

seek to gain a better theoretical grasp of the content matter before moving forward. This can be accomplished by beginning with chapter eight. Just as chapter eight provides an excellent theoretical context, chapter seven provides an excellent historical context and should be subsequently read. The remaining chapters can then be read in sequence from chapter one to chapter six. Ultimately, senior scholars and researchers in the field of economics would likely find this work most useful as an essential part of their reference collection.

Bibliography:

- Polanyi, Karl (1975). *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, New York: Octagon Books.
- Syrquin, Moshe (1988) 'Patterns of structural change' in Hollins Chenery and T.N. Srinivasan (eds), *Handbook of Development Economics*, Vol. 1, Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp. 205-268

Fabio Zucca, *The International Relations of Local Authorities. From Institutional Twinning to the Committee of the Region: Fifty Years of European Integration History* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012)

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At a moment when the European Union is having an identity crisis, it is pertinent to remember the motivations, the ideas and efforts of the men who dedicated their lives to its creation and who established the means and organizations necessary to involve the citizens in the bottom-up part of this process. This book focuses on the role played by local authorities, who were the first to use the establishment of twinning – the development of cultural, political and economical bonds between two cities or villages belonging to different nations – as a parameter of real international policy and to view it as an essential phase of the establishment of a united Europe.

The deep archival research the author has conducted shows how the legitimisation of local authorities within the European institutions has been a "long march" and his book clearly considers all the different historical steps in this process, from the creation of the *Union internationale des villes* (UIV) in 1913 to the new phase of EU cohesion policies started in 2013. He also shows a special regard for the men who made this integration possible: Gasser, Milhaud, Schiavi, De Jager, Bareth, Chaban-Delmas and other. In the context of the activities implemented by local authorities, the establishment and development of twinning between important European cities appears as a prime case of their effectiveness and importance. At the beginning, these relations started as means for the reconstruction of Europe, but they soon

became an instrument for sensitising citizens to and involving citizens in the ongoing European integration process, as well as giving them the opportunity to enter in contact and to compare personal experiences. Zucca highlights the activities of three Italian cities: Florence, Turin and Milan. In each of them, the role played by municipal councillors and mayors was the engine of the mechanism of European integration. In Florence, the federalist and Europeanist councillors Riccioli and Zoli put great efforts into overcoming political and administrative problems as well as fighting the underestimation of the importance of twinning; in Turin, after the initial hesitation, Mayor Peyron totally devoted himself to the work of the *Associazione Italiana per il Consiglio dei Comuni d'Europa*, concluding six of the seven European twinning contracts of its city and even winning the *Prix de l'Europe* in 1957. Milan, despite being extremely active in ideological and political debate, concluded its first twinning agreement only in 1961 and the reference framework was more focused on the economic and international political relations that Milan could develop rather than on European integration. Only with the advent of Aniasi as mayor did Milan assume its role as a European and federalist city.

The representatives of local authorities put every effort into obtaining the recognition of their institutions by the Union, but their first official appearance took place only in 1988 and the Committee of the Regions was only established in 1994. The positive outcomes of these now European institutions have reinforced the perception of the effectiveness of their initiatives, giving one more tool for the integration of new member cities and countries.

European integration is a multifaceted process, comprehending different aspects and paths, and it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview. Besides being difficult, it should be noted that scholars often concentrate on the same issues, neglecting smaller, but fundamental successes, such as the establishment of inter-municipalities contacts and exchanges, and this book is one of the few covering the fifty years of the effect regional institutions have had on the European Integration process. Zucca completed a long and complex process of archival research to reconstruct all the phases in this path to bring the role European citizens had in creating the Union to the eyes of their descendents, their commitment and belief in integrating with their neighbours overcoming national belonging. To make his message more effective, the author supports his thesis with a detailed historical reconstruction of local efforts, from the theoretical development, stressing in particular the fundamental role of Adolf Gasser, to the creation of newspapers – from *La Gauche européenne* to *Der Europaer* – and associations – from *La Fédération* and the European Movement to the Council of European municipalities – providing us with the example of three important Italian cities. This choice may seem curious since Italians municipalities were much less active than French ones, both in terms of official and civic engagement and belief in the possibility of achieving concrete results. Zucca faced a challenging and difficult task in collecting

the necessary material for his analysis, since archives did not always meet his expectations and information might have been lacking, not considering the geographical distance between them. If the cases of Florence and Turin are interesting for the important results achieved, deeply analysed by the author, Milan was more source of theoretical and international debate on the direct elections of the European Parliament rather than concrete local commitment. Consequently, more attention is given to that than to concrete results at the people-to-people level such as twinning. It is definitely proof of Italian politicians' activities and involvement in the unification process, but it can give the impression that the Milanese have been detached, leaving behind only their political and intellectual guides.

Although complex, the reading is quite fluid: sentences are well structured and the vocabulary not too formal, not an easy accomplishment considering the subject of the book. Arguments are well grounded, with the necessary references to discussions, events and speeches. However, regarding the latter, Zucca is maybe too confident in his readers' understanding of French since he provides translation only for quotations in Italian. Even if there are few of them in the text, they can still create the feeling among the readers that they are missing something in the description of the events. Another point creating some difficulties in reading is the stress on the biographies of the men and women who devoted their lives to the recognition of local authorities' importance. It is undeniable that personal education and affiliation are essential to the choices people made; but sometimes it seems that biographical elements prevail in the historical reconstruction and this excessive stress risks detaching the readers' attention from the main focus. The author wisely confines the majority of these to the footnotes; nevertheless the latter may be longer than the text on a single page.

People who are interested in popular European history as well as those who look for an example of how will and commitment can bring societies together and overcome both physical and political boundaries will find in this book an excellent guide. Zucca reminds us how difficult the creation of a united Europe and the establishment of an adequate civic participation were, which nowadays European citizens seem to underestimate and forget, but which is the core of European belonging and is one of the best ways to welcome our new members in a ever-larger Union.