force all member states to apply very restrictive definitions of asylum and international protection – preventing those countries that might want to have a more generous provisions from doing so (Interview #1, #5, #6, #7 and #10). The Greens even proposed to change it back to a directive on the grounds that:

So we would have preferred, given the very negative context, to maintain a directive in order to give member states the possibility to apply higher standards and to give them more flexibility. It is not because of wanting less Europe or towards more Europe, but because of the nature of the proposal of the Commission, which we see as a step backwards compared to the status quo. (Interview #3)

In the end, Tanja Fajon used these arguments to raise the standards of protection in the Qualifications Regulation – claiming that, otherwise, it would be better to stay with the existing directive (Report PE599.799v03-00: 80–81).

In other instruments, the arguments in favour or against more harmonisation were more mixed. The EPP (often supported by the ECR, to the surprise of some) were clear proponents of more harmonisation; this was linked to their pro-European views but also because strengthening integration was seen as a way of achieving more security, especially when it came to avoiding secondary movements and asylum shopping (Interview #3, #9 and #14). The liberals were accused of sacrificing their wishes for more European integration at the expense of migrant rights – a position largely influenced by Macron's pro-European discourse (Euractiv 2018a, Interview #1). This was particularly visible in the Procedures Regulation, where the liberals tried to defend the need for a more differentiated understanding of harmonisation:

I think we need to find a reasonable, a sensible balance. Harmonisation just for the sake of harmonisation isn't necessarily useful. I mean, if member states have similar procedures ... and they're common sense and they work ... I don't think that's necessarily a big problem. If you have vastly different use of concepts that mean that ... the outcome of the asylum procedure is vastly different depending on where you are then we have a problem. (Interview #2)

Therefore, there was the impression that debates on integration should go beyond the choice of instrument and focus rather on the concepts underpinning harmonisation; that is, integrating further would not make much sense if the purpose for having a common asylum system was not understood equally by all member states (Interview #14). Integration, hence, became a much more contested concept inside the EP, which actually brought the EP's position closer to member states' wish for flexibility. However, although the positions on the extent of integration seemed to become closer between EP and Council, this rapprochement hid very different visions of what should be harmonised. Indeed, while the EP might be sceptical about the choice of instrument, it was united in its desire to reform the Dublin regime. In comparison, member states found it impossible to reach an agreement on this key aspect of the CEAS reform – largely due to the 'shadow of hierarchy'.

For a start, the European Council cast a long shadow over the agenda-setting stage, since the Commission proposals were mostly inspired by the positions of member states

and did not include wider opinions from NGOs or other stakeholders (Interviews #8, #9, #10). Later, the interventions of the European Council were mostly directed to setting the pace of negotiations and trying to reach a compromise on Dublin (Interviews #3, #5, #7, #11). For instance, the deadlock in negotiations led European Council President, Donald Tusk, to ask the Commission to scrap the idea of 'ineffective' relocation quotas that '[do] nothing to reduce the number of illegal migrant' (EU official in Euobserver 2017b). His intervention was heavily criticised for its content (seen to be biased towards countries like Poland and Hungary) but also for its potential encroachment of the Commission's right to legislative initiative. Tusk also tried to unblock the debate by proposing a 'Leaders' Agenda', in which he set new working methods and a clear calendar with June 2018 as deadline for an agreement (European Council 2017). Tusk's Agenda raised criticisms among those who saw it as an attempt of the European Council to act as legislator, bypassing the Council and the EP (Euobserver 2017b, 2017a; Politico 2018b).

For the rest of the CEAS, the European Council remained relatively silent:

They do say not very much in terms of content of the CEAS apart from 'it is very important and we need to get this done!' And then they talk about borders and managing external borders and returns. (Interview #4)

However, this did not necessarily make it easier for the Council to find agreement on other issues, since the 'shadow of hierarchy' affected its working environment, especially when it came to the room for brokerage left to the presidencies:

[the last reform] was done in a much more calm environment. There wasn't this crisis. The people that were working on it were asylum experts from the interior ministry and so on. The difference this time is that there is nothing done on this file that doesn't pass through at least a number of prime ministers' desks. So it's much, much, much more highly politicized [and] by pushing the issue of solidarity in the European Council, of course they can only decide stuff by unanimity, whereas in the ministers' council it's qualified majority ... obviously they're not supposed to be directly involved in the legislative processes, but they very clearly are. And in a sense, it's hard to avoid because, I mean, it's very hard for an interior minister to go and tell his prime minister that he's caught in circles. (Interview #2)

When you have the 'high politics', but at the same time the technical and the real legislation is happening. It is sometimes hard to match these up. We were quite excited before the Estonian presidency, because we thought we were gonna make some steps forward. It didn't work out for them. That could be another small country factor. That could be because they focused too much on the high politics ... [while] Bulgaria has a pretty vested interest as a frontline Member State .. And they have also said 'Right! We're taking this down, taking it out of the high politics level.' But it is still there. It is not going anywhere. (Interview #4)

The European Council cast also a shadow over the Council by creating a bad atmosphere during negotiations, partly due to past incidents – such as the disputes around relocation quotas and the subsequent Court cases against the Viségrad countries (Interview #4) –, partly due to national elections blocking discussions and, partly, because the high number of interrelated files made it difficult for national experts to find the time and energy to focus on the key issues (Euobserver 2017c; Politico 2018b, Interviews #2, #3, #4, #14).

The Council's struggle to reach a common position was also blamed on its culture of consensus:

What can they agree by consensus? ... It's very hard for the two extremes in the Council to meet, to find something that is good enough for the entirety of the Greeks and that can also be met with the approval of Hungary and Poland. (Interview #2)

We would never try and take on board the ENF group ... We basically leave them out.. And the ECR group to be honest. They are not around the table ... If we would be trying to bring them in as well, like Council are doing with the Viségrad countries, you are not going anywhere. (Interview #4)

The cleavages among member states were particularly clear in the Dublin Regulation: Northern countries pushed for some sort of redistribution mechanism, frontline ones were willing to reform but not if it meant taking responsibility for even more migrants, while the Viségrad countries blocked any reform of the status quo (Politico 2018a, Interviews #2, #9, #13). In comparison, these conflicts were less clear-cut in other files: for instance, in the Procedures Regulation, northern Member States (especially the Netherlands, Germany and France) actively tried to upload their national systems (with more or less success) and resisted changes to their long-established national systems and blocked negotiations, while smaller member states with less well-developed asylum systems (the Viségrad countries included) proved more constructive (Euobserver 2017c Interviews #11, #13, #14). Many interviewees confirmed how, despite the possibility to use QMV against certain member states blocking decisions, it would be politically impossible to outvote certain countries like Germany and France – or even Greece and Italy (Interview #7, #9).

Therefore, the 'shadow of hierarchy' emphasised political conflicts among member states and made it difficult to activate the norms of consensus-building prevalent in the Council. In the end, the failure to agree on a solution for the Dublin system can be directly attributed to the European Council of June 2018 – which made it clear that the EP was considered a lesser partner in negotiations. Generally, there was a shared impression that Council ignored Parliament's position because it continued to see the EP as a 'talking shop' (Interview 13). EP actors often faced Council negotiators unwilling to engage with them and insisting that the concerns of member states should prevail:

Member states try to influence our debates, but still even with all of that, ... when we decide in Parliament, obviously it's not a set of redlines, it's a sign that we're ready to sit and discuss with the Council, but then they have to treat Parliament in the same way. They can't say we've agreed on something, now we can't touch it anymore, because that's not how the process works. (Interview #2)

The 'shadow of hierarchy', therefore, led to a situation where EP actors felt marginalised and highly frustrated:

European Council says 'get it done', Parliament feels like 'okay, we did. We worked' ... [but then] Parliament can't say anything about [Council's] position until it exists. Parliament can't criticize, can't comment ... There have been lots of files where the Council haven't got a position and they can block the file forever. (Interview #4)

There is no obligation on their side..We will continue to put pressure on governments and tell citizens that the European Parliament has done its part. We are ready to sit and

negotiate... What I think is that the Council wants to keep the last word by sidelining the Parliament and Commission in these matters. (Elly Schlein, S&D MEP in Euractiv 2018a)

Indeed, the 'shadow of hierarchy' left Parliament with little leverage to push for a reform of the CEAS. The EP tried to rhetorically convince (or put pressure on) member states to act; for instance, EP leaders asked President Tusk to push for an agreement on Dublin (Bullmann, Verhofstadt, and Keller 2018), while MEP Angelika Mlinar (ALDE) accused the Council that it had 'led sham negotiations from the very beginning and [was] never interested in the implementation of the asylum package' (Mlinar 2018, own translation). Liberal leader, Guy Verhofstadt, even threatened to take the Council to court for 'failure to act' (Euractiv 2018b). However, all these attempts serve, first and foremost, to underline the extent to which the 'shadow of hierarchy' led to the EP's disempowerment in these negotiations.

Conclusion

We have wasted a crisis and are not even close to [being] ready for the next (Diplomat in Politico 2017).

Crises are often used by political actors as windows of opportunity to change policies. However, not all crises have this effect; some might go to waste because political actors are unable to frame problems as 'common bads' and solutions as urgent and necessary. What the crisis of the EU's asylum system shows is that the positionality and legitimacy of political actors in the post-crisis period is essential to understand the limits of framing to achieve policy changes. Indeed, although the EP managed to provide a common vision of the crisis – based on previous legislative failures and the need to find common European solutions – and built strong internal support that provided them with legitimacy beyond ideological cleavages, this was not enough to successfully change European legislation. The 'shadow of hierarchy' was so strong that it permeated the entire legislative reform of the CEAS. This hierarchy was to be found not just among institutional actors (i.e., the pre-eminence of the European Council) but also inside the policy package (with Dublin dominating the scene and subordinating all other agreements to its success or failure).

What does this tell us about the conditions for success or failure in crisis policy-making? First, the conditions provided by 'standard' bicameral accounts (unity and legitimising frames) are necessary but not sufficient for explaining success. Even if the EP manages to gather strong majorities and provides solutions that are seen as legitimate solutions to the crisis, the 'shadow of hierarchy' might act as a sufficient condition for explaining the failure of the EP in day-to-day decision-making after a crisis. Indeed, Dublin was perceived as being so sensitive that no deal could be found without the intervention of the European Council; this meant that the position of the EP became subordinate to the wishes of member states. As a result, the EP was asked to behave more responsibly and focus on those aspects that particularly interested the Council. In addition, with Council unable to compromise, the Parliament was left in a disempowered position, unable to push member states to act. Despite the EP's efforts to blame Council for its inaction and its ability to portray itself as the more pragmatic

and responsible legislator, the fact is that the EP just failed to have any influence on policy outputs. Therefore, if we compare this crisis with the Eurozone one (cf. Schoeller and Héritier 2019), the nature of the problem and the absence of a shared 'common bad' pre-empted any use of urgency to influence member states, since the EP had a higher sensitivity to urgency and failure than (some) member states. Indeed, in line with the findings of Schoeller and Héritier, redistributive issues led to deadlock – but they did not necessarily concern the most powerful member states; rather those countries that perceived a shift away from the status quo as detrimental for their (electoral) chances back home.

The analysis has also shown that the assumption that the EP is more integrationist than member states needs to be nuanced. Although there continued to be an 'integration bias' among most mainstream EP groups, the traditionally positive connotation given to 'more integration' became a matter of contestation. There was a rising concern that harmonisation might come at the expense of substance and that pushing integration might not always be a good thing. It shows that the concepts behind integration have become more contested and that integration can be pushed for reasons other than wanting more Europe – with Eurosceptic groups like the ECR willing to support harmonisation if it meant reinforcing the borders and securitising asylum polices. Therefore, this case underlines the boundaries of European integration and how the content and purpose of more 'Europe' is becoming increasingly contested and susceptible to disintegration.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the editors of this special issue, as well as the reviewers who have offered comments on the various versions of this article. I also appreciate the comments received in the UACES conference in Krakow, the SGEU conference in Paris and the DVPW conference in Frankfurt (Main).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This work was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [RI 2536/3-1].

ORCID

Ariadna Ripoll Servent  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1399-6535>

References

Bickerton, C. J., D. Hodson, and U. Puetter. 2015. *The New Intergovernmentalism: States and Supranational Actors in the Post-Maastricht Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Biermann, F., N. Guérin, S. Jagdhuber, B. Rittberger, and M. Weiss. 2019. "Political (Non-)Reform in the Euro Crisis and the Refugee Crisis: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Explanation." *Journal of European Public Policy* 26 (2): 246–266. doi:10.1080/13501763.2017.1408670.
- Boin, A., P. T. Hart, and A. McConnell. 2009. "Crisis Exploitation: Political and Policy Impacts of Framing Contests." *Journal of European Public Policy* 16 (1): 81–106. doi:10.1080/13501760802453221.
- Börzel, T. A., and T. Risse. 2018. "From the Euro to the Schengen Crises: European Integration Theories, Politicization, and Identity Politics." *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (1): 83–108. doi:10.1080/13501763.2017.1310281.
- Bressanelli, E., and N. Chelotti. 2018. "The European Parliament and Economic Governance: Explaining a Case of Limited Influence." *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 24 (1): 72–89. doi:10.1080/13572334.2018.1444627.
- Bullmann, U., G. Verhofstadt, and S. Keller. 2018. "Joint Letter To President Tusk." June 20. https://www.skakeller.de/fileadmin/material/Migration/pdf/ab_2018/2018-06-20_Joint_Letter_EUCO_President_Tusk_20062018_signed.pdf
- Costello, R. 2011. "Does Bicameralism Promote Stability? Inter-Institutional Relations and Coalition Formation in the European Parliament." *West European Politics* 34 (1): 122–144. doi:10.1080/01402382.2011.523548.
- Euobserver. 2017a. "Tusk Migration Note Prompts Institutional 'Hysteria.'" December 13. <https://euobserver.com/institutional/140278>
- Euobserver. 2017b. "EU Asylum Debate Reopens Old Wounds." December 15. <https://euobserver.com/migration/140300>
- Euobserver. 2017c. "The Asylum files: deadlock and dead-ends." December 27. <https://euobserver.com/europe-in-review/139748>
- Euobserver. 2018. "EU States Tackle Dublin Asylum Reform 'Line by Line.'" March 7. <https://euobserver.com/migration/141236>
- Euractiv. 2018a. "MEPs Hope to Break Deadlock on Migration Reform." May 31. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/meps-hope-to-break-deadlock-on-migration-reform/>
- Euractiv. 2018b. "Verhofstadt Threatens to Take Council to Court for "Failure to Act" on Asylum Reform." June 13. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/verhofstadt-threatens-to-take-council-to-court-for-failure-to-act-on-asylum-reform/>
- European Commission. 2016. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe.*
- European Council. 2017. "Leaders' Agenda - Migration: Way Forward on the External and Internal Dimension." EUCO 26/15. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32083/en_leaders-agenda-note-on-migration_pdf
- European Council. 2018. *European Council Conclusions.* June 28. 421/18.
- Fabbrini, S., and U. Puetter. 2016. "Integration without Supranationalisation: Studying the Lead Roles of the European Council and the Council in Post-Lisbon EU Politics." *Journal of European Integration* 38 (5): 481–495. doi:10.1080/07036337.2016.1178254.
- Farrell, H., and A. Héritier. 2007. "Introduction: Contested Competences in the European Union." *West European Politics* 30 (2): 227–243. doi:10.1080/01402380701238741.
- Finke, D. 2014. "Domestic-Level Parliamentary Scrutiny and Voting Behaviour in the European Parliament." *Government and Opposition* 49 (02): 207–231. doi:10.1017/gov.2013.27.
- Genschel, P., and M. Jachtenfuchs. 2016. "More Integration, Less Federation: The European Integration of Core State Powers." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23 (1): 42–59. doi:10.1080/13501763.2015.1055782.
- Genschel, P., and M. Jachtenfuchs. 2018. "From Market Integration to Core State Powers: The Eurozone Crisis, the Refugee Crisis and Integration Theory." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56 (1): 178–196. doi:10.1111/jcms.12654.
- Hagemann, S., and B. Høyland. 2010. "Bicameral Politics in the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48 (4): 811–833. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02075.x.

- Ioannou, D., P. Leblond, and A. Niemann. 2015. "European Integration and the Crisis: Practice and Theory." *Journal of European Public Policy* 22 (2): 155–176. doi:10.1080/13501763.2014.994979.
- Kingdon, J. W. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Lehner, R. 2019. "The EU-Turkey-'deal': Legal Challenges and Pitfalls." *International Migration* 57 (2): 176–185. doi:10.1111/imig.12462.
- Maricut-Akbik, A. 2018a. "EU Politicization beyond the Euro Crisis: Immigration Crises and the Politicization of Free Movement of People." *Comparative European Politics*, January. doi:10.1057/s41295-018-0113-6.
- Maricut-Akbik, A. 2018b. "The Dynamics of Institutional Behaviour in EU Justice and Home Affairs: Roles, Representative Claims, and Varying Policy Positions." *Journal of European Integration* 40 (2): 161–176. doi:10.1080/07036337.2017.1415334.
- Meserve, S. A., J. Robbins, and F. Thames. 2017. "Multiple Principals and Legislative Cohesion." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 42 (4): 515–548. doi:10.1111/lsq.12165.
- Mlinar, A. 2018. "Offener Brief an Bundespräsident Alexander Van Der Bellen." <http://www.angelikamlinar.eu/offener-brief-an-bundespraesident-alexander-van-der-bellen>
- Mühlböck, M. 2012. "National versus European: Party Control over Members of the European Parliament." *West European Politics* 35 (3): 607–631. doi:10.1080/01402382.2012.665743.
- Politico. 2017. "Brussels Plans to Drop Permanent Refugee Relocation Scheme." November 29. <https://www.politico.eu/article/brussels-plans-to-drop-permanent-refugee-relocation-scheme/>
- Politico. 2018a. "Southern Rim Rebels against EU Migration Proposal." April 26. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-migration-crisis-italy-spain-rebels-bulgaria-dublin-quotas-proposal/>
- Politico. 2018b. "EU Fails on Migration (Yet Again)." June 5. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-fails-on-migration-yet-again/>
- Politico. 2018c. "Brussels Readies New Border Enforcement Plan." July 6. <https://www.politico.eu/article/jean-claude-juncker-sebastian-kurz-brussels-readies-new-border-enforcement-plan-migration/>
- Ripoll Servent, A. 2015. *Institutional and Policy Change in the European Parliament: Deciding on Freedom, Security and Justice*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ripoll Servent, A. 2018a. *The European Parliament*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ripoll Servent, A. 2018b. "A New Form of Delegation in EU Asylum: Agencies as Proxies of Strong Regulators." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56 (1): 83–100. doi:10.1111/jcms.12652.
- Ripoll Servent, A., and F. Trauner. 2014. "Do Supranational EU Institutions Make a Difference? EU Asylum Law before and after 'Communitarization'." *Journal of European Public Policy* 21 (8): 1142–1162. doi:10.1080/13501763.2014.906905.
- Rittberger, B. 2012. "Institutionalizing Representative Democracy in the European Union: The Case of the European Parliament." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 50 (s1): 18–37. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02225.x.
- Schmidt, V. A. 2016. "Reinterpreting the Rules "By Stealth" in Times of Crisis: A Discursive Institutional Analysis of the European Central Bank and the European Commission." *West European Politics* 39 (5): 1032–1052. doi:10.1080/01402382.2016.1186389.
- Schmidt, V. A., and C. M. Radaelli. 2004. "Policy Change and Discourse in Europe: Conceptual and Methodological Issues." *West European Politics* 27 (2): 183–210. doi:10.1080/0140238042000214874.
- Schoeller, M., and A. Héritier. 2019. "Driving Informal Institutional Change: The European Parliament and the Reform of the Economic and Monetary Union." *Journal of European Integration* 41 (3)
- Scipioni, M. 2018. "Failing Forward in EU Migration Policy? EU Integration after the 2015 Asylum and Migration Crisis." *Journal of European Public Policy* 25 (9): 1357–1375. doi:10.1080/13501763.2017.1325920.
- Slominski, P., and F. Trauner. 2018. "How Do Member States Return Unwanted Migrants? the Strategic (Non-)Use of "Europe" during the Migration Crisis." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56 (1): 101–118. doi:10.1111/jcms.12621.
- Thielemann, E., and C. Armstrong. 2013. "Understanding European Asylum Cooperation under the Schengen/Dublin System: A Public Goods Framework." *European Security* 22 (2): 148–164. doi:10.1080/09662839.2012.699892.

- Thomson, R. 2011. *Resolving Controversy in the European Union: Legislative Decision-Making before and after Enlargement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trauner, F., and A. Ripoll Servent. 2016. "The Communitarization of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: Why Institutional Change Does Not Translate into Policy Change." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54 (6): 1417–1432. doi:10.1111/jcms.12397.
- Trauner, F., and A. Ripoll Servent. 2015. *Policy Change in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: How EU Institutions Matter*. London: Routledge.
- Whitaker, R., S. Hix, and G. Zapryanova. 2017. "Understanding Members of the European Parliament: Four Waves of the European Parliament Research Group MEP Survey." *European Union Politics* 18 (3): 491–506. doi:10.1177/1465116516687399.
- Zaun, N. 2017. *EU Asylum Policies: The Power of Strong Regulating States*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Interviews

- Interview #1, GUE/NGL MEP assistant, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #2, ALDE MEP assistant, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #3, Greens political advisor, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #4, ALDE political advisor, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #5, GUE/NGL MEP assistant, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #6, EP staff, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #7, official of the General Secretariat of the Council, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #8, S&D political advisor, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #9, EPP political advisor, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #10, Greens MEP assistant, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #11, Commission official, Brussels, February 2018
- Interview #12, ALDE MEP assistant, written communication, February 2018
- Interview #13, EP staff, Brussels, May 2018
- Interview #14, S&D MEP assistant, Brussels, May 2018