

Re-bordering Europe? Collective action barriers to ‘Fortress Europe’

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ABSTRACT

I discuss the collective action problems associated with different kinds of joint external bordering and highlight specific aspects of the European Union which I argue make it particularly ineffective at supplying (many) forms of external bordering. Applying this framework to the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy, European Immigration Policy, and European Neighbourhood Policy I explain why each of these areas are subject to chronic under-provision. I conclude that a ‘Fortress Europe’ is unlikely to materialize, giving rise instead to national re-bordering as a reaction to growing pressures on the Union’s internal and external borders.

Unrest on Europe’s borders, threats from transnational terrorism and crime, increasing migration flows, and, most recently, pandemic disease have led to growing pressures to reinforce national borders within the European Union (EU), thus raising the spectre of a reversal of integration. Amidst calls for ‘re-bordering’ Europe some observers point to *external* bordering as an alternative to strengthening national frontiers (Bartolini 2005, Schimmelfennig this issue). This article considers the merits of such arguments.

Since the 1980s European integration has focused on tearing down borders. From the creation of the Single Market and single currency to the introduction of EU citizenship, previous barriers to free movement of goods, capital, and people have been steadily dismantled (Schimmelfennig this issue). The progressive elimination of borders within the EU has in turn necessitated a common regime for managing the Union’s external borders to compensate for individual loss of boundary control. The 1990 Schengen Convention which abolished inspections at internal EU borders introduced common rules for perimeter border security to prevent illegal immigration, drug trafficking and other criminal activities, and instituted common screening

mechanisms to apply to the movement of third country nationals. But while it articulated common rules to control who and what can enter the area of free movement, the Schengen Convention left implementation and enforcement of these rules largely in the hands of national authorities (Brunet-Jailly 2006, Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018:179, Kriesi et al. this issue). A similarly feeble approach to external bordering has applied in the area of external security and defence where the EU has left regional territorial defence largely in the hands of NATO and individual member states (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014, Menon 2011).

The combination of open internal borders and brittle external borders presented a relatively stable equilibrium until the mid-1990s. Since then, however, international developments have served to widen the ‘boundary gaps’ between the EU and its external environment, leading to growing demand for ‘re-bordering’ (Schimmelfennig this issue). These developments include, *inter alia*, the outward expansion of the EU’s borders which has brought the Union into closer proximity with poorer and less democratic neighbours, international terrorism, a surge in migration, and a hardening of Russian autocracy (ibid.). Such external strains have combined with growing internal dissensus to render European integration more politically salient and contested and has led to growing public demand for strengthening European borders in order to defend core national interests (de Wilde and Zürn 2012; Goodman and Schimmelfennig 2019, Hooghe and Marks 2009, 2019). Starting in the 2000s and escalating in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis, such pressures have led several member states to renege on the principle of freedom of movement by reinstating national border controls, citing threats from illegal migration and terrorism (Krisi et al. this issue). More recently, the Covid-19 crisis ignited a new wave of internal border controls (or led to the extension of temporary controls already in place) as the Schengen regime was once again suspended (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, Krisi et al. this issue). While technically permitted under Schengen rules, the reinstatement of internal border controls in response to Covid-19 fuelled existing tensions regarding free movement (Montale 2020) and highlighted a lack of faith in the Commission’s proposed collective response to the pandemic.¹

Amidst growing calls for ‘re-bordering’ European states, some scholars point to *external* (regional) bordering as an alternative to re-erecting national borders. On this view, reinforcing Europe’s perimeter presents a way to alleviate negative effects of internal ‘debordering’ and to strengthen internal cohesion and polity consolidation (Bartolini 2005, European Commission, 2020, Morgan 2006, Schimmelfennig this issue). Yet external bordering offers no easy solution to

stem the rising tide of nationalist isolationism across the Union. In the context of open internal borders, external bordering (whether in the form of tighter physical border controls, a common migration and asylum system, joint military defence, or stronger collective capacity for out-of-area interventions to stem migration from Europe's near abroad) takes on strong public good qualities with associated collective action problems. These qualities imply that many forms of external bordering require a degree of centralized policymaking and fiscal and coercive capacity which the EU currently lacks. On this basis, I suggest that growing political pressure to re-border the EU leads to two broad possible outcomes: either 'dis-integration' (defined in this issue as a combination of internal re-bordering and continued weak external borders), or enhanced centralization of political and fiscal authority in order to build stronger supranational capacity to supply effective external bordering - irrespective of lacking capacity or will by individual member states.

I begin with a brief review of economic theory to theorize the public goods aspects of various forms of collective bordering. From this discussion I draw hypotheses about the supply conditions for different types of external bordering in the context of a loose state union such as the EU. Section 2 reviews recent attempts to strengthen the EU's external borders as an empirical illustration of the distinctive collective action problems facing EU members in regard to common bordering. Specifically, I consider three long-standing EU 'bordering failures': the inability to marshal a credible Common Security and Defence Policy; the failure to agree a common European asylum policy to accompany the Schengen regime; and chronic underfunding of European Neighbourhood Policies. Together these capture central aspects of external (re)bordering as defined by Schimmelfennig (this issue). I briefly contrast these with the Union's more successful efforts at controlling the influx of goods and production factors via joint tariffs, quotas and customs, and with efforts by other international organizations like NATO and the UN to supply border-related public goods. Section 3 derives lessons regarding the likely future paths of boundary formation in the EU.

External Bordering as a Public Good

This section specifies the public goods properties of territorial boundaries in a decentralized union of states like the EU and theorizes supply conditions for different forms of collective boundary control. Following Schimmelfennig (this issue), I conceive of collective 're-

bordering' as an increase in the 'closure, control and congruence' of the EU's external boundaries. I acknowledge that national and regional borders have multiple dimensions - both material and symbolic - and may comprise of territorial, political, and economic boundaries along with social, religious, cultural, ethnic, and emotional divisions which both reflect and shape collective patterns of belonging. My focus, however, is more narrowly on the physical and administrative borders which regulate the movement of people to, from, and within the EU, since these can be more easily manipulated to constrain or accommodate other boundary dimensions. In short, my focus is on *government instituted* functional borders and their associated management mechanisms. These can in turn take several forms; from physical barriers to prevent the flow of peoples or goods into a territory, or military defences aimed to deter invasion, to non-physical measures like tariffs and quotas focused on controlling flows of goods, or travel and immigration policies governing flows of people.

Scholars have long recognized that mechanisms of border management such as military defence or asylum policy provide elements of public goods. What has been less in focus, however, is the differing nature of the joint goods provided by different bordering mechanisms, and the varying ability of different kinds of polities to overcome the collective action problems associated with their supply. I discuss the collective action problems associated with the provision of different types of bordering and highlight specific aspects of the EU which I argue make it particularly ineffective at supplying (many) forms of external bordering.

Public Goods: Definition and Variations

Public Goods (PGs) are defined by having benefits that cannot easily be confined to a single 'consumer'. Once provided, many can enjoy these goods without reducing the amount available to others. Streetlights, public roads, or territorial defence are common examples. Theorists distinguish between 'pure' and 'impure' PGs. Pure PGs are both *non-excludable* (non-contributors cannot easily be barred from consumption) and *non-rival* (consumption by one does not reduce the amount available to others), whereas 'impure' PGs provide benefits that are partially non-rival or partially excludable (Olson 1965). For example, nuclear deterrence is excludable but non-rival in that additional beneficiaries do not directly limit its effectiveness (Sandler 1977). A military fortress built by one member of a defensive alliance is non-excludable in that other allies cannot be excluded from enjoying its benefits but partially rival in that it

provides broader protection for the country where it is based (Sandler and Forbes 1980). Absent mechanisms for coordinating collective action, both pure and impure PGs are prone to uneven burden-sharing and undersupply. Uneven burden-sharing arises because larger and richer states tend to place a higher value on PGs and thus produce more of such goods, allowing less capable (or less willing) states that cannot be excluded from benefitting to free-ride on their efforts (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966). Undersupply arises because once the amount of PG produced by the most capable nation(s) is made available to all, others have limited incentives to contribute (Olson 1965:27-35, Sandler 1998).

Supply Conditions

A large literature theorizes specific characteristics of PGs which make their supply more or less likely, and which dictate different institutional fixes to problems of under-supply. Factors facilitating/inhibiting PG provision include, *inter alia*: (i) whether a PG is partially excludable is not, (ii) the cost of supplying the good relative to benefits received, (iii) the relevant 'supply aggregation technology', and (iv) the number of actors whose participation is needed for effective collective action, and their relative capabilities and preferences.

Excludability: The supply of *pure* PGs is generally understood to demand a central authority capable of imposing and financing consumption through taxation. If, however, consumers can be excluded at an affordable cost, then pseudo-market mechanisms in the form of 'clubs' can collect 'members' fees' to finance a PG (Sandler 1998). An example of a club good is information databases where consumption is non-rival, but access can be restricted (Krahmann 2008). Foreshadowing my later discussion, integrated databanks like the Schengen Information System and Visa Information System theoretically fit this specification as they are in principle excludable.

Cost: It is assumed that states will contribute to PGs only insofar as individual benefits exceed individual costs. Pure PGs benefit all states equally regardless of whether they contribute to their financing, creating an expectation of widespread freeriding. Most PGs, however, generate a mix of general ('public') and country-specific ('private') benefits. Generally, the higher the ratio of private to public benefits, the more likely that individual states will elect to contribute rather than freeride (Sandler and Forbes 1980, Sandler 1977:455).

Aggregation Technology: A third factor governing supply concerns the manner in which individual contributions add to the overall amount of a PG. Building on Hirshleifer (1983), Sandler (1998, 2001) distinguishes four aggregation technologies: 'summation'; 'weighted sum' 'weakest

link' and 'best shot'. For many PGs it is assumed that the total amount available for public consumption equals the sum of individual contributions ('Summation' technology). Examples include basic research or curbing of greenhouse gas emissions (Anand 2004), or—in the context of external bordering—patrolling of international waters to rescue (or deter) individuals seeking to enter the EU irregularly via sea. In such cases, the prognosis for effective collective action is pessimistic (Sandler 1998). Since a unit contribution by one actor is a perfect substitute for that of another, and assuming exclusion is infeasible, the dominant strategy for individual actors is to provide none of the good but to freeride on others' efforts (Cornes 1993, Sandler 1998:224). Formally, such problems are often depicted as Prisoner's Dilemmas (ibid.).

When 'weighted-sum' aggregation applies, the level of PG provision enjoyed by all also depends on the combined contributions of all participants, but individual contributions have different marginal impact. Sandler (2010) gives the example of reducing certain kinds of pollution where the location of the source of pollutants affects the pattern of dispersion; for example, kerbing river pollutants in upstream states will have larger collective benefits than equivalent cuts in downstream states (Mitchell and Kielbach 2001). In the context of the 'extra-territorial' management of EU migration, some member states may have specific expertise or historical ties which make them better able to strike effective re-admission deals with third countries. If individual contributions to a PG add up unequally, some countries (whose marginal impact is high) may be particularly motivated to act, but only insofar their share of derived benefits is also high.

Hirshleifer's illustration of 'weakest-link' aggregation is a circular region of which each nation owns a pie-shaped slice and whose perimeter is protected by a dike (Cornes 1993:259). Floods may penetrate the weakest point of the dike and deluge the whole region. Each nation determines the height and strength of the section of the dike bordering its territory. Thus, the level of protection enjoyed by all is determined by the smallest individual contribution (Cornes 1993:259, Hirshleifer 1983). Collective action is more likely in this scenario than for PGs subject to 'summation' technology since individual contributions are not substitutable (preventing freeriding) (Sandler 1998:228). In equilibrium, the least able or willing participant picks the smallest level of contribution which is then matched by others since greater individual efforts would yield no added benefits (Sandler 1998:227). A variation on this logic--'weaker-link' aggregation—assumes that the smallest effort has the greatest *marginal* impact on PG provision, followed by the next

smallest, so that contributions above a minimum level add progressively less to the good (Cornes 1993). In both cases, the least able group member has the largest influence on provision.

Finally, for ‘best-shot’ aggregation, the quantity of PG available is determined by the largest individual contribution. Examples include the provision of anti-ballistic missile defence for a region (Cornes 1993:529) or finding a cure for a virus like Covid-19—both cases in which the nation delivering the ‘best shot’ will end up neutralizing the threat to the benefit of all (Sandler 1998:231).

Number: For any type of PG, the greater the number of individual contributions needed, the more difficult it is to ensure adequate supply. Crucially, in most scenarios, the hurdle of collective provision hinges not only on the number of relevant actors but also on their heterogeneity in terms of their preferences and capacities (Cornes 1993). Many argue it is easier for heterogeneous groups to provide public goods (Martin 1992, Olson 1965). For example, in ‘best-shot’ scenarios where the socially available amount of a PG depends on the actions of just one country, heterogeneity is beneficial since the most capable or eager nation can be expected to act for all. In the ‘summation’ model, provision is also facilitated by the presence of relatively richer nations that assume a greater share of the burden (Sandler 1999:234, Cornes 1993). From the perspective of overall provision, a best-case scenario is when a single country’s capacity for supply and share of collective gains are sufficiently large that it can benefit from providing a large amount of a PG unilaterally and let others freeride—as some say has been true of the US within NATO (Olson and Zeckhauser 1966). If, by contrast, states have roughly equal capacity and utility from a PG this raises the question of who should act.

Different combinations of supply factors may have different effects. In weighted-sum scenarios, different valuations of a PG may facilitate supply since countries that benefit more from a PG are more likely to contribute. However, differing costs of supply may cut the other way: if a PG is most highly valued by countries with high costs of supply it is likely to remain undersupplied (Anand 2004, Mitchell and Keilbach 2001). Weakest-link models generally favour homogenous groups. If all actors desire a similar level of provision (say, a similar height of a dike), effective communication should ensure coordination on a mutually preferred ‘high-level’ contribution. Once a level of contribution is chosen, there are no individual incentives to renege since reducing one’s effort would inflict self-harm. Conversely, if a good is valued differently by states, or if some face higher cost of supply, coordination on a high level of mutual contribution is less likely.

In sum, the most intractable PG problems involve pure nonexcludable PGs where the quantity is defined as the sum of all individual contributions and no-one has actor-specific incentives to act. Also problematic are weakest-link models in which the benefits enjoyed by all depend on the actor(s) with the least capacity to act. For all PGs, the presence of a leading group member whose expected gains from acting alone exceed associated costs is expected to increase supply (Sandler 1998).

Institutional Solutions

Just as strategic dilemmas differ for different types of PGs so do institutional solutions. Broadly speaking, transaction cost theory suggests that PG supply is facilitated by supranational governance structures that limit the decision-making autonomy of individual states and restrain opportunistic behaviour (Sandler and Hartley 1980:889). Yet, supranational solutions are not always needed. For groups with homogenous preferences and capacities, all that may be required to ensure provision of weakest-link PGs is simple information-exchange. Other problems may call for more drastic solutions. When PGs abide by a weakest-link logic, but groups are heterogenous, highly willing/capable states may reap net-benefits from transferring income to low-capacity contributors (Cornes 1993:268). The same holds true for weighted-sum aggregation, where redistributing income towards countries whose contributions have high marginal impact or who receive significant private benefits from their own contributions may increase overall provision (ibid.). Both types of problems may thus benefit from strong supranational institutions that can facilitate income transfers. For example, during the 1990s, the EU provided technical and financial assistance to strengthen immigration- and border-controls in Eastern European states through the PHARE programs (Adamson 2006). However, supranational institutions may also impede effective solutions if they give veto-power to states with low valuation for a PG. Some of the same countries that received PHARE funds to improve border-controls now block mandatory EU burden-sharing in regard to the reception of refugees.

External Bordering in the EU

In this section I use a combination of secondary and primary sources to evaluate three broad PGs that remain underprovided and subject to uneven burden-sharing in the EU: collective security, joint migration policy, and European Neighbourhood policy. These 'goods' comprise

important dimensions of external re-bordering as conceived in this Special Issue. From a theoretical perspective they also feature clear variation on the independent variable (type of PG problem) and dependent variable (degree of bordering achieved). In the concluding section, I briefly compare these bordering ‘goods’ to other forms of EU bordering, such as external trade barriers.

Europe’s Defence Dilemma

The European Community/EU has a long history of undersupply of military security and defence. From the failed European Defence Community in the 1950s to attempts during the 1990s to create, first, a European defence pillar *within* NATO and, next, a Common Security and Defence Policy *separate* from NATO,ⁱⁱ Europeans have proven disinclined to contribute robustly to joint military capacities or to pool responsibility for decision-making in this area. Since the Cologne and Helsinki Presidency Conclusions (1999), the EU has issued a succession of official targets aimed to transform Europe into a more assertive global security player. Yet progress has been slow. Scholars have documented persistent shortfalls in military capabilities—both compared to other global security actors like NATO and vis-a-vis the Union’s self-professed needs (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014, Hardt 2009, Menon 2011). These range from capability shortfalls to delayed and poorly staffed missions, and restricted mandates for EU troops deploying abroad. There is strong evidence of uneven burden-sharing with larger and richer members—chiefly France, Germany and Italy—being the largest net-contributors to CSDP, whereas smaller states freeride (Dorussen et al. 2009, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014).

Recent initiatives like Permanent Structured Cooperation on defence (PESCO) introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (2017) fail to reverse the long-standing trend of weak external bordering in the realm of joint security and defence. Aimed to solicit binding commitments to invest, develop, and operate specific defence capabilities within an EU framework, PESCO articulates yet another set of ambitious capability goals which are so far going unfulfilled. Furthermore, the most critical capability shortfalls (such as strategic airlift and naval capabilities) are not covered by PESCO projects, which are mostly at the lower end of the capability spectrum (Billon-Galland and Efstathiou 2019).

The persistent weakness of external bordering qua joint military security and defence is well-predicted by PG theory. In their seminal work Olson and Zeckhauser (1966) suggested that

military security provided through alliances constitutes a *pure* PG insofar as benefits are both non-excludable and non-rival, and each individual contribution adds equally to the common good ('summation'). Thus, provision is expected to be collectively suboptimal and burden-sharing uneven. Later scholarship has dismissed the notion that collective defence constitutes a pure PG, arguing that allied security provides a mix of benefits; some public, some private (Sandler, 1977, Sandler and Forbes 1980). For example, conventional land-forces have restricted mobility and thus disproportionately benefit states in which they are stationed (Sandler 1977:454). Nevertheless, collective security remains a PG, subject to collective action problems.

Undersupply is common to most collective security organizations. However, three features of the CSDP make cooperation within this framework particularly prone to collective action failure. The first is a high degree of 'publicness' of the benefits created. While most contemporary security communities provide elements of both territorial defence and out-of-area peacekeeping and conflict-management, CSDP cooperation focuses exclusively on the latter, leaving territorial defence to NATO. As Shimizu and Sandler show (2002:656), successful peacekeeping and crisis-management increase overall global stability and thus benefit all states equally whether or not they contribute. Such activities are therefore more prone to uneven burden-sharing and undersupply than cooperation on territorial defence which provides a mix of public and private benefits.

A second problem is the even size of EU member states. Suboptimality in the supply of PGs generally arises because smaller states freeride on the efforts of larger partners. *Ceteris paribus*, the larger a state is, the more defence it will be motivated to produce for itself with derived benefits for allies. Hence, suboptimality tends to be less pronounced when the largest member receives a relatively large fraction of group gain (Olson 1965: 29, Olson and Zeckhauser 1966:274). Relative size also matters for leadership. As Martin (1992:778) has shown, although larger and richer states face incentives to unilaterally supply PGs, they can often induce others to contribute through sticks or carrots. Unlike NATO which has at its helm a single state that far surpasses others in power and wealth, the CSDP has no single member large enough to be willing and capable of providing a significant amount of global crisis management on its own, or to use its power to nudge others. The largest member, Germany, has been historically reluctant to assume a leadership role in security and defence.

A third barrier to collective action is heterogenous strategic interests (Hoffmann 2000; Krotz and Wolf 2018) which lead states to place different value on an effective CSDP. Despite

open internal borders, threats posed to European borders by failed states on Europe's periphery do not affect member states evenly. Due to geography and colonial ties, countries such as Italy, Spain or France are more likely to benefit from action to stem political unrest in North Africa, whereas East European states are more focused on promoting stability in the Balkans (Siegel 2009: 470). The upshot is that—for any given conflict management mission—only a sub-set of member states are likely to derive sufficient private benefits to motivate them to contribute robustly. Indeed, in cases where individual states have perceived strong country-specific interests in intervention, they have often preferred unilateral action to tolerating the delays and decision-making constraints that accompany joint action through CSDP (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014).

This was the case with the French military intervention in Mali in 2013. Given its colonial past and proximity to North Africa, France had a particular interest in the conflict, which other EU members states did not share. Since they could reasonably expect Paris to act (France has intervened militarily in Africa more than 30 times since 1960) they stood by as France intervened unilaterally. Overall, during the first decade of CSDP cooperation, France provided more than a quarter of all forces to EU military missions—vastly more (in relative terms) than smaller members or other large partners like Germany, Italy and Britain (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2013) but still too little to make CSDP an effective tool of European border management.

Importantly, freeriding and undersupply are greater within CSDP than within comparable institutions (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014). Within NATO the US has traditionally been willing to provide security for its allies and to use its power to pressure partners to contribute. During the Cold War, the US provided economic benefits and military assurances to persuade West Europeans to refrain from cooperating with the Soviet Union. More recently, Washington has granted loans and military aid in exchange for contributions towards US-led military interventions. In the UN, large developing country contributions to international peacekeeping are often explained by the fact that participation brings valuable private benefits in the form of pay and training for national troops. In the CSDP none of these favourable conditions hold. The predominant focus on out-of-area conflict management means there are few private benefits to participation in CSDP missions. In contrast to NATO, the EU lacks a leading state powerful enough to unilaterally supply external conflict management or to coax or extort contributions from others.

Along with explaining the general weakness of EU common security and defence policy, PG theory also accounts for variation in the supply of joint security by EU members. For example, efforts to tackle transnational organized crime and corruption through projects such as the Prosecutors' Network of the Western Balkans and through Rule of Law and Police Missions within the CSDP framework have been relatively more successful than peacekeeping operations. The relative success of external bordering along this dimension may be explained by an element of rival consumption. As Sandler notes (2001:10), "efforts directed to thwarting organized crime in one place may merely displace criminal activity to a less protected venue so that benefits are rival through the consumption process." This ensures an element of private benefit which facilitates supply.

Migration and Refugee Protection

Like international conflict-management, the stability benefits generated by international refugee and migrant protection are largely non-rival and non-excludable, whereas local costs—both economic and political—can be significant. As a result, states often adopt restrictive immigration policies in an effort to shift burdens onto neighbouring countries. Scholars have long understood that global refugee protection constitutes a PG with resulting problems of collective action (Suhrke 1998, Betts 2003, Noll 2003, Thielemann 2004, 2018, Roper and Barria 2010, Zaun 2018). Yet Bauböck (2018) suggests that the EU offers the best possible 'real-world' circumstances for effective refugee management. Within the EU, refugee protection becomes a collective good for a predetermined group of states with a prior commitment to solidarity and sharing of responsibility in matters of border checks, migration and asylum, he argues (*ibid.*). The EU also features strong supranational institutions that support effective task-coordination and burden-sharing. Noll (2003:241) makes a similar argument, noting that 'risks' associated with joint refugee protection in a regional scheme are *a priori* more circumscribed than a commitment to burden-sharing in a global context, thus facilitating joint action.

Such arguments, however, fail to capture aspects of the EU which hinder rather than facilitate collective refugee management. Unlike in a global setting, borders between EU states are open. As a result, immigrants arriving in one EU country can relatively easily move on to other (Schengen) countries. This in turn creates incentives for individual countries to provide less favourable conditions of reception than their neighbours (Thielemann 2018). To prevent buck-

passing the Dublin Regulation (1997) introduced common rules for processing asylum applications and placed responsibility with the member state where an asylum seeker first enters the Union. In practice this means states with external land or sea borders that are difficult to guard are most heavily burdened, while implementation costs are lower for landlocked states such as Germany, Austria or Switzerland (Noll 2015; Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018:183, Niemann and Zaun 2018). The effects of this uneven burden were evident during Europe's 'refugee crisis' in 2015-2016 when overwhelmed reception countries such as Italy and Greece, receiving little support from other EU members, chose to 'wave' asylum-seekers through so they could reach member states in North and Western Europe (Noll 2015, Lavenex 2018: 1197, Zaun 2018).

Open internal borders imply that collective efforts to control migration at the Union's external borders abide by a 'weaker-link' aggregation logic. Theoretically, this might present a relatively benign coordination problem if member-states were in agreement on the desirability of higher/lower barriers to entry. As with joint security and defence policy, however, heterogeneous preferences have undermined collective action on border checks and immigration policy. Although migrants and asylum-seekers arrive to the EU rather than to individual European countries, their arrival do not affect member states equally. Factors of language, employment opportunities, and historical patterns of migration mean some countries are more likely to be final destinations for immigrants than others. This in turn leads states to value the good of joint external bordering differently. Germany which has traditionally accepted a large share of EU immigrants was a keen promoter of greater supranational control of immigration during negotiations of the Amsterdam treaty, while governments with stronger control over their borders (like Britain and Ireland who remained outside Schengen) opposed supranational policy development (Moravcsik and Nicolaidis 1999). At the height of the 'refugee crisis' (2015-16), Germany and Sweden which received large numbers of refugees (Krisi et al. this issue) once again sought greater EU responsibility-sharing, whereas states with fewer refugee arrivals refused to expand joint action (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018:187, Zaun 2018). Such diverging preferences have meant that long-standing efforts to introduce more comprehensive, obligatory burden-sharing have been largely unsuccessful (Moravcsik and Nicolaidis 1999). For example, the European Refugee Fund created in 1999 to support member states in the reception, integration and voluntary return of refugees has remained severely underfunded (Noll 2003:245, 2018).

In 2015 Germany briefly provided regional leadership by unilaterally accepting a large number of asylum-seekers but soon had to reverse course due to domestic opposition. Meanwhile, Berlin has been largely unsuccessful in using its economic and political clout to push other states to accept larger numbers. Scholars have documented wide disparities in EU members' responsibilities for receiving and sheltering asylum-seekers arriving since 2015 (Thielemann 2018; Niemann and Zaun 2017, Krisi et al. this issue). A Refugee Relocation Mechanism was adopted by majority vote in September 2015 but remained ineffectual due to poor implementation (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018; Niemann and Zaun 2018). Meanwhile, uneven externalities on other states from poor protection of the Union's southern borders and an existing institutional infrastructure which grants a veto to the least-willing member states have precluded agreement on income-transfers or other solidarity measures to countries whose external borders are under greatest pressure, such as Italy and Greece. These 'weaker-link' countries place high value on effectively controlling the EU's external borders but have low capacity to do so.

In 2015 the European Commission's 'Agenda for Migration' (COM(2015)240) proposed improvements to Schengen's regulatory framework, including a new monitoring system for the CEAS, strengthening of the Returns Directive, and implementation of common standards for border-management. Rather than improving burden-sharing, however, lack of EU funding has meant these measures have largely shifted adjustment burdens to countries directly exposed to high refugee inflows (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018:18, Thielemann 2018). Thus, in 2018, five of the EUs then 28 members received some 75% of asylum seekers to the Union.¹ Such repeated failures of burden-sharing led the European Parliament to pronounce that, "all efforts to establish a fair and humane migrant scheme at Union level have been unsuccessful so far" (2018). In response, some observers have called for legally binding commitments to burden-sharing through greater re-allocation of asylum seekers and through harmonization of domestic legislation (Betts 2003, Thielemann 2018). Such proposals are, however, question-begging since they assume what is blatantly missing; willingness by member states to commit to collective problem-solving.

Overall, growing immigration pressures and rising waves of refugees from war-torn countries like Syria have failed to markedly strengthen EU collective bordering. Instead, tighter borders have been instituted at national level. As Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (2015) observe, "we talk of *European* migration policy, but the migration regime is defined mainly by the actions of

¹ <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/europes-new-refugee-regime/>

individual states.” Along with more restrictive national policies, many member states have unilaterally closed their borders. In September 2015 Germany reinstated controls at the border with Austria to stem the flow of refugees. In October that year, Hungary erected a fence along its borders with Croatia and Serbia. Other Schengen countries like Austria, France, Sweden and Denmark also reintroduced domestic border controls (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2021, Krisi et al. this issue). These closures not only represented a departure from the Schengen regime but, in the case of the Nordic countries, reversed a principle of free movement dating back to the Nordic Passport Union of 1958.

The perhaps most effective joint initiative to manage migration flows has been the EU-Turkey Statement brokered in 2016 to stop migrants from entering the EU from Turkey. The deal led to a dramatic fall in the number of refugees and migrants arriving by sea from Turkey to Greece. Still, the task of receiving refugees was largely left with Greece. Between 2016 and 2020 more than 245,000 asylum-seekers arrived in Greece while the Scandinavian countries and Germany received the lowest numbers of asylum applications in years (Eliassen and Malichudis 2020). Despite an agreement by EU governments in 2016 that 160,000 asylum-seekers in Greece and Italy would be distributed across Europe, only a fraction of that number were welcomed by other member states. The EU-Turkey Statement broke down in February 2020 as Ankara accused the EU of “[un]willingness to do what is necessary in addressing the root causes of sufferings in Idlib [Syria]”, noting that the EU had paid less than €3bn of a promised €6bn to help refugees living in Turkey, and had resettled only 26,576 of 3.7million Syrians arriving in Turkey since 2016 to Europe.ⁱⁱⁱ Greece responded by shutting down asylum processing and announced plans to build a floating barrier off Lesbos to stop migrants from making the sea-journey from Turkey (Smith 2020).

Lack of shared responsibility for receiving refugees is well-predicted by PG theory. Yet collective efforts to reinforce EU borders have been more forthcoming for some problems than others. In 2017 EU members agreed to transform the existing European Asylum Support Office into an EU Asylum Office mandated to provide operational and technical assistance to member states during crises.^{iv} The European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) launched in 2016 also strengthens collective control of Schengen borders by integrating the existing Frontex more closely with national authorities responsible for border management, and by granting the former a mandate by to carry out expulsions (Bruns 2019). Both agencies provide a mix of public and private

benefits in the form of enhanced access to information and training for national police forces, thereby boosting incentives for participation. Nevertheless, results have been relatively modest. Plans to provide the European Border Agency with a standing corps of 10,000 border guards by 2027 seem distant, as staff in 2019 stood at just 750.

EU Neighbourhood Policy

In addition to seeking to harmonize European asylum policies and secure greater burden-sharing for reception of refugees, the EU has sought to reduce pressure on its external borders through its Neighbourhood policies. These employ targeted economic assistance to help nearby countries strengthen their national asylum systems and thereby transform them into ‘safe countries’ for readmission of asylum-seekers (Cuttitta 2019). In some cases, European neighbourhood policies ‘externalize’ EU border controls, for example through bilateral readmission agreements with adjacent countries or through financing camps for holding refugees (Bruns 2019, Trauner and Kruse 2008). More generally these policies aim to improve socio-economic conditions in Europe’s ‘near abroad’ to reduce both migration pressures and security threats from trafficking and organized crime. According to the European Parliament (2018),

“part of the solution to the migratory and refugee challenge as well as to the security concerns of Union citizens lies in addressing the root causes of migration and devoting sufficient financial means to internal and external instruments that aim at tackling issues such as poverty, lack of employment, education and economic opportunities, instability, conflict and climate change in the European Neighbourhood.”

In 2015, at the height of the refugee crisis, the EU launched an Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa ‘to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration.’ European leaders offered an initial €2,4bn to be spread across twenty-six partner countries in Africa and the Sahel to help deport unwanted migrants and improve local living conditions (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018). In 2018, the budget for EUTF Africa was increased to €4.2bn Euros with a further €489,500 pledged by individual member states (EUTF Annual Report, 2018). These growing (but still modest) sums were, however, largely diverted from other, pre-existing funds such as the European Development Fund. As predicted by PG theory, the

majority of individual member-state pledges come from the countries that are most directly affected by African migration, such as France, suggesting that ‘private benefits’ drive cooperation in this area (Thielemann 2018, Roper and Barria 2010). While this secures some buy in, too few countries perceive a direct interest in contributing to give these policies teeth. Thus, while some observers point to growing EU investment in external bordering and suggest that internal border-closures have impelled a move to ‘more fortress Europe’ (Genshel and Jachtenfuchs, Krisi et al. this issue), the persistent weakness of EU border agencies and the chronic underfunding of European Neighbourhood Policies are strong indicators of the collective action problems hindering effective external bordering.

Conclusions

Scholars and pundits have long argued that the ‘quid pro quo’ for Schengen has been the creation of a ‘Fortress Europe’—“a citadel against immigration, watched over by a hi-tech surveillance system of satellites and drones and protected by fences and warships” (Malik 2018). But while internal debordering has certainly led to growing politicization of immigration and asylum policies and fuelled fears of terrorism and transnational crime, in reality there is no ‘European fortress’. Instead, there are 27 fortresses behind which individual member states are increasingly barricading themselves (ibid.). Recent developments show few signs of reversing this trend. The EU budget for 2019 increased funds for Heading III (Security & Citizenship) from €3,49 billion in 2018 to €3.73 (+6.7%) but financed reinforcements through mobilisation of so-called flexibility instruments for unforeseen contingencies rather than establishing permanent mechanisms to finance migration cooperation and external security (Committee on Foreign Affairs 2018). Overall, while there has been an increase in ‘closure’ in the form of tougher rules governing entry and exit to the EU (Schimmelfennig this issue) there has not been a corresponding increase in EU capacity to enforce these rules.

Failure to agree a common European asylum policy, inability to marshal a credible CSDP, and inadequate financing of European neighbourhood policies all evince the cooperation problems facing EU states in regard to external bordering. Yet it is important to stress that not all forms of external bordering present intractable collective action problems. Successful external bordering in the form of joint control of the flow of goods and production factors to/from the

EU has long been supplied through the European Customs Union and Single Market. Why has collective bordering succeeded in one realm but failed in others?

Broadly, the answer lies in the relative cost of pooling and delegating decision-making and implementation authority v. individual gains from joint action. As discussed, successful supply of PGs often requires investment in supranational institutions that restrain opportunistic behaviour (Sandler 2010) and channel funds towards weaker-link counties. Yet supranational authority entails autonomy costs for individual states whose interests may sometimes diverge from the collective will. Collective action is most likely when autonomy costs are low, when there are commercial gains from collective action, and when joint action can be initiated by smaller groups that can later be expanded (Sandler 2010:43-44). For example, the European Customs Union started with just six countries. It might not have succeeded if agreement among 27 states had been needed at the outset. In the case of the customs union and internal market, autonomy costs were also limited since most European countries adopted similar levels and standards of trade regulation at national level (Sandler 2001). At the same time, benefits from integration were significant as individual states saw increased national income from growing regional trade and investment flows, along with reduced transaction costs and enhanced bargaining power vis-à-vis global trading partners (Gnutzmann and Gnutzmann 2019).

Drawing on economic theories of PG provision I have identified collective action barriers to external bordering of the EU in the domains of security and defence and migration policy. Alternative explanations exist for weak bordering in these domains—for example, normative theories citing nationalism. Yet given the constraints of a single article, rather than assess rival theories I have chosen to focus solely on PG theory to see how far it can explain variation in patterns of bordering. What general conclusions follow from my analysis with respect to the future of European bordering?

According to Schimmelfennig (this issue) in a context of growing politicization of borders, the outcome of boundary (re)negotiations depends on the specific costs and institutional hurdles of internal v. external re-bordering. Since economic, cultural and political homogeneity and interdependence are substantially higher between EU members than vis-à-vis non-members, *external* re-bordering provides greater gains and fewer scale losses than internal re-bordering, making the former more likely (ibid.). I draw a different conclusion, namely that conditions conducive to effective external bordering are currently lacking in Europe. While it might be ‘cost-

effective' for the EU to pursue external re-bordering in combination with continued internal openness (thereby defending economic integration), the difficulty of external border-closure implies that we can expect the opposite: continued porous external borders combined with growing internal re-bordering.

In recognition of this trend, some have called for stronger supranational structures aimed at limiting national decision-making autonomy and restraining opportunistic behaviour. Yet, such structures are themselves products of collective action which require agreement on long-term political objectives. Or, put differently, the creation of supranational institutions with sufficient political authority and coercive power to satisfy member states' demands for external bordering assumes a willingness to share risks and burdens which is presently lacking. Instead growing pressures on Europe's borders are translating into increased border-closure at national level.

A different trajectory could be envisaged, of course, were European publics and political elites to embrace the benefits of open borders—internally and externally. Many economic analyses point to strong social and economic benefits of immigration. Most normative arguments establish a clear responsibility to extend solidarity beyond borders—that is, to *de*-bordering. This article takes no normative view as to whether weaker/stronger internal or external borders are desirable. My argument is simply that the particular nature of European integration means that external re-bordering presents a doubtful alternative to internal re-bordering in the present EU context. Even if we disregard the normative drawbacks to 'Fortress Europe', stronger external border-closure appears infeasible in the present political and institutional context. Assuming continuing or growing public demand for bordering in the EU, the more likely scenario is therefore national re-bordering.

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ⁱ Travel bans are covered by Art.29 of Directive 2004/38/EC which allows Member States to limit free movement in the event of a "disease with epidemic potential." On 16 March, 2020, the European Commission published "COVID-19: Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services (2020/C 86 I/01) which clarified that "in an extremely critical situation, a Member State can identify a need to reintroduce border controls as a reaction to the risk posed by a contagious disease", but stressed that "the conduct of health checks of all persons entering the territory of Member States does not require the formal introduction of internal border controls" and that "safeguards laid down in the Free Movement Directive must be guaranteed". [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XC0316\(03\)&from=FR](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XC0316(03)&from=FR).

ⁱⁱ The Maastricht Treaty (1992) foresaw the creation of a 'European Security and Defence Identity' within NATO, whereas the St. Malo Declaration (1998) foresaw a European security and defence policy separate from but closely aligned with NATO.

ⁱⁱⁱ Turkish EU Embassy to EU-ObsERVER, 03-03-2020.

^{iv} <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170627STO78419/eu-border-controls-and-managing-migration>