

New Narratives of European Integration History

Edited by Gabriele D'Ottavio. With contributions by Martin Conway, Kiran Klaus Patel, Sandrine Kott, Gabriele Metzler, Andreas Fickers, Aline Sierp

Gabriele D'Ottavio

Disenchantment and new heuristic challenges in European Integration history

For many historians it's time to move beyond the mainstream historical narratives of twentieth-century Europe. This need is perceived as particularly urgent in the field of European integration history. One might even ask whether a new «narrative turn» is taking place. To discuss this question, we have brought together contributions that address the topic of the new historical narratives of European integration from different vantage-points. What unites these contributions is their commitment to reflecting on analytical approaches or research perspectives, which might lead to a reformulation, if not reconceptualisation, of the historiographical discourse on European integration, breaking with the hallowed pattern. This first section aims to clarify the key assumption this forum builds on: to fully capture the distinctiveness of recent historical narratives of Euro-

pean integration, we have to take account of both the origins of the current «historiographical disenchantment» and the complexity of the closely related new heuristic challenges.

«Entzauberung»: one might be tempted to describe the more recent historical narratives of European integration with Max Weber's famous concept of «disenchantment». With our backward perspective, the origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to the early 1990s. Since Alan Milward's *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, deconstruction of old-fashioned narrative histories has always been one of the main driving forces in European integration historiography. With his groundbreaking 1992 study, the British historian offered a provocative and stimulating interpretation, arguing that European integration was anything but a federalist or a neo-functional

project¹. Milward was certainly right in his critique when he claimed that the first historical accounts of European integration were influenced by theory-oriented approaches and, more generally, that «much research was centrally concerned with testing the validity of these theoretical propositions»². However, with the passage of time the «Milwardian» narrative of Western European cooperation would in turn become the object of some new «critical stories», which considered its state-centrism too reductive, over-deterministic and at places misleading.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, second-generation scholars could easily plead for new narratives of European integration. Some historians, for example, proposed a new «supranational history» of European integration: one that investigated the intergovernmental, transnational yet also community nature of European politics by means of newly released archival documents³. The novelty of this proposal lay in considering not just nation states but the viewpoint of the Community institutions and non-state actors⁴. Some other scholars called for more conceptual and theoretical

investigation, arguing that the «historiography of European integration should relate more coherently and contribute more effectively to the agendas of other disciplines»⁵. At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, a new self-reflexive historiographical turn set in, beginning with Mark Gilbert's critical reflection on the progressive institutional narrative, where European integration was often described as a «process», marked out in constituent stages alternating between crisis and «relaunching»⁶. Gilbert's anti-teleological assessment was (and still is) an inspiration for the many scholars who believed that European integration history could not be narrated as a forward-moving «process». This new self-reflexive «narrative turn» was further developed by the introduction of the concept of «Europeanization» as a historiographical category⁷. The heuristic assumption underlying that concept is that the history of Europe, of which European integration forms a part, may be studied via a constructivist approach, such that the very idea of Europe is constantly being reframed⁸. This understanding of European (integration) history would clarify both the emergence of com-

¹ A.S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, London, Routledge, 1992.

² Id., *Allegiance. The Past and the Future*, «Journal of European Integration History», 1995, 1, p. 7.

³ J. Laursen, *Towards a Supranational History*, «Journal of European Integration History», 2002, 1, pp. 5-10.

⁴ See, particularly, P.N. Ludlow, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s: Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge*, London, Routledge, 2006; W. Kaiser, B. Leucht, M. Rasmussen (eds.), *The History of the European Union: Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity 1950-72*, New York, Routledge, 2009.

⁵ W. Kaiser, *From State to Society? The Historiography of European Integration*, in M. Cini, A.K. Bourne (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in European Union Studies*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 195.

⁶ M. Gilbert, *Narrating the Process: Questioning the Progressive Story of European Integration*, «Journal of Common Market Studies», 46, 2008, pp. 641-662.

⁷ W. Schmale, *Europäisierungen*, «Europäische Geschichte Online» (EGO), March 12, 2010.

⁸ M. Conway, K. Patel (eds.), *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; U. von Hirschhausen, K.K. Patel, *Europäisierung, Version 1.0*, «Docupecta-Zeitgeschichte», November 29, 2010.

mon European forms of self-perception or self-representation and the ongoing impact of local and national identities in the face of phenomena that transcend the borders of regions and nation states⁹.

In the last decade, partly as a consequence of the many strides made by research, European integration historians have radically questioned the «Cinderella syndrome» of their discipline within European studies, again with some of them calling for more analytically sophisticated historical narratives¹⁰. Additionally, some recent events, such as the outbreak of the Eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit, have also begun to rebound on the historiography of European integration. In the widespread belief that the European Union is facing an unprecedented existential crisis, some scholars have argued, for example, that the new heuristic challenge should be that of studying the «contested history» of European integration¹¹. This new trend is also a telling

example of the risks some of the neglected stories of Europeanization do seem fraught with. For should such an analysis fail to go deep enough into the historical roots and ramifications of Euroscepticism, instead of correcting, it might end up bolstering the mainstream narrative with its talk of an alleged dialectical tension between the propulsive forces of integration and opposition to a «process» which continues to be interpreted teleologically. A second risk is that the new «negative narratives» of European integration might slide into a new form of retrospective determinism, based on a need to bend analysis of the past to explaining the problems of the present¹².

An excellent example of the new critical narratives of European integration history is to be found in the recent volume by Kiran Klaus Patel, *Project Europe*¹³. Deconstruction of hoary narrative clichés is the book's guiding theme; as the subtitle of the German edition hints, it is a «critical history». And

⁹ K.K. Patel, *Transnationale Geschichte*, «Europäische Geschichte Online» (EGO), March 3, 2010; C. Cornelissen, *Transnational History as a Challenge to European Historiography*, «Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico»/«Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts», 2019, 1, pp. 169-186.

¹⁰ W. Kaiser, A. Varsori (eds.), *European Union History. Themes and Debates*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; L. van Middelaar, *The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union*, New Haven, Ct/London, Yale UP, 2015; D. Dinan, *Europe Recast, A History of European Union*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2014; W. Loth, *Building Europe: A History of European Unification*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2015; I.T. Berend, *The History of European Integration. A New Perspective*, London, Routledge, 2016; W. Van Meurs, R. de Bruin, L. van de Grift, C. Hoetink, K. van Leeuwen, C. Reijnen, *The Unfinished History of European Integration*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2018.

¹¹ B. Wassenberg, F. Clavert, P. Hamman (dir.), *Contre l'Europe? Anti-européisme, euroscepticisme et alter-européisme dans la construction européenne de 1945 à nos jours*, vol. 1: *Les concepts*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010; M. Gainar, M. Libera (dir.), *Contre l'Europe? Anti-Européisme, Euroscepticisme et Alter-Européisme dans la Construction Européenne de 1945 à nos jours: Acteurs institutionnels, milieux politiques et société civile*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015; B. Wasserberg, P. Moreau (eds.), *European Integration and new Anti-Europeanism*, 3 vols., Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016/2018.

¹² On potential pitfalls in the study of Euroscepticism see M. Gilbert, D. Pasquinucci, *Introduction*, in M. Gilbert, D. Pasquinucci (eds.), *Euroscepticisms. The Historical Roots of a Political Challenge*, Boston-Leiden, Brill, 2020, p. 2.

¹³ K.K. Patel, *Project Europe: A History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020 [German original: *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte*, München, Beck, 2018].

critical it certainly is, not just by its avowedly anti-teleological stance and theme-based approach, but above all for the author's explicit intent, as pointed out by Konrad Jarausch in his endorsement of the English edition, «to strip away many of the popular myths in order to appreciate the EU's real achievements and to refocus the discussion about its current crisis and future prospects»¹⁴.

In the broad operation of ridding Europe's history of «myths» we may also include some recent studies that have contributed hermeneutic as well as empirical subtlety to the idea that European integration cannot be properly understood, if it is not linked to the wider history of Europe¹⁵. At the same time one notes a recent research interest in historicizing the political and cultural narratives by which the mass media played their part in constructing the European Community/Union as a historical discourse right from the outset¹⁶.

But deconstruction of hoary narrative clichés and myth-making representation of European integration is only one of the elements of current «historiographical disenchantment». What seems far more important from an epistemological angle is the spate of pluralization and differentiation in analytical approaches, in addition to (and even on top of) which we have witnessed a growing research attention in time to «global history» and «transnational history» perspectives¹⁷. As the present collection of contributions makes clear, present-day narratives are not confined to noting the transcendence of those political and cultural horizons within which European (integration) history used to be framed from a broadly Eurocentric and teleological standpoint. All of our forum authors suggest moving European integration history towards a polycentric or even provincializing world view, which at the same time addresses the question of

¹⁴ On this, see also *Europa in der Krise. Gespräch mit Kiran Klaus Patel und Lutz Raphael über die Geschichte der europäischen Integration und den gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel westeuropäischer Gesellschaften seit den 1970ern*, «Journal of Modern European History», 2019, 4, pp. 412-421.

¹⁵ See, particularly, P. Hansen, S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica. The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014; M. Gilbert, *Cold War Europe. The Politics of a Contested Continent*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014; I. Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster. Europe 1950-2017*, London, Allen Lane, 2018; L. Warzoulet, *Governing Europe in a Globalizing World. Neoliberalism and its Alternatives following the 1973 Oil Crisis*, London, Routledge, 2018; L. Raphael, *Jenseits von Kohle und Stahl – Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte Westeuropas nach dem Boom*, Berlin, Suhrkamp, 2019; U. Krotz, K.K. Patel, F. Romero (eds.), *Europe's Cold War Relations. The EC Towards a Global Role*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

¹⁶ G. Clemens, *Werben für Europa: Die mediale Konstruktion europäischer Identität durch Europafilme*, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 2016; K.K. Patel, A. Sianos, S. Vanhoonacker, *Does the EU Have a Past? Narratives of European Integration History and the Union's Public Awareness Deficit*, «Journal of European Integration History», 2018, 1, pp. 145-167; W. Kaiser, R. McMahon, *Transnational Actors and Stories of European Integration. Clash of Narratives*, London, Routledge, 2019; G. D'Ottavio, *Broadcasting Europe: The Treaties of Rome as a Media Event*, «Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico»/«Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts», 2019, 1, pp. 143-168.

¹⁷ On this, see also K.K. Patel, *Widening and Deepening? Recent Advances in European Integration History*, «Neue Politische Literatur», 2019, 2, pp. 327-357. For the wider European history from the early modern to the twentieth century, an example of this pluralization of the research perspectives is to be found in *Nuovi approcci alla storia europea/Neue Ansätze zur europäischen Geschichte* (special issue edited by G. D'Ottavio and M. Rospocher), «Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico»/«Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts», 2019, 1.

whether this «space of experience» can still be regarded as European. They all dwell on certain categories in particular: the «long twentieth century», the «*trente glorieuses*», «Europeanization», «epistemic Eurocentrism», «globalization», «Cold War narrative», «(post-)colonialism», «hidden integration», «memory region», «European public sphere». Such an approach not only maps out the history of European integration by periods and by its fundamental processes,

but opens up a gamut of new research perspectives serving to bring out an innovative change of significance.

As a whole these contributions reflect the evolution of a complex historiographical process, the dawn of which we can trace to the early 1990s. Only recently, however, has this taken on the guise of a radical cultural, conceptual, theoretical and methodological «turn» in the way the history of European integration is being conceived and recounted.

Gabriele D'Ottavio, Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale (Dsrs), Università degli Studi di Trento, Via Verdi 26, 38122 Trento
gabriele.dottavio@unitn.it

Martin Conway

Writing European unification backwards

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Narratives are neither neutral nor natural. The tendency to write – and perhaps more especially to think – the history of Europe in the twentieth century in a forward direction has long been very strong. Written from that perspective, the twentieth century can be presented as a dark but ultimately heroic tale: Europe was consumed by national and ideological conflicts in the early decades of the century, which culminated in its collapse around 1945. From this nadir, Europe gradually recovered its peace and identity, before finally regaining its unity and full sovereignty after 1989. This narrative of the post-1945 era – modulated

to accommodate national and ideological variants – has had a long life in history books, and in European minds¹. It is not difficult to see why. Its forward-facing narrative provided an account of the origins of the present, which legitimised the actions of the rulers of Western Europe after 1945, marginalised Europe's Mediterranean and eastern borderlands, and rescued a liberal agenda of social and intellectual progress from the ashes of the 1940s. Above all, it gave successive generations of post-war Europeans a collective identity which offset the uncertainties generated by American and Soviet encroachment, the collapse

¹ This paradigm is symbolised, above all, by the influence (and multiple translations) of Tony Judt's narrative of Europe's recovery: T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, London, William Heinemann, 2005.

of colonial empires, and rapid social and cultural change.

But there is a limit to how far the rubber band of an ever more elongated post-war era can be stretched, before it risks breaking, or rebounding into the faces of those who seek to extend it. This narrative of the origins of the present has reached the end of its life, even though we are unlikely to agree on the exact date of its demise, or its proximate causes². Most obviously, events since the turn of the century – notably the consolidation of a Russian national state, the financial and economic crisis, and new forms of populist politics – have invested the early decades of the twenty-first century in Europe with a very different character from those of the late twentieth century. What sense we will make of the politics of the twenty-first century remains an open question; but it provides contemporary historians with a privileged vantage-point from which to look back on the twentieth century. We live in a different place, with very different preoccupations, and this enables us to see the era since 1945 not as a path towards our present, but as a series of distinct periods, each of which was shaped by particular historical forces, that were both internal and external to Europe.

This re-imagining of the territory of the second half of the twentieth century has a particular relevance for the history of European integration. The project of European unification was tied from the outset to the aspiration to move beyond the conflicts

which had brought Europe to its mid-century low-point, and the commemoration of these origins – as made manifest in the House of European History inaugurated by the European Parliament in Brussels in 2017 – remains the most tangible source of legitimation for the European Union (EU). But, more than sixty years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, it is now possible to assess the development of European unification as a properly historical phenomenon, with a beginning, a middle, and perhaps also an end. Of these three elements, the first is too familiar, and the third remains too uncertain; but the second has now come into clearer historical perspective. The forward leap which European unification made in the 1980s and 1990s from a scheme of inter-governmental management to a Union possessed of its own institutions, currency, borders, and the apparatus of a putative sovereign state, was one of the most remarkable features of the late twentieth-century history of Europe. But it does not fit easily into Hobsbawm's concept of a short twentieth century that reached its resolution in the events of 1989 and their immediate aftermath⁵. Instead, this expansion in the powers of the European Union was a medium-term process over a period of roughly thirty years. It had its origins in the economic crises of the 1970s, and continued into the eastward expansion of the Union after 1989, before reaching its rather messy terminus in the European constitutional reforms of the 2000s.

² See the interesting reflections on the investment of contemporary history in the post-1945 era, in P. Lagrou, *De l'histoire du temps présent à l'histoire des autres. Comment une discipline critique devint complaisante*, «Vingtième Siècle», 118, 2015, pp. 101-119.

⁵ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*, London, Michael Joseph, 1994.

This European version of the *trente glorieuses* had several explanations. But, viewed in retrospect, its most distinctive feature was the way in which the project of European unification benefited from the way that it became the focus for an activist mentality of reformist governance, an inclusive corporatism, and a value structure of post-national liberalism. The first of these three elements is perhaps the most familiar. Narrative histories of the development of the European Union have rightly emphasised how the institutions of the Union – and most especially the Commission – encouraged a spirit of governmental experimentation, carried out by a transnational élite of civil servants and experts, who found in the structures of Europe a necessary distance from the pressures of national electoral politics. The importance of the European institutions did not therefore lie solely in what they did, but in the laboratory space that they provided for new forms of market harmonisation, infrastructure provision, regional policy, and a wide range of social measures. The second factor was related to this. The classic structures of corporatism which were created across Europe from the 1920s onwards were largely limited to the tripartite mediation of conflicts between employers, employees, and the state. But in the latter decades of the twentieth century the EU became the catalyst for a much more inclusive model of social negotiation, involving a wide range of actors, including farmers, small business groups, professional organisations, and consumer and environmental groups. Clustered around the Commission and the European Parliament, these interest groups

created a new culture of lobbying and negotiation that nudged the making of European regulations and policies, but which also cascaded down into the national and local levels of governance.

None of this, however, would have worked had it not found an echo in the West European societies of the late twentieth century. The essential third element which made possible the expansion of a European level of governance was the way it merged with the values and mentality of a new demographic of socially and geographically mobile, predominantly younger, and more educated, generation of Europeans. For some, the identity of Europe was an alternative to the constraints and awkward historical reference points that they associated with nation-states. For many others, however, an affinity with Europe became a supplementary identity, which co-existed alongside national loyalties, and which formed part of a rather loosely-defined progressive liberalism. Europe acquired a legitimacy among these groups because it appeared to be the means of bringing to fruition their vision of an expanded range of civic and personal freedoms, as well as the collective ideal of a more inclusive and fluid European society. These factors matter because, with our backward perspective, we can now see how they have been eroded with the passage of time. Governance by European institutions is less accepted, the mechanisms for inclusive social negotiation have become less effective, and above all the European Union has come to be perceived as too remote from the concerns of many ordinary Europeans. Why that should have occurred is a task for another day. But, more imme-

diately, it demonstrates how the forward march of Europe across the final decades of the twentieth century owed less to the institutions of Europe, or indeed to the actions of those who staffed them, than to the way it was carried forward by broader factors. The window of opportunity which these created was seized upon highly effectively by the predominantly Franco-German leadership of Europe in the 1980s. But the Europe of a different shape that emerged after 1989 proved to be a much less conducive context in which to advance schemes of European integration. The nation-state nationalisms of the post-Socialist east, the disruptive impact of policies of market-led deregulation, and subsequently fears of an Islamic-inspired terrorism, all weakened European institutions while strengthening the primacy of nation-states, and their European and extra-European alliances⁴.

If nothing else, this proves that European unification is, and always was, history. It has no teleological right to continue to succeed, and the particular form of integration which gathered momentum across the late twentieth century was not fundamentally different from other forms of unification that have occurred in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That, too, is a benefit of the altitude afforded by a backwards perspective. We can now see better the shape of the project that emerged from the Treaty of Rome, but also how it resembled those that had preceded it. The unifi-

cation brought about by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, as well as the institutions of European negotiation and multilateralism generated by the League of Nations in the 1920s were not predecessors of the Treaty of Rome, but they demonstrate that European unification has rarely been the product of its own history but the consequence of broader shifts in political, social, and economic power. Nor should we neglect the precedents provided by the two projects of European unification under German aegis that briefly took shape within the periods of the two world wars. The Europeanising ambitions of the officials of the German Empire during the First World War and, subsequently, of an élite cadre of officials within the Third Reich have long been an awkward presence in histories of European unification. That the founders of the EEC and of other institutions of European integration in the 1950s should have conceived of their goals as the antithesis of Nazi projects of annexation and oppression was of course comprehensible and entirely sincere. But, again with the passage of time, we can perceive how the technocratic and economic policies of the Third Reich bore something of a family resemblance to the techniques of government which developed within European institutions over subsequent decades⁵.

These precedents and comparisons do not detract from the inherent importance of what developed in Western Europe over the final decades of the twentieth century.

⁴ A necessarily preliminary account of these trends is provided in P. Ther, *Europe since 1989: A History*, Princeton Nj, Princeton University Press, 2017.

⁵ D. Gosewinkel (ed.), *Anti-liberal Europe: A Neglected Story of Europeanization*, New York and Oxford, Berghahn, 2015; M. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi rule in occupied Europe*, London, Allen Lane, 2008.

But they demonstrate that the history of European integration cannot be viewed in isolation from the wider history of Europe. Indeed, it is tempting to see the impulse towards integration as something inherent to European history, at least from the era of the French Revolution onwards. The emergence during the nineteenth century of projects of national unification – that were also projects of integration – as well as of more or less explicit models of empire have been counter-

balanced by the contrary trend – which was equally evident in the later twentieth century – towards the liberation and sovereignty of smaller and more ethnically or linguistically homogenous states. In that way, the contemporary history of Europe has always been a complex mixture of the quest for the small and the proximate, and the lure of the large and the unifying. The EU was, and remains, part of this larger tension, but not, we can now see, the means of its resolution.

Martin Conway, Faculty of History, University of Oxford, George Street OX1 2RL, Oxford (Uk)
martin.conway@history.ox.ac.uk

Kiran Klaus Patel

Beyond a zero-sum logic. Writing the history of European integration from a global perspective

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For many global historians, the process that eventually led to the creation of today's European Union must appear as the heart of darkness. In the language of Jerry Bentley and Sebastian Conrad, two «birth defects» have haunted the modern social sciences and humanities since their inception in nineteenth-century Europe. «Methodological nationalism», where research was tied to the nation state through its themes and questions, but also its societal function, is one; the other is Eurocentrism, which placed European developments in the foreground, saw Europe as humanity's driving

force, and, at a deeper level, as a conceptual template for understanding the world¹. If the key task is to overcome Eurocentrism and the cultural baggage of European science, where would the challenge be more daunting than in the history of European integration?

But that is only one way of seeing things. One can also take issue with the organicist metaphor coined by these leading representatives of global history, which alludes more to the academic language of the nineteenth century than the twenty-first. It is as much a reflection of power struggles be-

¹ J.H. Bentley, *Introduction: The Task of World History*, in Id. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 1-16 and, echoing Bentley, S. Conrad, *What is Global History?*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 3-4.

tween different academic fields and traditions in our own times as a valid scholarly argument.

This short contribution does not take sides with either European (integration) history or global history. Instead, it seeks to overcome the widely shared view that the relationship between the two is a zero-sum game. I contend that repositioning European integration history with the help of global history can help both sides, and I elaborate on my argument with a mix of historiographical and conceptual deliberations as well as a few empirical examples. As starting point, it is important to clarify the relationship between European integration history and global history. In a nutshell, I see them as two very different beasts (to return to organicist language one last time). While I understand European integration history as an empirical field, global history for me is a perspective – a perspective with the potential to free European integration history from methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism². Conversely, its application to European history can help global history to fully realize its potential. Firstly, then, on methodological nationalism. This issue has presented pervasive challenges to European integration history ever since it emerged as a field of historical

inquiry during the postwar decades, and it came in two shapes. For one, many of the first generation of historians entering (and thus defining) the field focused on a history of ideas and adhered to a federalist approach. Some scholars, particularly in Italy, continue to work along these lines today³. This research has an implicit proclivity to methodological nationalism, since it tends to substitute a supranational Europe for the nation state as the historical object (and, for some, even project) of historical inquiry. Konrad Jarausch has rightly warned of the Treitschke trap: that historians today might mimic the role of nineteenth-century historians, only at the European level⁴.

Even if some historians do still work this way, this form of methodological nationalism has receded to the margins. Criticism of its teleological underpinnings has been long and elaborate, and also politically, support for such views has weakened substantially in times of neo-nationalism and populism.

For another, methodological nationalism has also shaped the literature that emerged in critical reaction to federalist research. Since the 1980s, European integration history has witnessed the rise of archive-based studies, often undergirded by notions that in political science would be called real-

² I readily concede that global history has also turned into a field, next to being a perspective.

³ D. Pasquinucci, *Between Political Commitment and Academic Research: Federalist Perspectives*, in W. Kaiser, A. Varsori (eds.), *European Union History: Themes and Debates*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 66-84; D. Pasquinucci, *Nella direzione del «movimento storico». Il contributo federalista dalla europeizzazione dell'Italia*, in P. Craveri, A. Varsori (a cura di), *L'Italia nella costruzione europea. Un bilancio storico (1957-2007)*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2009, pp. 395-415; L. Levi, *Il pensiero federalista*, Roma, Laterza, 2002; and, in a comparative perspective to Germany, K.K. Patel, *L'integrazione europea nelle storiografie di Italia e Germania*, in C. Cornelissen, G. D'Ottavio (a cura di), *Germania e Italia. Sguardi incrociati sulla storiografia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2019, pp. 81-110.

⁴ K. Jarausch, *Zeitgeschichte zwischen Nation und Europa. Eine transnationale Herausforderung*, «Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte», 2004, B39, pp. 3-10.

istic. This approach, however, also had a penchant for methodological nationalism. It is characterized by a state-centric approach. Seen through this optic, most powerfully conceptualized in the work of Alan Milward⁵, European integration was but the latest means of nation states to reassure their role in postwar Western Europe. Here, the nation state is not replaced by a new historical telos. Instead, methodological nationalism comes in an even more straightforward fashion, by reinstating the nation as main historical actor and, more fundamentally, as the key analytical lens to examine historical processes.

Having said all this, both these methodologically nationalist approaches have been challenged over the past ten to fifteen years and lost their dominance in favor of more methodological sophistication and pluralism. As mentioned before: work of the federalist-teleological kind has become quite rare in recent years. For more than ten years, non-state actors and transnational perspectives have been part and parcel of the analysis of European integration history, subverting the logics of conventional state-centric interpretations and approaches⁶. Moreover, the latest research has demonstrated the transformative effect of European integration on its member states, which also leads beyond state-centrism⁷. And, more fundamentally, the chal-

lenge of teleology and the Treitschke trap are always on the table⁸.

European integration history has thus begun adopting approaches today associated with global history. Admittedly, a lot of work still needs to be done. But conceptually, there are clear alternatives to at least the most obvious forms of methodological nationalism, and we now have a lot of research that implicitly or explicitly responds to its challenges. In connection with methodological nationalism, one might be reminded of Molière's Monsieur Jourdain: he had been speaking prose long before realizing he did so. Admittedly, European integration historiography has not done so since its very inception – which is a clear difference to Monsieur Jourdain. But by now, the move is not new anymore either. Eurocentrism, as the other challenge, can also be addressed in interesting ways, though the challenge is greater here than for methodological nationalism. Three particularly promising routes must suffice as examples. Firstly, Eurocentrism in this field has long translated into EUcentrism – a form of scholarly research that treats European integration under the auspices of the predecessors of today's EU as the main or even only alternative to nation-centered forms of policy-making. In contrast, recent studies started to provincialize this forum and placed it in the context of

⁵ A.S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, 2nd ed., London, Routledge, 2000.

⁶ See, particularly, W. Kaiser, B. Leucht, M. Rasmussen (eds.), *The History of the European Union: Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity 1950-72*, New York, Routledge, 2009.

⁷ K.K. Patel, *Project Europe: A History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, especially chapter 6.

⁸ See as an early important contribution to the debate M. Gilbert, *Narrating the Process: Questioning the Progressive Story of European Integration*, «Journal of Common Market Studies», 2008, 46, pp. 641-662.

other contemporary efforts toward European cooperation and integration. Among other things, this line of research shows that even the EU's earliest postwar predecessors were latecomers on a stage of international cooperation that was already densely crowded, and that it took decades for the European Communities to turn into the foremost – and increasingly also predominant – organization at this level. Such research therefore challenges not just teleological assumptions, but also the Eurocentrism that this line of research has suffered for so long⁹. The obvious next step is a comparative and relational analysis of cooperation and integration efforts in other parts of the world, starting from Eastern Europe and moving on to phenomena such as Pan-Americanism and internationalist ideas and practices in Africa and Asia. While political science has recently started to go into that direction, historical research with such an approach still lags behind¹⁰. A second, highly productive line of research examines the late-colonial roots of post-1945 European integration. This contradicts an older interpretation con-

tending that integration was Europe's response to the end of centuries of global dominance; that decolonization represented a necessary precondition for a European Community of equal democratic partners to emerge¹¹. Instead, the more recent research has been able to show not just the late imperialist, trans-continental projections in early plans and practices of European integration – as a dimension long ignored in public discourse and historiography. It has also demonstrated that European integration was not simply an internal, intra-European process but was driven by perceived global developments in a context of existing global entanglements. More profoundly, such studies reveal how Eurocentrism shaped Europeans' ideas about integration with regard to Africa, and how these categories and practices were perceived – and challenged – by non-European actors¹². Deconstructing and historicizing Eurocentrism, especially in constellations in which European integration intersected with global processes, has thus come to represent an important contribution that European integration

⁹ See, conceptually, K.K. Patel, *Provincialising European Union: Co-operation and Integration in Europe in a Historical Perspective*, «Contemporary European History», 22, 2013, pp. 649-673; L. Warlouzet, *Dépasser la crise de l'histoire de l'intégration européenne*, «Politique européenne», 44, 2014, pp. 98-122; empirically W. Kaiser, J. Schot, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, and International Organizations*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; K.K. Patel, W. Kaiser (eds.), *Multiple Connections in European Cooperation: International Organizations, Policy Ideas, Practices and Transfers 1967-1992*, «European Review of History», 2017, 3 (special Issue); Patel, *Project Europe*, cit.

¹⁰ T.A. Börzel, T. Risse (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016.

¹¹ See, for example, N. Davies, *Europe: A History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 1068.

¹² P. Hansen, S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015; M. Rempe, *Decolonization by Europeanization? The Early EEC and the Transformation of French-African Relations*, in Working Paper Series, Freie Universität Berlin, Kolleg-Forscherguppe: The Transformative Power of Europe, 2011, 27; G. Garavini, *Dopo gli imperi: L'integrazione europea nello scontro Nord-Sud*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 2009; M.-T. Bitsch, G. Bossuat (sous la direction de), *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique. De l'idée d'Eurafrrique à la convention de Lomé I*, Brussels, Bruylant, 2005.

history can bring to debates about global history.

A third dimension is probably most probing. Eurocentrism also touches the epistemic level of the very concepts we work with, and global history rightly emphasizes that these need to be freed from the Western biases that have driven them for the longest time. This is what some have called «conceptual Eurocentrism»¹³; I prefer the term epistemic Eurocentrism. So far, there are rather few alternatives to Eurocentric categories such as «state», «international organization», and «government». But identification of the shortcomings of these terms by political scientists and others is a step on the road to arriving at critical alternatives. Terms such as multi-level governance sound technical¹⁴. But in stressing the postmodern and hybrid elements of policymaking they have potential, particularly if freed from rational-choice thinking and possibly combined with a Foucauldian understanding of «governance». There is still a long way to go, but global historians are also – like European integration history – struggling to come up with meaningful alternatives to Eurocentric categorizations. Dialogue between the various camps and fields is the most promising approach¹⁵.

Plans and practices of enhanced cooperation and integration in Europe have always been discussed against the background of global processes and fear of decline. They cannot be understood without this context and, in fact, research has long been aware of the global dimension of European integration. The lenses of the Cold War and transatlantic relations had already informed and driven federalist as well as state-centric approaches. Recent research in the field has moved further in the direction today associated with global history – partly informed by other historiographical traditions, such as the (European and North Atlantic) debate about transnational history, partly taking its cue explicitly from global history research. A perspective and a research field that might look like extreme opposites have thus entered into contact with the potential of creating a win-win-situation. Fortunately, European integration historians are not resorting to the «methodological grumpiness» that Charles S. Maier sees as a typical response to «global history» from the diplomatic and international history fraternity¹⁶. In fact, scholars in European integration history today follow and contribute more to global history debates than the other way around. Global historians could therefore profit from dialogue with

¹³ E.g. Conrad, *What is Global History*, cit., p. 164.

¹⁴ See, as a starting point of that debate, L. Hooghe, G. Marks, *A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus*, «British Journal of Political Science», 39, 2009, pp. 1-25.

¹⁵ As recent examples going into this direction, see M. Herren, *Transkulturelle Geschichte: Globale Kultur gegen die Dämonen des Eurozentrismus und des methodischen Nationalismus*, «Traverse», 19, 2012, pp. 154-169; C. Dejung, M. Lengwiler (hrsg.), *Ränder der Moderne. Neue Perspektiven auf die Europäische Geschichte (1800-1930)*, Köln, Böhlau, 2016.

¹⁶ C.S. Maier, *Dis/Relocating America: Approaches to Global History in the United States*, in B. Haider-Wilson, W.D. Godsey, W. Mueller (eds.), *International History in Theory and Practice*, Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017, pp. 315-331, here p. 329.

Europeanists. It takes a joint effort to overcome the zero-sum logic and address the

pertinent conceptual and empirical issues we are all struggling with.

Kiran Klaus Patel, Historisches Seminar, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, 80539, München (Ger)
patel@lmu.de

Sandrine Kott

«European» integration without or against Eastern Europe

In common parlance, the word «Europe» refers to the European Union, which, as we know, does not cover the whole European territory. From its very beginning, the European construction was not an all-encompassing European project but a Western one. Neutral as well as Eastern European countries¹ were never part of this Europe. The Economic Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and subsequent «European» institutions not only forget Eastern Europe, but also strongly contributed to its economic marginalization². Most of the literature on this topic takes this for granted and sees it as an unavoidable consequence of the unfolding Cold War. Yet, as I will argue, choices were made by US and Western political and economic elites at the end of the Second

World War that strongly contributed to the exclusion of the «small countries» of Eastern Europe and their economic stagnation. Was another Europe possible? This is what I wish to explore here by taking seriously the pan-European projects formulated during the interwar and war years that led to the creation of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (ECE) in 1947. Because it does not fit the Cold War narrative and because the «European» project has been reduced to the success-story of the European Union, the ECE is largely ignored. But led by neutral countries citizens³, it aimed to build a bridge between East and West, and could have offered an alternative path for a European common future⁴.

¹ I use the expression «Eastern Europe» countries as a counterpart to «Western Europe» not in a geographical sense.

² K.K. Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte*, München, Beck, 2018, pp. 28-51 and p. 69.

³ After Myrdal, two executive secretaries were Finnish: Sakari Tuomioja (1957-1960) and Klaus Sahlgren (1985-1986), two were Yugoslav: Vladimir Velebit (1960-1967) and Janez Stanovnik (1968-1982) and one was Austrian Gerald Hinteregger (1987-1995).

⁴ Y. Berthelot, P. Rayment, *Economic Commission for Europe*, in Y. Berthelot (ed.), *Unity and Diversity in Development Ideas Perspectives from the UN Regional Commissions*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press,

During the Second World War, pan-European plans were developed but only the «humanitarian» aspects of them were implemented. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which operated mainly in Eastern Europe between 1943 and 1947, did provide relief but it had neither the means nor the time to fully develop the rehabilitation dimension of its mission. And yet, development plans had been discussed in what remained from the League of Nations (LON) system as well as in several circles in the US and Great Britain during WWII. They envisioned bringing «backward» Europe out of its state of underdevelopment as a precondition for lasting peace on the continent. In an article published in 1943, the Polish economist Rosenstein-Rodan pleaded for priority aid to Eastern Europe coupled with large developments programs. Rosenstein-Rodan saw this combination as a blue print for the rest of the underdeveloped world⁵. These ideas were not new. Already in the twenties, the LON and the International Labour Organization (ILO) had sent several

technical missions to Eastern and South Eastern Europe with two aims: to develop less advanced countries, and guarantee the political stability of the continent in the process⁶. In the thirties, plans to fight unemployment in Eastern European sought to counterbalance rising German imperialism⁷.

In line with this vision, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, founded in 1947, tried to develop all-European economic reconstruction plans by setting up technical committees on coal, transport, electric power, industry, and housing⁸. The US economist Walter Rostow, the mind behind the creation of the ECE, was convinced that to ensure peace it was necessary to reconstruct devastated Eastern European countries and, to help them to rise out of their «backwardness». In 1948, his first executive secretary, the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal declared:

Europe is going forward not back and Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, particularly, will and should be more industrialized than before, a new balance between East and West must come. But it will not be the old one that left the East in a semi-colonial state⁹.

2004, pp. 46-70; D. Stinsky, *A Bridge between East and West? Gunnar Myrdal and the UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1947-1957*, in M. Christian, S. Kott, O. Matějka (eds.), *Models of Economic and Social Planning in Cold War Europe. Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2018, pp. 45-68.

⁵ P.N. Rosenstein-Rodan, *Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe*, «The Economic Journal», 53, 1943, pp. 202-211; Id., *The International Development of Economically Backward Areas*, «International Affairs», 1944, 2, pp. 157-165. See also his interview for the Oral World Bank History Project, oralhistory.worldbank.org/transcripts/transcript-oral-history-interview-paul-rostenstein-rodan-held-august-14-1961.

⁶ M. Alacevich, *Planning Peace: The European Roots of the Post-War Global Development Challenge*, «Past & Present», 2018, 1, pp. 219-264.

⁷ S. Schirmann, *Crise, coopération économique et financière entre États européens, 1929-1933. Histoire économique et financière – XIXe-XXe*, Vincennes, Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2011, books.openedition.org/igpde/100.

⁸ Memorandum of Walter Rostow, United Nations Origination in Geneva Archives (UNOG), Arr 14/1360-80.

⁹ UNOG Arr 14/1360 080 Myrdal 1948 See also for the role of UN-ECE in circulations of knowledge within Europe V. Lagendijk, *Divided Development: Post-War Ideas on River Utilization and their Influence on the Development of the Danube*, «The International History Review», 37, 2015, 1, pp. 80-98.

This was in tune with the objectives of the Communist leadership who wished to reach economic independence through industrialization. At the ECE in 1948, Eastern European delegates pledged to establish an industrial development commission for Eastern Europe. Yet in a Cold War context that was heating up, this demand was rejected by the US, as well as the main Western European representatives. By then the Marshall plan, and its purpose as a Cold War weapon, had already supplanted the UNRRA. The Marshall plan did not succeed in bringing the Western European nations to fully cooperate, nor did the Economic Cooperation in Europe (OECE) become the European community that some US officials had envisioned. But it drew the limits of a new Western Europe trade zone under US leadership¹⁰. Moreover, it quickly became a very effective tool to enforce the embargo politics promoted by the US. One of the amendments inserted into the Economic Co-operation Act of the Marshall Plan stipulated that OECE countries had to refuse supplying non-member countries with goods for which the American authorities had not granted an export license¹¹. These export licenses were already

imposed by the US authorities on Eastern European countries in 1947 and expanded to «sensitive» materials, including mining equipment in 1948. The same year, Walt Rostow visited Poland and Czechoslovakia as Gunnar Myrdal's assistant and reported on the anger of his interlocutors. They bitterly pointed out that this restrictive licensing practice greatly impeded their economic reconstruction, while the German aggressor received funds from the Marshall Plan. This embargo also contributed to the failure of pan-European economic projects planned by the ECE such as the one that, in 1949-1950, sought to link electricity networks between Czechoslovakia, Poland and southern Germany. This plan failed because of the embargo on US and Western European electrical equipment to Central European countries under the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM)¹². COCOM's stated objective was to establish a single list for all NATO countries of goods prohibited from export to Eastern Europe¹³. The COCOM was never a perfect instrument but until 1954, and again in the 1980s, it was undoubtedly a powerful economic weapon against an already less developed and im-

¹⁰ D.B. Kunz, *The Marshall Plan Reconsidered: A Complex of Motives*, «Foreign Affairs», 76, 1997, 3, pp. 162-170; S.D. Parrish, M.M. Narinsky, *New Evidence on the Soviet Rejection of the Marshall Plan, 1947: Two Reports*, Cold War international history project working papers series, paper 9, 1994, www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFB73.pdf; A. Carew, *Labour under the Marshall Plan: The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987, pp. 92-110. On the role of the Marshall plan for European construction, see among others G. Bossuat, *L'Europe occidentale à l'heure américaine: le Plan Marshall et l'unité européenne, 1945-1952*, Bruxelles, Éd. Complexe, 1992.

¹¹ I. Jackson, *The Economic Cold War: America, Britain and East-West Trade, 1948-63*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, St. Martin's Press, 2001.

¹² V. Lagendijk, *The Structure of Powers: the UNECE and East-West Electricity Connections, 1947-1975*, «Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung», 2014, 1, pp. 50-65.

¹³ M. Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the politics of East-West trade*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1992; T.E. Følrand, «Economic warfare» and «strategic goods»: a conceptual framework for analyzing Cocom, «Journal of Peace Research», 1991, pp. 191-204.

poverished part of Europe. Western European economic and political elites that still had economic interests in Eastern Europe showed some reluctance towards these measures but they never effectively resisted US demands. The foundation of the ECSC and the subsequent economic integration of Western Europe have to be understood in this context.

The Council for Mutual Economic assistance (CMEA) has always been a very weak answer to these various Western initiatives and never paved the way for real economic integration in Eastern Europe¹⁴. At its founding conference in 1949, two objectives were clearly reaffirmed: reconstruction had to be accelerated and, trade with the West encouraged. This second objective was a constant concern throughout the organization's existence¹⁵. Eastern European leaders, in particular the Czechoslovaks and the Poles, and even the Soviets, knew that they remained economically dependent on the Western European countries to which they sold raw materials and bought equipment products that were urgently needed for their reconstruction, their economic development and the construction of socialism¹⁶. In the hope of preserving these economic relations, the Czechoslovak and

Polish delegates never deserted the ECE, even during the Stalin era. For Eastern European countries, the real threat was the growing integration of Western European economies and the various protective barriers that followed the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC)¹⁷. Up to the 1970s, the EEC largely ignored the CMEA countries, and when a general framework to develop trade agreements with «non market» economic countries was floated in 1971, the EEC bypassed the CMEA, leaving individual Eastern European countries to negotiate trade agreements in a weaker position¹⁸.

In the mid-1980s, there were about 2000 economic agreements between EEC and CMEA countries, as well as 400 mixed production companies. Most of the time, Eastern European countries hosted production and assembly units, and played the role of disinherited subcontractors rather than fully-fledged economic partners. Often confined to the old economic sectors of mechanics and chemistry, these agreements contributed little to the modernization of the socialist countries' productive apparatus and increased their dependence on Western technology and standards. What Gunnar Myrdal described in 1947 as a «semi-

¹⁴ T. Bogomolov, *Socialisme et compétitivité: les pays de l'Est dans l'économie mondiale*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989, pp. 69-144 and M. Lavigne, *Les Économies socialistes: soviétique et européennes*, 3 éd. revue et mise à jour, Paris, A. Colin, 1979, pp. 345-382.

¹⁵ L. Crump, S. Godard, *Reassessing Communist International Organisations: A Comparative Analysis of COMECON and the Warsaw Pact in Relation to Their Cold War Competitors*, «Contemporary European History», 2017, 12, pp. 1-25.

¹⁶ W. Diebold Jr., *East-West Trade and the Marshall Plan*, «Foreign Affairs», 26, 1948, 4, pp. 709-722.

¹⁷ UNOG AEE 14/1560-26.

¹⁸ A. Romano, *Untying Cold War knots: The EEC and Eastern Europe in the long 1970s*, «Cold War History», 2014, 2, pp. 153-173 and S. Kansikas, *Acknowledging Economic Realities. The CMEA Policy Change vis-à-vis the European Community, 1970-1973*, «European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire», 2014, 2, pp. 311-328.

colonial» situation from which he hoped to liberate Eastern Europe through the ECE seemed to have remained a persistent reality forty years later for Eastern European Countries¹⁹. The role that the Western economic integration and the ECE played in that still needs to be studied. By the second half of the 1980s, highly indebted socialist countries had developed an economic dependence on the West. In a final attempt at reform in 1986, and under the injunction of

Mikhail Gorbachev, the CMEA set itself the goal of intensifying «cooperation» with the capitalist countries and using the EEC as an inspiration to solve the economic problems of Eastern Europe²⁰. Finally, the European project, whose primary aim was to solidify the Western bloc, greatly contributed to weaken the Eastern Europe economically but also ideologically, to the point that Reform communists had nothing else to propose than the EEC as a model.

Sandrine Kott, Département de Histoire Générale, Université de Genève, Rue Saint Ours 5, 1211, Genève 4 (Ch)
sandrine.kott@unige.ch

Gabriele Metzler

Writing the history of European integration from a (post-)colonial perspective

In the wake of the crises in the European Union – the financial crisis of 2008, the disagreement on refugee policy and especially the impending Brexit – confidence in the progress of integration has been shaken. The European Union, and with it its citizens, must rebalance its future. With the future, the interpretation of the past has – unsurprisingly – also been drawn into a reassessment. Most recently, Kiran Klaus

Patel has critically dissected and relativized the grand narratives of the European Union as a project for peace, democracy, prosperity and welfare¹. The time seems ripe for new historical perspectives on European integration.

This holds true, I would argue, especially with regard to the (post-)colonial dimension of European integration. In the great historical narratives on European integra-

¹⁹ O.T. Bogomolov, *Socialisme et compétitivité: les pays de l'Est dans l'économie mondiale*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1989, p. 203.

²⁰ K. Grzybowski, *La communauté socialiste et les projets de Gorbatchev*, «Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest», 1988, 2, pp. 131-144.

¹ K.K. Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte*, München, C.H. Beck, 2018. For a critique of Eurocentrism in European historiography, see S. Berger, *The Past and Present of European Historiography. Between Marginalization and Functionalization?*, in R. de Bruin, M. Brotsma, M. Lok (eds.), *Eurocentrism in European History and Memory*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019, pp. 25-42.

tion it was completely absent for many decades, and only in recent years has it been receiving increasing attention. By «(post-) colonial» we mean, on the one hand, a temporal perspective that gives more weight to the simultaneity of decolonization and founding of the first European institutions than has been the case in European integration historiography to date. In short: how were the numerous departures from the empires connected with the first steps towards integration? On the other hand, however, I would like to make clear that a postcolonial perspective on the history of European integration offers opportunities for insights that go beyond the history of the EU's origins. As there is still little empirical research available on this subject, this part of my contribution will be more tentative and thesis-based. The perspective of global history helps to understand how to «globalize European Union history and Europeanize the history of decolonization»². Not the first³, but probably the strongest, impulse for a (post-)colonial history of European integration was given by Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson's book «Eurafrica»⁴, in which they show how European colonial powers managed to combine their interests in continuing their influence in Africa with the building of European institutions.

I will address this issue in the first part of my contribution. Further perspectives will then be opened up by questions about concrete policies after the founding of the EEC, as well as about a (post-)colonial European culture of remembrance, certainly the most difficult terrain on which the history of European integration can – and must – be told anew.

Power, Interests, Institutions

The study by Hansen and Jonsson has convincingly shown that the older interpretation that the European Communities only became a good foreign policy option for the two great powers, France and above all Great Britain, after their empires had disintegrated can be set aside. Quite the reverse: united Europe was not a surrogate for past imperial greatness, but rather an instrument for continuing to successfully assert European interests in the colonial areas that were becoming independent: an instrument of power. To put it in a nutshell: the two authors recognize that reaching out to Africa and penetrating this non-European area was a founding impulse of the European communities in their formative phase after the Second World War.

This idea had already been in the offing in the late nineteenth century. The rise of the

² E. Buettner, *Europe after Empire. Decolonization, Society, and Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 505.

³ Cf., among others: M.-T. Bitsch, G. Bossuat (sous la direction de), *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique: de l'idée d'Eurafrrique à la convention de Lomé I: Actes du Colloque international de Paris, 1er et 2 Avril 2004*, Brussels, Bruylant, 2005; G. Garavini, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South, 1957-1986*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012; Y. Montarsolo, *contrepoint de l'idée d'Europe: le cas français de la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale aux négociations des Traités de Rome*, Aix-en-Provence, Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2010.

⁴ P. Hansen, S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica. The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

United States and its emerging dominance in global competition had a threatening effect on the European states in its tendency towards territorialization – and thus potentially closure – of capitalist structures. Against this background, they pushed ahead with their colonial expansion and at the same time the territorialization of their rule, especially in Africa. Initial ideas of a European union, preferably in the form of a customs union between two or more European states, were formulated in circles of industrialists and politicians, but did not gain wider support before the First World War⁵. Inspired by the experience of this world war, designs for a united Europe became more popular after 1918. What is often overlooked in historical research is how European domination over Africa was always included in these projects. Not only did the European colonial powers – in the dawning age of self-determination and after the short «Wilsonian moment»⁶ – form a «holy alliance»⁷ to continue their rule (in which, by the way, Germany, which had lost its colonies in the war, also participated in practice); but the advocates of a political and economic unification of the continent also assumed that Africa belonged to it as a hinterland, as an economic resource and thus as the basis of European power in the world.

«Eurafrica» had geopolitical significance, promised settlement space, and for its part seemed only to be waiting to be «developed» through European modernization. This included the great technical utopias of connecting infrastructures⁸. By imagining themselves as a civilizing power, Western European societies also enhanced their common European identity: in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, all the states that were later to found the European Communities shared perfectly similar representations of colonial rule⁹.

It was not until after the Second World War that the vision of a united Europe could be put into practice. There is no denying other founding impulses that lay outside the colonial sphere (Cold War, reconstruction and the Marshall Plan, security). But one of these impulses was rooted in the colonial interests of the states, which is hardly surprising, given that five of the six states that signed the Treaties of Rome in 1957 and thus formed the core of the newly emerging European communities still maintained control over territories outside of Europe¹⁰. The small Duchy of Luxembourg was the only exception. These experiences were of varying relevance at the end of the 1950s. Germany had already lost her colonies in 1919. Italy was still present in Somaliland as a trustee power for

⁵ S. Beckert, *American Danger: United States Empire, Eurafrica, and the Territorialization of Industrial Capitalism, 1870-1950*, «American Historical Review», 2017, 4, pp. 1157-1170.

⁶ E. Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁷ P. Hansen, S. Jonsson, *Eurafrica*, cit., p. 17.

⁸ Here, the «lieu historique» is «Atlantropa» – Visionen eines Richard Sörgel, *ibidem*, pp. 60-64.

⁹ M.G. Stanard, *Interwar Pro-Empire Propaganda and European Colonial Culture: Toward a Comparative Research Agenda*, «Journal of Contemporary History», 2009, 1, pp. 27-48.

¹⁰ E. Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, cit., p. 500.

the United Nations. The Netherlands had to leave Indonesia in 1949, but maintained their rule over Surinam until 1975; even today, small territories in the Caribbean officially belong to the Netherlands. France withdrew from Indochina in 1954, but was still present in North Africa and Western Sub-Saharan Africa; today the Dom-Tom form small relics of the French Empire. Belgium also retained its dominance in the Congo until 1960. By the end of the 1950s, European rule was nowhere uncontested; everywhere it was challenged and its legitimacy questioned. And only a few years later, in particular after the «Year of Africa» in 1960, the map of Africa already looked quite different.

While it was initially due to British initiative that the rule over and access to Africa provided a founding vision of Europe as a «third force» between the two superpowers USA and Soviet Union, in the 1950s France in particular was the driving force behind «Eurafrica». The French defeat in the Suez crisis played a part in this. French efforts to include the whole of Africa in the early integration process remained unsuccessful. After Morocco and Tunisia became independent in 1956, the French focus was directed even more strongly than before at Algeria, which had a special status anyway and, unlike the other Maghreb states, was formally (since 1848) part of France¹¹. This provision

of the Treaty has never been fully implemented. On the contrary, after the Treaty of Évian in 1962, the question arose as to what would become of Algeria's commitment to the EEC. It would take another two years after independence before Algeria withdrew from the European Communities¹².

The main instrument for linking Africa to the EEC was association. It is noteworthy that British territories in Africa were already associated with the EEC before Britain itself achieved membership status in the European Communities¹³. The history of association is a promising avenue by which to gain (post-)colonial insights beyond the founding of the EEC and also to arrive at a more precise perspective on the neo-colonial character of EEC/EU policy¹⁴.

«Spaces of Experience» and Mental Maps

The system of association was shaped by various treaty regimes during the 1960s and 1970s. The first, the conventions of Yaoundé, had an asymmetrical layout with late colonial features, as they gave Europeans access to African markets on conditions of mutual preference. There are obvious similarities with the imperial preference system. As the self-confidence of the independent (or soon-to-become independent) states grew, the EEC's trade relations with Africa had to be readjusted. This was expressed in the Lomé

¹¹ M. Brown, *Drawing Algeria into Europe: Shifting French Policy and the Treaty of Rome (1951-1964)*, «Modern & Contemporary France», 2017, 2, pp. 191-208, here pp. 194-197.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 197-200.

¹³ F. Leikam, *A Matter of Preference: Commonwealth Africa, Britain, and the EEC Association System, 1957-1975*, in P. Winand, A. Benvenuti, M. Guderzo (eds.), *The External Relations of the European Union*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2015, pp. 292-311.

¹⁴ On «neocolonial» cf. G. Martin, *Africa in World Politics: A Pan-African Perspective*, Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2002, pp. 1-22; E. Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, cit., p. 500.

Conventions I to IV (1975-1989), but above all in the Cotounou Agreement (2000).

The case of European trade relations with Africa illustrates how difficult it was to transform late colonial ideas of preference. The EEC's trade policy provides an exemplary policy field for tracing the colonial imprint of *individual* policy fields. Another would be that of European development aid: For example, the European Development Fund established under the Treaty of Rome focused entirely on the (former) colonial territories. Véronique Dimier has made it clear that the beginnings of the Directorate General for Development were determined entirely by former French colonial officials, who both consciously and unconsciously sought to continue late colonial modernisation policies here¹⁵. Sara Lorenzini has argued that European exceptionalism in international development aid can be explained by the colonial identity and the resulting specific design of its development aid policy¹⁶.

It is therefore necessary to go beyond the foundation of the European institutions and to examine individual policy areas more closely in order to determine how the colonial past shaped their structure, their design and also the main actors active in them. An analysis of individual pol-

icy fields also reveals that different colonial pasts have produced different mental maps and thus make joint action in the respective policy fields more difficult. Differences in policy preferences in the foreign policy of EU member states can thus be plausibly explained¹⁷. Another example would be the specific actions of EU members in development policy: their bilateral agreements with non-European countries still show the after-effects of colonial interdependence. In short, not only the beginnings of integration, but also the obstacles to its progress can be explained by colonial pasts; the propaganda of the Brexiteers who invoked the Empire was the most recent example of this¹⁸.

Remembrance and the Public

A shared culture of memory with regard to the (post-)colonial dimension of European integration has not yet emerged. Three complexes come together here, each of which, taken separately, is already fraught with difficulty. Not only is a common European culture of remembrance of integration at best in its infancy, as manifested for example in the «House of European History» in Brussels¹⁹; but also the memory of colonialism has until now been marked by a decidedly national character and has found

¹⁵ V. Dimier, *The Invention of a European Development Aid Bureaucracy. Recycling Empire*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

¹⁶ S. Lorenzini, *At the Origins of European Foreign Policy: European Exceptionalism and the Case of Development Aid*, in L. Antonioli, L. Bonatti, C. Ruzza (eds.), *Highs and Lows of European Integration. Sixty Years after the Treaty of Rome*, Cham, Springer Nature, 2019, pp. 11-25.

¹⁷ On this, see the example of the 2015 French intervention in Mali, cf. B. Erforth, *Mental Maps and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Eurafrique and the French Intervention in Mali*, «European Review of International Studies», 2016, 2, pp. 38-57.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Ward, A. Rasch (eds.), *Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

¹⁹ historia-europa.ep.eu (Jan. 9, 2020).

varying degrees of depth within European societies²⁰. As a result, it is problematic to find a common memory of the late or post-colonial influences of European integration. Other powerful narratives about the beginnings of integration after 1949 still dominate: the unifying root in Christian-Jewish culture, the lessons of the two world wars, the common striving for democracy, peace and prosperity. The fact that the early steps of integration actually indicate a striving to defend and continue European influence in non-European, colonial regions has so far found no place in these grand narratives. Just as the colonial past has now taken hold of the former Western European colonial powers and they have to address this past (e.g. through restitution of colonial arte-

facts, human remains etc.), so the EU must acknowledge the colonial character of its roots²¹. This also implies that Europeans should become aware of how much their own European identity was and is determined by the construction of «the other». Especially in times of a so-called «refugee crisis» it would be important to give an account of this and to become aware of the fact that «people escaping across the Mediterranean are questioning the borders of Europe and dramatically exposing past entanglements again»²². It is essential we create a European public sphere around this issue, if we are to deal with the colonial past and to develop a common awareness towards a common post-colonial space that goes beyond Europe.

Gabriele Metzler, Philosophische Fakultät, Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin (Ger)
metzlerg@geschichte.hu-berlin.de

²⁰ K. Nikolaïdis, B. Sèbe, G. Maas (eds.), *Echoes of Empire. Memory, Identity, and Colonial Legacies*, New York, I.B. Taurus, 2015.

²¹ Cf. P. Pasture, *The EC/EU between the Art of Forgetting and the Palimpsest of Empire*, «European Review», 2018, 3, pp. 545-581; M. Stanard, *The colonial past is never dead. It's not even past: Histories of empire, decolonization, and European cultures after 1945*, «Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte», 2016, pp. 151-174.

²² J. Ifversen, *A Guided Tour into the Question of Europe*, in R. de Bruin, M. Brolsma, M. Lok (eds.), *Eurocentrism in European History and Memory*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019, pp. 195-222, here p. 219.

Making Europe – Looking at the history of Europe in the long twentieth century through the lens of technology

Science and technology are at the very heart of the European project. But how to write a history of Europe in the making when using technology as an actor category and lens of analysis? This is the driving narrative behind *Making Europe: Technology and Transformations (1850-2000)* – a six-volume series on the history of Europe in the «long twentieth century»¹. All volumes in the series are co-authored by two or three authors and are the result of an intense debate and discussion amongst all people involved in this collective endeavor. As the series editors Johan Schot and Phil Scranton emphasize in the introduction to the series, *Making Europe* aims at providing a novel perspective on European history by decentering the European Union and its many predecessors and by placing the complex, desynchronized and multi-layered process of Europeanization in a long-term historical perspective:

Technology's role in shaping Europe coalesced around 1850, when a new era began, an era from 1850 to 2000, that we refer to as

The Long Twentieth Century. It was during the mid-nineteenth century that a newly globalizing world began to emerge. This was a world in which the many new transportation and communication technologies played a decisive part. At this time, technology became a reference point for European superiority – both within and beyond Europe. Cross-border connections and institutions thrived; the knowledge-sharing practices that fostered these connections were widely circulated and adopted. This circulation of knowledge led to a worldwide imagining, negotiation, and experiencing of Europe that still exists today².

Challenging European integration scholarship – which largely interpreted the post-war European integration process as a political project driven by great men (the «founding fathers») and neo-functional dynamics – the research agenda of the ToE-network focuses on the «hidden integration» of Europe: processes that carried, flagged, and helped to maintain a sense of Europeanness by bringing out tensions in Europe and about Europe³. *Making Europe* treats Europe as an actor and Europeans as

¹ The book series is one outcome of the «Tensions of Europe» (ToE) network – an international network of scholars in the field of history of technology with the aim of promoting transnational research and collaboration (www.tensionsofeurope.eu). For detailed information about the six volumes (including podcasts by the authors) see www.makingeurope.eu/.

² J. Schot, P. Scranton, *Making Europe: An Introduction to the Series*, in R. Oldenziel, M. Hard, *Consumers, Tinkerers, Rebels. The People who Shaped Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. x.

³ T. Misa, J. Schot, *Inventing Europe: Technology and the Hidden Integration of Europe*, «History and Technology», 2005, 1, p. 1.

a performative category in the shaping of transnational infrastructures, knowledge, artefacts, as well as in the production of the social and cultural capital of technology. In this sense, the book series attempts to demonstrate the intellectual tradition and conceptual richness of the history of science and technology and what it has to offer for a better understanding of the «project of Europe»; at the same time, it is a critical investigation of the ambiguous role of technology in European history.

Struggling with «Europe» and «technology»: the Europe/technology uncertainty principle

All volumes struggle with the fuzziness of the term «Europe» or «Europeanness» in both its temporal and spatial dimensions. As Wolfram Kaiser and Johan Schot put in their volume on *Writing the Rules for Europe*: «It was, and is, a content with fuzzy economic, political, and cultural borders [...]. Europe is often present in different shapes: as an ambition, a problem, a necessity, a stepping stone, a last resort, a natural geographical space, a colonial space, a response to America, a background factor, or an unintended consequence»⁴. In fact, it is the focus on technology which allows for a much clearer reflection on what Europe means or has

meant. As Dirk van Laak and Maria Paula Diogo explain in *Europeans Globalizing*, the concept of Europe has neither been historical, nor cultural or geographical, but civilizational. It was premised on «a radically new way of perceiving nature and its relationship to Humanity»⁵.

That this relationship was often a contested and harmful one goes without saying. While recognizing the pivotal role of technology in the making of Europe, *Making Europe* also addresses the dark side of the techno-economic and techno-political phenomena inscribed into the logic of technological progress and the techno-scientific conquest of the world. This is most obvious in the instrumental role that hundreds of thousands of technicians, engineers and craftsmen played as so-called «experts» during wars or in supporting totalitarian regimes⁶. As Martin Kohlrausch and Helmuth Trischler demonstrate in their volume *Building Europe on Expertise*, the many «Faustian bargains» between techno-scientific experts and totalitarian regimes show that the relationship between experts and the state can generally be interpreted as mutually beneficial – and that expert cultures are obviously quite willing to adapt themselves to changing political circumstances⁷. As Melvin Kranzberg once stated, technology is neither

⁴ W. Kaiser, J. Schot, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, and International Organizations*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 11.

⁵ M.P. Diogo, D. van Laak, *Europeans Globalizing: Mapping, Exploiting, Exchanging*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 8.

⁶ The chapter 5 «Logistics of War» in the volume by P. Högselius, A. Kaijser, E. van der Vleuten, *Europe's Infrastructure Transition. Economy, War, Nature*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 183-227 offers the most explicit analysis of the role of technology during wartimes in Europe.

⁷ M. Kohlrausch, H. Trischler, *Building Europe on Expertise: Innovators, Organizers, Networkers*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 143-155.

good, nor bad, nor neutral⁸. Neither are technicians or engineers. Understanding the «non-neutrality» of technology and its protagonists in the shaping of Europe – be it in the physical, social, political, economic, or cultural sense – is exactly what *Making Europe* does when studying actors (both individual and institutional ones), arenas (such as international organizations or discrete moments of techno-political conflicts), and actants (non-human actors in the Latourian sense such as infrastructures or technical devices).

Because of the «notoriously inaccurate scale» of Europe as an epistemological object of study, all volumes of the series were faced with the «Europe/technology uncertainty principle»: the more one tries to explore the grand aims, spatial vision and contested projects of Europe that informed the planning, building or uses of technologies, the more the unique materiality or thingness of technological infrastructures or devices tends to fade away. On the other side, the closer one comes to understanding the mechanisms, protocols and conventions of large technological systems or networks, the more nebulous the European aspect becomes⁹.

The teams of authors of *Making Europe* address this challenge by choosing different narrative strategies: depending on the topic of investigation, the authors deal with different layers of complexity in applying flexible geometries (local, national and global)

and zoomable scales (macro, meso and micro). The books therefore vary in terms of structure and architecture, but all share a common vision and ambition: to study Europe's multiple pasts through the lens of technology and thereby offer fresh perspectives on how technical experts as well as amateur users, large technological systems as well as domestic devices, ideologies of rationality and effectivity as well as technophobic and utopian imaginaries have left their mark on the complex windings of the long twentieth century.

Critical interventions

Besides offering a fresh look at European history at large, *Making Europe* aims at making a number of critical interventions in the field of European integration history in specific. First, it offers a consequent transnational approach to European history, thereby applying a spatial approach that takes into consideration the variable geometry of Europe in terms both of its continental configurations and asymmetries and of its global entanglements. Second, it develops a long-term historical perspective of European integration and fragmentation which addresses both the many a-synchronicities of national developments and the structural or intellectual traditions and continuities of European organizations, regulatory regimes, as well as the longevity of large technological systems and infrastructures. Finally, it offers a

⁸ M. Kranzberg, *Technology and History: «Kranzberg's Laws»*, «Technology and Culture», 1986, 3, p. 544.

⁹ The «Europe/technology uncertainty principle» (a playful allusion to the uncertainty principle in quantum physics introduced by Werner Heisenberg) was introduced by A. Badenoch, A. Fickers, *Introduction. Europe Materializing? Toward a Transnational History of European Infrastructures*, in A. Badenoch, A. Fickers (eds.), *Materializing Europe. Transnational Infrastructures and the Project of Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 8.

number of conceptual innovations by introducing terms or concepts such as «hidden integration», «techno-diplomacy», or «technocratic internationalism» which propose novel ways of interpreting the role of technology in the making of modern Europe.

Technology as an «actor category» in European history matters not only in terms of the transnational «hardware» of European integration¹⁰. In fact, *Making Europe* critically discusses and even questions the master narrative of technology being the driving force of modernization and progress. Against such teleological narratives, *Europeans Globalizing* (Diogo/van Laak) argues that the «religion of science and technology» which drove the technocratic missionaries of imperialism and colonialism since the late 18th centuries were to be met with very different reactions and defensive strategies depending on the «contact zones» or «portals of globalization». Instead of a one-way diffusion or transfer of European knowledge and technology in terms of an imposition of European scientific and technological regimes, responses to European technological imperialism varied widely. Hybrid or creole technologies as a creative process of cultural appropriation might go hand in hand with forms of armed resistance or more subtle processes of clandestine boycott.

As the example of railroad construction in India shows, the realization of this project was not only a «tool of empire»¹¹, but the very essence of the European way of understanding and dealing with nature «by making the territory manageable and by rationalizing and controlling time, space, speed, and productivity»¹². Yet at the same time, this project also demonstrates the different cultural and political appropriation of European technology in indigenous contexts: while the two great Indian leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru basically shared the idea of mastering the land through infrastructure, they differed greatly in the political and above all cultural implications of this «tentacle of progress»¹³ in the nation-building process of India¹⁴. While Gandhi's concept of «swaraj»¹⁵ eventually failed, Nehru's vision of a powerful interventionist state based on a critical appropriation of technologically-driven colonial modernity emerged as a winning strategy for an independent India.

While most of the classical integration literature focuses on the political and institutional developments that eventually led to the European Union in the 1990s, *Making Europe* enlarges the temporal framework and argues that many structural, procedural and mental conditions that are too easily assigned to the post-war integration project

¹⁰ Transnational infrastructures are certainly the most prominent example of such «European hardware». They are the main focus of the volume by P. Högselius, A. Kaijser, E. van der Vleuten, *Europe's Infrastructure Transition. Economy, War, Nature*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

¹¹ D. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1981.

¹² M.P. Diogo, D. van Laak, *Europeans Globalizing*, cit., p. 180.

¹³ D. Headrick, *Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.

¹⁴ M.P. Diogo, D. van Laak, *Europeans Globalizing*, cit., pp. 175-181.

¹⁵ In 1909, Gandhi published the book «Hind Swaraj», *swaraj* meaning «self-rule» or «home-rule», suggesting a non-hierarchical, decentralized government rejecting the British rule and values, *ibidem*, p. 181.

have a much longer history¹⁶. While the intellectual roots of a «United States of Europe» have been studied in detail¹⁷, many concrete practices and procedures of transnational collaboration that paved the way for EU-like regulatory regimes remain rather hidden. A good example for such a process of hidden integration in the «international machinery» of nineteenth-century Europe is the emergence of international organizations such as the International Telegraph Union (ITU) or the Universal Postal Union (UPU)¹⁸. Such organizations, although born out of necessity to govern problems of trans-border or transnational communication traffic, were more than sites for building cable connections or defining technical norms. They «shaped new ways of thinking about transnational cooperation, established new institutional patterns and forms of decision-making, and influenced emerging behavioural norms in the international machinery»¹⁹. As Andreas Fickers and Pascal Griset argue in their volume *Communicating Europe*, these organizations became privileged arenas of European techno-diplomacy and established new routines and habitual ways of thinking and acting as well as a long-lasting legacy and tradition of expert-based regulation²⁰.

This spirit of «technocratic internationalism» which has its origin in economic and political ideas of liberalism has been a crucial element of the European way to modernization and was closely connected to both national and European integration as well as to colonial expansion²¹.

Another contribution of the *Making Europe* series concerns the social and cultural dimension of Europeanization through the use of transnational communication or transport infrastructures, the creative appropriation of key technologies and consumer products such as the sewing machine or the bicycle, or distant participation in European techno-events. In *Consumers, Tinkerers, Rebels*, Ruth Oldenziel and Mikael Hård offer a panorama of case studies showing how Europeans of all classes and origins appropriated technologies and turned them into meaningful objects for identity construction and social distinction²². They also highlight the power of amateur users, for example when organized in consumer associations or interest groups. Between 1880 and 1900, urban and middle-class cycling clubs popped up all over Europe and established a powerful lobby-group promoting a transnational touring infrastructure and rural

¹⁶ This necessity of looking back into the 19th century in order to understand post-war integration process is also put forward by K.K. Patel, *Projekt Europa. Eine kritische Geschichte*, München, C.H. Beck, 2018.

¹⁷ See for example S. Aprile, C. Cassina, P. Darriulat, R. Leboutte (sous la direction de), *Europe de papier. Projets européens au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2015.

¹⁸ On the ITU see G. Balbi, A. Fickers (eds.), *History of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU): Transnational Techno-Diplomacy from the Telegraph to the Internet*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020 (forthcoming).

¹⁹ W. Kaiser, J. Schot, *Writing the Rules for Europe*, cit., p. 8.

²⁰ A. Fickers, P. Griset, *Communicating Europe. Technologies, Information, Events*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan 2019, pp. 109-157.

²¹ J. Schot, V. Lagendijk, *Technocratic Internationalism in the Interwar Years: Building Europe on Motorways and Electricity Networks*, «Journal of Modern European History», 2008, 2, pp. 196-217.

²² R. Oldenziel, M. Hård, *Consumers, Tinkerers, Rebels. The People who Shaped Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

service corridors: «This was comprised of a system of bicycle support services, guidebooks, maps, hotels, railroads, and signs, in addition to clean beds and good food. Internationally oriented from the start, the clubs contributed to creating a genuine transnational and pan-European feeling of collaboration, generating a tourist infrastructure and a touring experience that automobile lovers and their organizations would expand and perfect»²³.

In addition to such physical experiences of Europe through travelling, electrical communication devices such as the telegraph, radio and television enabled Europeans to virtually travel the continent and to participate at important European events from a distance. This mediated experience of Europe based on the technological imaginary of «immediacy», «liveness», or «simultaneity» that is even inscribed into the design of electronic devices such as the radio dial, helped to create a feeling of transnational and European communion – at least during specific moments or events²⁴. While international organizations such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) or its Eastern European counterpart, the Organisation Internationale de Radio-Télédiffusion (OIRT), promoted transnational media events and infrastructures even during the Cold War, radio and television signals also became privileged targets for ideological

warfare and jamming activities. Cross-border communication was therefore always characterized by tensions and ambiguities, resulting in a careful negotiation of the political, economic, juridical, and cultural interests of all actors involved. «Depending on the political systems (democratic states or totalitarian regimes) or circumstances (times of stability or crises), the possibilities and limits of private entrepreneurship and state interventions, international regulation and individual freedom, strategic planning and creative or subversive appropriation, were negotiated and thereby constantly shifted and reorganized. This is what makes the European history of communication and information technologies a history of asymmetrical interdependencies rather than a history of clear patterns of evolution based on a teleological narrative of integration»²⁵.

The Making Europe story

It is of course impossible to adequately synthesize the many arguments and new perspectives that the *Making Europe* book series is eager to make. The critical interventions presented above can only offer a reduced glimpse but hopefully demonstrate the critical potential of this collective endeavor. Unlike other recent collective initiatives aiming to write the history of Europe²⁶, *Making Europe* offers a concise lens

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

²⁴ See A. Fickers, P. Griset, *Communicating Europe*, cit., pp. 159-195.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 236. On the notion of asymmetrical interdependencies see A. Fickers, *Looking East – Watching West? On the Asymmetrical Interdependencies of Cold War European Communication Spaces*, in K. Bönker, J. Obertreis, S. Grampp (eds.), *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016, pp. 3-24.

²⁶ See for example E. François, T. Serrier, *Europe – Notre Histoire*, Paris, Les Arènes, 2017; or the «Encyclopédie d'histoire numérique de l'Europe», ehne.fr/.

through which the history of Europe in the long twentieth century can be studied and understood. Although the authors portray some of their main protagonists – be it «system builders», «experts», or «rebels» – with quite some empathy and admiration for their genius, creativity or will, the *Making Europe* story does not aim at replacing the myth of the founding fathers of European integration by a new one simply exchange-

ing politicians by technocrats or engineers. In understanding technology as a powerful actor of historical change, as a socially constructed and culturally enriched human activity, *Making Europe* offers a complex narrative of European history in the long twentieth century that acknowledges both the integrative and splitting forces of technology in a truly transnational and longuedurée perspective.

Andreas Fickers, Center for Contemporary and Digital History, Université du Luxembourg, Maison des Sciences Humaines, 11, Porte des Sciences, L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg (Lux)
andreas.fickers@uni.lu

Aline Sierp

The European Union as a Memory Region

The question of what Europe is and how it can best be defined has not only been instrumental to the recent «narrative turn» in European integration history but has occupied scholarly writing since the very beginning of what today is the European Union. While there is discussion whether the EU can be described as a confederation, a state sui generis or an international organisation, most scholars are in no doubt that nation states continue to be the main building blocks of the European Union. This academic over-emphasis on the EU's member states has led to a certain number

of blind spots when it comes to research areas that by definition cut across national boundaries. One example is scholarly work on memories and memory politics. The academic focus continues to be on the nation-state as the prime locus for the formation of memories, despite the widespread recognition that memories usually form in discursive arenas above and below the state. With this in mind, the concept of the European Union as a memory region has started to appear in the last decade¹. Scholars working with this concept highlight the fact that memories in Europe are multifaceted with

¹ J-W. Müller (ed.), *Memory & Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; R.N. Lebow, W. Kansteiner, F. Claudio (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006; M. Pakier, B. Stråth (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2010.

interaction taking place both at individual and institutional levels. Because (national) borders play a secondary role in this definition, the notion of memory regions cannot be tied to a nation-bound conceptualisation of memory. This raises the question of what exactly a memory region is? What unit of analysis are we talking about? Is a memory region bigger or smaller than the nation-state? Is it transnational – and thus going beyond the narrow boundaries of nation states – or is it transcultural – and hence cutting across divisions present within national societies? Can it encompass two or more regions (border areas) or can we talk about regions (plural) of memories? In the following, I will develop a few critical thoughts concerning those questions.

European memories

Memory by definition has a double function. It can be a vehicle for community building as it can be a battlefield for (political) hegemony. Both elements make it pervasively present in contemporary politics. Both aspects were also acutely present in early European integration history. While the memory of WWII and with it the promise of peace was one of the drivers for integration (as mentioned by Robert Schuman in his famous declaration on May 9, 1950), it became quickly overpowered by economic motivations, before being forgotten in the heat of the Cold War when memo-

ries were considered a dividing rather than a uniting factor. EU activism in the field of memory and identity building remained for many decades exclusively on the level of symbolic politics. No active attempt was made to devise concrete EU policies dealing with questions of memory and remembrance until the 1970s. Triggered by the oil crisis and the ensuing loss of confidence in the European integration project, policy makers understood that «one could not fall in love with a common market» – as famously noted by former Commission president Jacques Delors². Instead they started to concentrate their efforts on devising strategies aimed at fostering popular support for European integration. The perceived legitimacy crisis pushed the European Commission in particular to demonstrate actively that there were new *raison d'être* to European integration that went beyond pure economic growth³. In this context culture and cultural policies acquired a new meaning as glue that could hold Europeans together in times of crisis. Efforts of the European political elites consequently concentrated initially on activities promoting a common European heritage. The ideological division during the Cold War years may have at the same time fostered stylized and standardized ideas of the European past that cultivated a sense of community and alliance able to cover the real existing differences between countries. 1989 was a

² J. Delors, *Have we Betrayed the European Economic and Social Venture?*, in E. Gabaglio, R. Hoffmann (eds.), *European Trade Union yearbook*, Brussels, 1996.

³ Commission of the European Communities, «The First Summit Conference of the enlarged Community», *Bulletin of the European Communities*, no. 10, 1972. This concern was first expressed at the political level in 1972, in the final communiqué of the Paris Summit (19-20 October 1972) and then made its way into almost all other communications by the EU institutions.

real turning point in many ways. It marked not only the breaking open of the bipolar world but also a shift of focus that led to a renewed attention towards Europe's potentially divisive past. The EU's aperture to the post-communist countries brought with it the at times painful confrontation with and reflection on what *European* values, *European* wars and *European* political tragedies were. The Holocaust, which had not played any role in the early integration years, became a central tenet, a source of legitimacy and a founding myth⁴. The memory of human rights violations during WWII turned into a vital element of transitional justice, and a value that the EU prides itself on advocating to the rest of the world. That the idea of what a European memory is or should look like is nevertheless far from uniform across European countries, became particularly evident after ten Central and Eastern European countries joined the EU in 2004. EU institutions – first and foremost the European Parliament but also the Justice and Home Affairs Council – turned into an additional arena of debate for national politicians. A clear East-West divide manifested itself that cut across already existing ideological differences. The question if the experience of Nazism can be compared to the one of Stalinism and whether the Holocaust was unique became particu-

larly pertinent in 2009 when the 25 August was introduced as a European wide day of remembrance for the victims of Stalinism and Nazism. The debates surrounding its introduction can be seen as an excellent example of how memory actors of both national and supranational origin negotiate the existence of multiple collective memories on the European level⁵. It also made pertinent the challenges associated with the integration of different narratives into a common historical consciousness whose existence could foster the development of a European public sphere.

The concept of memory region

What does this mean for the concept of «memory region»? Can the EU be defined as a memory region? If we consider that memories have started to form in discursive arenas below and above the nation state, it is possible to move away from nation-bound considerations and describe the EU as a memory region. The question remains where exactly the boundaries of this region are. Regions by definition are «a cohesive area that is homogeneous in selected defining criteria and is distinguished from neighbouring areas or regions by those criteria»⁶. Regions are often crossing national frontiers (one only has to think of the EU's Interreg programmes that support

⁴ A. Assmann, *Europe: A Community of memory*, «GHI Bulletin», 2007, p. 40; A. Beattie, *Learning from the Germans? History and Memory in German and European Projects of Integration*, «Portal Journal of Multi-disciplinary International Studies», 2007, 4.

⁵ See A. Sierp, *1939 versus 1989 – A Missed Opportunity to Create a European Lieu de Memoire?*, «East European Politics & Societies», 2017, p. 3; L. Neumayer, *Integrating the Central European Past into a Common Narrative: The Mobilizations Around the «Crimes of Communism» in the European Parliament*, «Journal of Contemporary European Studies», 2015, p. 3.

⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica, *Region*, available at www.britannica.com/science/region-geography, accessed January 10, 2020.

regional development across borders) and can therefore cover more territory than a single country. Often the term «memory region» is used to mark the division between East and West, claiming that narratives in Western Europe are different from the ones in Eastern Europe. «Memory region» here replaces the term «memory framework» that I have been advocating for in my work⁷. This is particularly the case in scholarly writing by Eastern European scholars and was the main tenor of the series of conferences organised by the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity between 2012 and 2016. The main issue with this type of conceptualisation is its inherent geopolitical connotation. Describing Europe as a memory region or a group of memory regions plays into the traditional East-West divide that has characterised memory politics in Europe since the 1990s. It potentially complements a homogenising reading of memory problems and interactions across identities in Europe to only fuel simplification tendencies (something that Eastern European politicians have repeatedly accused European institutions to do). However, neither Western nor Eastern Europe are homogeneous units with one single narrative. By subdividing the EU further into memory blocks that correspond to the previous Cold War divisions, the complexity of ever shifting memory frames within and between countries is being disregarded. In short, the notion of a region replaces the previous limiting notion of a nation as being a container unit, risking to

repeat the mistakes of methodological nationalism that has characterised so much of European integration research in the past. So, what is the alternative here? How can this dilemma be addressed?

Memory regions – A proposal

I propose to follow a more critical, nuanced conceptualisation by keeping the idea of Europe as a memory region but by connecting it to memory typologies and typographies rather than to geopolitical distinctions innate to nation-states. This would give it analytical power based not only on shared historical contexts but on the existence of common issues and, very importantly, on the framing of these issues. By concentrating on the formation, elaboration and diffusion of narratives it is possible to break open the nation state container and analyse memories as transcultural (in contrast to transnational) elements. Such a notion would pay sufficient attention to the fact that both Eastern and Western Europe as regions are complex, and that there are Western countries (such as the Southern European countries who experienced dictatorships until the 1970s) that are as far from the Holocaust-centred narrative as many Eastern European countries. It would allow memory competition to be seen as an inherent component of a developing European public sphere instead of a dividing factor that threatens the future of the integration project. It can hence complement current analyses of memory actors and their relations that include institutional

⁷ See A. Sierp, *History, Memory and Trans-European Identity. Unifying Divisions*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014.

interaction across local or national borders⁸. It would also make it transferable to other memory constellations in the world whereas a notion exclusively tied to the nation-bound imperative risks to perpetuate already existing cleavages in European memory politics.

In conclusion I think we can say that describing Europe as a memory region has the potential to overcome the current academic over-emphasis on the nation-state that characterises so much of existing European integration history writing. It never-

theless also carries the risk of oversimplification and homogenisation by introducing a new category that might do nothing else but replace the already existing units of analysis. One of the big challenges of the recent «narrative turn» in the history of European integration is exactly that: to analyse the fluid layer that stands between the national and the European/global without losing sight of the basic historiographical and methodological issues that have occupied scholars long before memory became a contested topic on the European level.

Aline Sierp, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University, P.O. Box 616, 6200 Md, Maastricht (NL)
aline.sierp@maastrichtuniversity.nl

⁸ See the forthcoming book A. Sierp, J. Wüstenberg, *Agency in Transnational Memory Politics*, New York, Berghahn, 2020.