

# CULTURE, PRACTICE & EUROPEANIZATION

Special issue *Knowledge, discourses and practices of EU critique*

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# EU critique beyond Euroscepticism and progressive stories: Introduction to the special issue

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Critical stances towards the EU have long been marginalized. In the political realm, they have been, and still frequently are, depicted as the business of “Eurosceptics” who are fundamentally questioning an established normative consensus. In the academic realm, integration theory somewhat similarly builds on “stories of progress” which construct a simplistic and largely uncritical history of European integration. In this introduction to the special issue, we argue that these tendencies do more harm than good, as they stand in the way of meaningful investigations of the diversity, the ambivalences, the symbolic underpinnings and the socio-political functions of EU critique. We picture how and with what consequences EU critique is typically delineated as a marginal phenomenon, and we sketch alternative perspectives based on an idea of EU critique as a field of knowledge that emerges in discourse and practice. Ultimately, both the introduction and the papers in this special issue make the case for freeing EU critique from its outside position in order to get a more nuanced picture of European integration and the current challenges it faces.

**Keywords:** EU critique, Euroscepticism, Politicization, Knowledge, Discourse, Practice

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## **1. Introduction: The other side of EU discourse**

This special issue is on EU critique. In many senses, the critique of the European Union is not at the centre neither of EU politics nor of EU studies. It at least never has been. This is not to say that European integration has not always experienced fervent criticism throughout European societies. Rather, critical stances towards the EU for long have not been recognized as integral part of democratic politics but have been marginalized as the business of “the others”. This has to do with the fact that criticizing the EU has easily been understood and/or depicted by many as a questioning of the overall integration consensus established after Second World War in continental Europe, upheld over the decades and reaching its peak in the 1990s (Hooghe & Marks, 2018, 114). If critical attitudes towards EU integration have been articulated, these voices came from what was observed as “the margins” of the political spectrum, with actors risking to be located at “the extremes” due to their counter-speech. In contrast, so-called “mainstream” parties in the “centre” of the political spectrum mostly took and defended an overall pro-European stance. This constellation holds true for most EU member countries – although with telling exceptions such as the UK where a much more critical discourse on EU issues has always been prevalent (Jachtenfuchs et al., 1998; Teubert, 2008; Risse, 2010).

As to the academic side, and EU studies in particular, there is a similar picture to be drawn. In line with fundamental assumptions of integration theory (mostly neo-functionalism), research typically relies on an original understanding of EU integration as a principally unpolitical issue, driven by élites, and allowed for by a permissive consensus (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970) at the public level. Functionalist accounts adhere to progressive stories of EU development, which made them struggle in explaining setbacks and failure (Börzel & Risse, 2018). As Michael Zürn correctly states, other theoretical accounts such as Majone's "regulatory state" or Moravcsik's Liberal Intergovernmentalism not only neglected public contestation in their models of EU integration, they even considered "any democratization of this process [...] as counter-productive" (Zürn, 2019, 902). However, in the 1990s, when economic integration was more and more flanked with political integration and when popular concerns thwarted integration dynamics, EU critique and the actors behind it more and more became objects of study. They were classified and somewhat pathologized under the umbrella term of Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998). More recently, with undeniable crises of the integration process putting long held certainties into question, EU studies have turned to processes of "politicization" of EU politics (Statham & Trenz, 2013). While from a perspective of democratic politics politicization does not sound negative, prominent accounts in EU studies take it as a reason for stagnation or erosion of the European project, even more so as it helped so-called Eurosceptics to spread their messages, to gain seats in representative bodies and to reach the "mainstream" of party politics in many EU countries.

In contrast to these accounts, we start out from the conception of critique and conflict as constitutive elements of political order in general and democracy in particular (Mouffe, 1999; Rancière, 2002; see also Jörke, 2011). The possibility to articulate discontent and to challenge established convictions – within a certain spectrum (see section 5 below) – is at the heart of democratic rule. Moreover, as a normative reference point, democracy is both inherently ambiguous and never entirely realizable. The question how to realize democratic principles in institutions and procedures is thus necessarily controversial and could never be ultimately settled. Thus, instead of regarding EU critique as somewhat abnormal and risky, we assume that critical attitudes, and especially counter-narratives and practices in respect to EU politics, are a constitutive part of the game and have always existed (Schünemann, 2020, forthcoming). If they have not been expressed in certain discourses in the past, and maybe still are not in the present, this has to do with power/knowledge constellations. This is not only true for political discourse but also for the academic realm which is likewise structured by stocks of knowledge that enable certain critical perspectives while pushing back potential others. Exactly such constellations are to be examined by the papers in this special issue. The works included deal with the political and the scholarly discourse alike as they both seem intertwined when it comes to critique as the other – the less illuminated – side of EU discourse.

This introduction proceeds as follows: First, we sketch dominant discourses on the EU in politics and academia with a focus on critique as their common blind spot or irritating event. Then, second, we critically discuss the term Euroscepticism as the dominant conceptual lens through which EU critique is being observed and assessed. Third, we reflect on the conception of knowledge in EU studies and confront it with a social-constructivist conception in order to derive the relevance of discourse and practice for the study of EU critique. Fourth, we explicate how EU critique could be approached in a meaningful way, both with regard to the political and the academic sphere. Finally, we give a short overview of the papers included in the special issue.

## 2. From permissive consensus to politicization

The story of European integration has predominantly been told as a progressive story. This is certainly true for pro-European, mainstream political rhetoric in most of EU member states. It is also true for the academic discourse across disciplines which also depicted the integration project as a peace project, a guarantor of political stability and economic prosperity for all its peoples. This is what Mark Gilbert described as the progressive story of EU integration (Gilbert, 2008). It can be conceived as the master narrative of a dominant discourse that both resulted from, and exerted power on, political actors and scholars in EU studies across the continent. The firm belief that the EU “has the future on its side” (ibid., 659) and the neo-functional idea of self-reinforcing dynamics towards an ever closer union exerted large influence, both in political and academic discussions. In the political realm, critique of EU politics has easily been interpreted as critique of the integration project as such. Actors expressing critique risked to be excluded from the mainstream and to be flagged as Eurosceptics (Sinnott et al., 2009; Taggart, 1998), which semantically more or less (hard vs. soft Euroscepticism) coincided with being backward-looking, old-fashioned, nationalist, affective and irrational. In the academic debate, there has been, and still is, the tendency to associate EU critique and resistance towards EU reform with irrational attitudes or a lack of knowledge, instead of seeing it as a legitimate and “natural” articulation of political contestation (Sinnott et al., 2009).

During the last decade, however, this dominant discourse has considerably lost ground. From one crisis of the European project to the next, “from the euro to the Schengen crises” (Börzel & Risse, 2018), voices and stories that openly question EU integration have become much louder. With the so-called permissive consensus vanished, more recently the EU has to face abounding critique particularly in the context of the multiple crises in the last decade. In this vein, so-called Euroscepticism finally entered the manifestos and practices of some mainstream actors across Europe (Brack & Startin, 2015).

Scholars of EU politics have consequently turned to politicization (Beichelt, 2010; Grande & Hutter, 2016; Statham & Trenz, 2013; Trenz & Wilde, 2009; Zürn, 2006). It is commonly defined “as the process through which European integration has become the subject of public discussion, debate, and contestation” (Schmidt, 2019, 1018). Politicization is normally described to happen on three dimensions: 1) the public salience of EU issues increases, 2) more actors get included in political debates on EU issues, and 3) conflict becomes increasingly polarized (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019, 999). Regarding its theoretical foundation, studies of politicization are mostly linked to the perspective of post-functionalism in integration theory. In extending the repertoire of integration theories, Hooghe and Marks had introduced so-called post-functionalism in reaction to the increased public resistance against the European project as expressed in a row of failed treaty referendums in the early 2000s (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Refraining from the neo-functionalists’ permissive consensus, the authors argue that one could observe an increasing “constraining dissensus” that hampers the integration process (see also Down & Wilson, 2008). While post-functionalism certainly makes a new and necessary offer for the theoretical explanation of stagnation or even spill-backs of EU integration, it perpetuates conventional views on EU critique.

First, it upholds a holistic and dichotomic conception of EU critique in the sense that attitudes towards the EU are said to generally speak either for or against European integration. This is underscored by an extended cleavage approach that identifies “a new divide” within European societies. Accordingly, in the respective literature party competition is mapped along the so-called GAL/TAN cleavage (Börzel & Risse, 2018; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Hutter & Kriesi, 2019). This is conceived as a transnational cleavage describing poles on a cultural dimension between GAL, which stands for green/alternative/libertarian, and TAN, which means tradition/authority/nation. The cleavage approach does not leave much

room for differentiated understandings of how criticism of particular EU politics might be integrated into other political stances and positions. Conversely, it also stands in the way of investigating instances of critique within political positions that are typically classified as Europhile, for instance the transnational movement *Pulse of Europe* which does not only make the case for Europe, but which also carries a critique of a European polity observed as remote and bureaucratic.

Second, there is a clear tendency towards a rationalistic submission of what could be observed as politicization under the strategic choices of political actors in a bipolar constellation. While from this perspective it always has been, and still is, a perfectly rational behaviour of pro-European mainstream parties to de-politicize EU issues in public debates, Eurosceptic parties are seen as the main drivers of politicization as they are about to profit from it (Hutter & Kriesi, 2019, 1000). In consequence, post-functionalism sticks to a bipolar structuration of how EU politics are discussed, with so-called Eurosceptics as the known suspects adhering to TAN values and engaging in a politicization that stands against integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2008; Scharpf, 2009). This gives little room for more nuanced notions of EU critique and for positive assessments of politicization in the context of EU politics (Beichelt, 2010). As Michael Zürn correctly describes, such an understanding of politicization as a threat to integration stands in contrast to normative conceptions of politicization at the national and also the global level:

*“Whereas European Union (EU) studies in general terms mainly ask about the disintegrative effects of politicization [...] the study of de-politicization in the national context and of politicization of international institutions more often emphasizes the normatively positive aspects of increased mobilization” (Zürn, 2019, 978).*

Instead of considering politicization as “a resource utilized as part of regular politics”, it is, as Zürn further argues, mostly regarded as “anti-systemic force” (ibid., 984). This preoccupation has also been criticized from a public sphere perspective (Statham & Trenz, 2015).

### **3. Naming a pathology: Euroscepticism**

Speaking of EU critique, instead of Euroscepticism as the much more prevalent term in EU studies, is a deliberate choice of this special issue. We think that the notion of Euroscepticism is associated with many of the central presuppositions (dichotomisation of attitudes towards the EU, rationalistic submission under the strategic choice of actors) that we try to avoid for this collection. In our view, the success of the neologism (sui generis term) can at least partly be explained by its compatibility with the master discourse of EU integration identified above. As it is a fundamental goal of this special issue to deconstruct the master discourse, the very term would stand in our way. To be sure, this move is not meant to actively justify any kind of (EU) critique as a valuable contribution to public discourse. Rather, it allows us to draw a more nuanced picture of the different facets and functions of critical stances, instead of classifying them right from the start on the basis of concepts which are deeply entangled with evaluative connotations.

True, the concept of Euroscepticism might give more room for differentiation as it seems from our critical discussion so far. Following Taggart (1998), researchers of political attitudes active in this field have distinguished between “hard” (exit from the EU) and “soft” Eurosceptics (yes to Europe, but not in its actual form). Nevertheless, this differentiation still leads to a depiction of EU critique as a sort of pathology, which corresponds to the master discourse. As both positions towards the EU are captured under the umbrella term of Euroscepticism, they appear as two variants of a single overarching phenomenon. It is important to recognize that such “scientific” classifications are performative in that they not only denote a phenomenon “out there” but make it specifically available in the first place. Moreover, the notion of Euroscepticism and its variants still facilitate a polarized

calibration of the political debate, either for or against. This holds particular true for the soft version of Euroscepticism. While the expression of hard Euroscepticism might make sense in that such critics actually turn against the integration project and seek to leave or dissolve the EU, the soft version allows for general support for the system as such with deviant approaches to institutional development, certain EU policies or governing rationales (“EU as a market project”, “austerity” etc.).

What seems problematic here is related to the term’s quality as neologism or *sui generis* term, leading to the fact that it is only applicable to the EU polity and EU politics. In order to illustrate the problem emerging here, an admittedly imperfect analogy might be in order. Imagine the existence of the term *German-sceptic* (not used so far), and that it would not only be used for so-called “Reichsbürger” and other people who deny the very existence of the polity, but also for people that utter their concern and criticism about institutional reforms, certain policies or overarching orientations of governing in the domestic realm. One would probably not accept such a kind of classification that would potentially serve strategies of de-politicization. This again is in line with Zürn’s observation mentioned above that (de-)politicization is differently discussed at the EU and at the national level. While politicization might be viewed critically in the EU context and de-politicization is seen as a success strategy for the sake of integration goals, this is completely reversed on the national level.

From this perspective, instead of further pathologizing EU critique as the strategically motivated arguments of Eurosceptics, it should be perceived and studied as a normal appearance of counter-discourse in democratic politics (see below). A similar observation could be made with regard to the currently spreading research on populism, a phenomenon which is also regularly depicted as something alien to democratic rule (e.g. Urbinati, 2014). In contrast, a more nuanced perspective is able to reveal that populist strategies have always existed as they are inherent to democracy and the institutionalization of the difference between the ruling and the ruled. The question then is why a populist rhetoric peaks in certain historical phases and how we could differentiate between problematic, acceptable and even desirable forms (cf. Möller, 2017). As to European integration and the existential dangers it faces in our days, it seems a valuable endeavour to examine more closely the different threads and forms of EU critique instead of banning them into the isolation of Euroscepticism.

#### **4. Knowledge and EU critique**

Even before the explicit turn to politicization, the phenomenon of EU critique had been unavoidable for analysts of EU referendums, as these offered more and more opportunities to national publics for open debate on EU issues (Barbehön & Schünemann, 2018; Schünemann, 2014, 2017, 2018). More specifically, referendums served as prime situations to express critique on the European project or particular policies. When explaining contestation that had led to failure in referendums and thus irritating halts of EU integration, knowledge and reason have regularly and remarkably served as core variables in many models. However, both “variables” are utilized *ex negativo* because it is the lack of knowledge or reason that is often taken as responsible factor for the rejection of an EU proposal in a national referendum. Or to put the message of this branch of research simple: Whatever people rejecting a treaty reform expressed in a referendum, it was certainly not the expression of a well-informed, well-reasoned choice on the issue. Instead, a no vote in a referendum on Europe is expected to be driven by affection and facilitated by a lack of knowledge and information (Hobolt, 2009, 48–53; Laffan & O’Mahony, 2008, 263–264; LeDuc, 2002, 727). The argument is linked to the inversed cognitive mobilization hypothesis according to which more knowledge on EU issues would produce more support for EU integration (Lubbers, 2008, 64; Marsh, 2010, 188; Sinnott et al., 2009, 19).

From a social-constructivist perspective, to which the idea for this special issue adheres to, any positivist knowledge hypothesis has to be challenged on fundamental grounds. Firstly, the supposed causal mechanism between knowledge and EU support suffers from an unresolvable endogeneity problem. The assumption that more knowledge about the EU would lead to more support for European integration is highly contestable and has not been supported by unambiguous evidence so far. Indeed, the relation could be exactly the other way around (Mößner, 2009). Secondly, a lack-of-knowledge assumption does not make sense to us as political debates are necessarily embedded in complex power/knowledge relations (Foucault, 1990), meaning that there is always knowledge circulating in a given society and social communication. Its availability is influenced by power effects. For a referendum campaign, it is not really the question, then, *if* but rather *what* knowledge is present and processed in a given society (Schünemann, 2018).

We would thus argue that it is not the supposed lack of knowledge that serves as explanation for EU critique, but that it is the ubiquity and diversity of EU critique itself that is central for getting a better and differentiated understanding of the significance of EU contestation. By bringing together the notion of knowledge with EU critique, we do not aim to causally explain manifestations of the latter on the basis of the former. Rather, we assume that EU critique is itself a field of knowledge which is both the precondition for and the result of discourses and practices. For instance, the result of the Brexit referendum could be explained, to a certain extent, by drawing on the prevalence of misinformation in the election campaign and a lack of knowledge on the part of the electorate. However, such an account would tell little about why these practices obviously appealed to large parts of the population. For that, a social-constructivist perspective is needed in order to trace the deeply embedded concerns within British society regarding supranational integration (cf. Jachtenfuchs et al., 1998; Teubert, 2008; Risse, 2010). The same holds true for the field of EU studies which also features specific orders of knowledge that allows for certain criticisms while disqualifying others. In order to explore and reconstruct the knowledge orders behind (the absence of) instances of EU critique, we thus have to turn towards discourses and practices of EU critique at different levels and in different social spheres.

### **5. Investigating and articulating critique**

To further differentiate what it means to approach EU critique in a way that aligns to the above considerations, we can discern two different directions of analysis. First, one can investigate discourses and practices of EU critique and how they constitute a distinct field of knowledge (see the paper by Roch). On the one hand, this corresponds with the literatures on Euroscepticism and on the politicization of EU politics. On the other hand, however, we suggest refraining from these concepts as they carry evaluative connotations which split the political realm into a “normal” and a “pathological” sphere. Instead, we argue to treat critique and contestation as constitutive aspects of politics in general and democratic rule in particular. We think that such a perspective is required since today EU critique could no longer be brushed aside by claiming that it is the exclusive business of “the others”. Rather, criticizing the EU is deeply embedded in how societies talk about Europe and EU integration. At the same time, the ubiquity of anti-EU sentiment might not only be negative, as it may also indicate a greater maturity of the EU political system. EU critique could also be seen as an “appropriation” of European politics (Beichelt, 2010) which also features a positive side, as public debate is exactly where EU critique belongs. Moreover, from the viewpoint of democratic theory (cf. Jörke, 2011), articulating critique is not external to, but a constitutive part of democracy itself. Democratic rule has to incorporate certain possibilities to voice discontent and objection, and there has to be room for meaningful debate about such objections.

This in turn raises the question of how EU critique can be approached, categorized and qualified. By refraining from evaluative notions like Euroscepticism, we do not intend to argue for the legitimacy and value of *any* kind of critique. Rather, certain minimum standards have to be fulfilled in order for a critique to appear as legitimate. It is of course neither possible nor desirable to define such criteria once and for all, as they vary with conceptions of democratic rule. However, a *certain* definition is necessary. This holds also true for radical democratic perspectives informed by constructivist and anti-foundationalist ontologies which explicitly build on the centrality of critique: on the one hand, they stress the importance of conflict and dissonance due to the radical contingency of the world, while, on the other hand, they argue that conflict, despite the absence of any ultimate grounding, has to be carried out not among enemies but among opponents that acknowledge each other as legitimate and equal voices (Mouffe, 1999, 2005; Rancière, 2002). It is thus important to stress that our more open take on EU critique should not be misunderstood as an attempt to authorize and justify critical voices per se. Rather, the aim is to acknowledge practices of EU critique as a constitutive part of the democratic realm.

Second, research may itself articulate critique. In a way, a critical orientation is inherent to constructivist ontologies as the endeavour of reconstructing the way how the world emerges in social practices necessarily implies that there are also alternatives. The articulation of critique can basically be directed at two (intertwined) addressees: On the one hand, one may critically interrogate certain EU policies, current institutional structures or governing rationales against the background of certain normative standards. Prime examples for this kind of research are analyses of European austerity measures (Mastromatteo & Rossi, 2015), or of the architecture of the EU's external relations (Staeger, 2016; see also the paper by Lenz and Nicolaidis). On the other hand, one may take a critical stance towards the field of EU studies and its (missing) critical perspectives (see the paper by Hoening). As elaborated above, for a long time the field of EU studies has been, and to a certain extent still is, dominated by a "progressive story" (Gilbert, 2008) which provides an oversimplified historical account of supranational institutionalization. As every story, it features certain blind spots, one-sided interpretations and retrospective idealizations. Developing a critical perspective towards this, or any other, narrative does not imply the attempt to "falsify" it. Rather, the task is to confront it with an alternative story in order to enable different interpretations of what has happened and is happening. These alternative stories are of course also selective, as observations are necessarily made from an observer (Luhmann, 1995), i.e. from a certain point of view which can never be all-encompassing.

These different variants are linked to one another, as the field of EU studies could not be neatly separated from the EU's political interventions into the academic realm (see the paper from Chamlian), and as analyses of the politics of EU critique necessarily take place within a field of "scientific" knowledge that raises certain expectations as to how to approach and evaluate the object under study, leading for instance to differentiations between "conventional" and "peripheral" or "inconvenient" perspectives. The point is thus not to try to escape from the power/knowledge relations in which EU critique is entangled, but to reflect on how it is structured and with what consequences.

## 6. Structure of the special issue

For this special issue we have invited and selected papers that do not adhere to the common Euroscepticism discourse and do not just identify the known and the new suspects of anti-EU-sentiment. Instead, the papers gathered here present more nuanced analyses of the meaning and significance of critique both within the political realm and within academia. They relate to the different ways of approaching the notion of EU critique distinguished above in specific ways and combinations.

Juan Roch is the only contributor in this collection who concentrates on EU politics as he analyses EU political debates in two member countries. In his article *Unpacking EU contestation: Europeanization and critique in Germany and Spain* he presents the findings of a comparative discourse analysis of party manifestos, speeches and parliamentary ratification debates produced over a long time span (1992-2017) in two member states. The underlying argument of the author is that the forms of EU contestation must be studied together with the symbolic orders about Europe and the EU at the national level. Drawing on the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD), the article delineates the diverse representations and problematizations of EU-contesting discourses in the countries under investigation. The findings suggest that Germany has been a more permissive environment for the articulation of EU critique whereas critique of the EU has been rather constrained in Spain over the last decades. The author connects these divergences to the country-specific processes of Europeanization.

Lucie Chamlian and Barbara Hoenig turn to academic discourses and practices instead. Hoenig reconstructs motives of EU critique in German sociological research since the 1990s. In her paper *'Critique as a vocation': Reconstructing critical discourses on Europeanization in German sociology, 1990–2018*, she investigates how the distinct field of the sociology of European integration emerged in processes of theory-building, empirical research and intellectual critique. Based on Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge approach, Hoenig discerns three generations of sociological research, each operating in specific socio-political constellations, in turn leading to different forms of EU critique. Hoenig's analysis thus shows how the emergence of different (im)possibilities of EU critique are bound to generational contexts and structural styles of thinking about Europe.

In her paper *European Union Studies as power/knowledge dispositif: Towards a reflexive turn*, Chamlian critically addresses the production of the field of EU studies on the basis of Foucault's notion of power/knowledge relations. She examines two prominent configurations which have steered academic research in specific ways, namely the numerous interventions by the European Commission and the cultivation of a particular type of "science" within EU studies itself. Chamlian's paper shows how certain (politically steered) academic practices co-evolve with in- and excluding power relations. Against this background, the paper makes the point for a reflexive turn which is sensitive towards the mutual interference of political and academic realms.

Finally, Tobias Lenz's and Kalypso Nicolaidis' article *EU-topia? A critique of the European Union as a model* speaks to both the political and the academic discourses. For, it formulates a critique of the widely shared idea of presenting the EU as a model for the rest of the world. By way of referring to the postcolonial literature, Lenz and Nicolaidis question the underlying assumptions that are inscribed into the discourses and practices of Europe-as-a-model. As a consequence, the paper argues for greater reflexivity on the part of Europeans and for the value of an ethos of mutual recognition which refrains from notions of superiority.

In addition to the papers selected, we are glad that the journal editors asked us to include Georg Vobruba's essay on the "Logic of populism" and an interview with Ágnes Heller on the relationship between democracy and capitalism.

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# Unpacking EU contestation: Europeanization and critique in Germany and Spain

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The rise of populist contenders in Western Europe in the aftermath of the euro crisis has led to an increasing critique of the project of the European Union (EU). This critique has been frequently encapsulated in the label 'Euroscepticism' and its softer or harder gradations. This article proposes to revisit this phenomenon from a different angle: the discursive and historical exploration of EU contestation in its context. This paper argues that the forms of EU contestation must be studied together with the symbolic orders about Europe and the EU at the national level. Drawing on the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD), this article delineates the diverse representations and problematizations of EU-contesting discourses in Western Europe studying the cases of Germany and Spain. The findings show greater power to constrain (*power in discourse*) EU contestation in Spain than in Germany, the latter country being a more suitable terrain for critique of the EU. These divergences are connected to the historical processes of Europeanization in each country and their particular symbolic orders.

**Keywords:** Populist contenders, Euro crisis, Symbolic orders, Discourses, EU contestation.

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## Introduction

The European Union (EU) is under increasing stress. This is a shared diagnostic among academics and political commentators (Bulmer and Joseph, 2016; Marhold, 2017; Hoboldt, 2018). To explore this stress, much research has been conducted on EU politicization (Kriesi, 2016; Hutter et al., 2016), Euroscepticism (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2002; Pirro & Taggart, 2018), or the emergence of fringe or radical parties (De Vries & Edwards, 2009). The particular perspective presented in this article seeks to illuminate the historical formation of contesting discourses on Europe and the EU, looking especially into the relations of power/knowledge that configure their contexts of emergence.

Discourse-oriented research is generally concerned with the interplay between power and knowledge as a form to explain the prevalence of certain hegemonic discourses or the emergence of novel discursive configurations in the public or political sphere (Diez, 2001; Keller, 2009; Stavrakakis, 2018). Following several scholars, the study of the discursive practices of certain actors must be embedded in their contexts, to correctly grasp the formation and effects of such discourses (Wodak, 2001; Van Dijk, 2009, 2015). Accordingly, the contestation of the EU cannot be analyzed in a vacuum but must be connected with an ongoing discursive struggle about Europe and the EU and the prevalent symbolic orders about this subject (Diez, 2001). In this vein, this article explores the modes of contestation

in Western Europe in their symbolic contexts. It argues that the symbolic orders about Europe and the EU are formed through processes of “horizontal Europeanization”; that is, processes of diffusion, construction and contestation of the representations and problematizations of Europe and the EU at the domestic level (see Radaelli, 2003, 17).

To allow for an in-depth investigation of this topic, this paper explores two cases: Germany and Spain. Although these cases cannot exhaust the diversity of EU-contestation in Western Europe, they entail important implications for the remaining southern and northern Western European countries. The rationale behind the case selection has to do with the particular characteristics of these countries in relation with Europeanization. First, Germany and Spain pertain to different categories according to their political economy (Borras et al., 1998; Streeck, 2012; Hall, 2017). Germany pertains to the coordinated market economies of northern European countries (see Hall, 2017, 4) and it is generally considered as the most powerful member state of the EU (Jeffery & Paterson, 2003; Beck, 2012; Schweiger, 2014). Spain, by contrast, is a Mediterranean market economy of the southern periphery which has played a subaltern role since its accession to the EU, and especially after the euro crisis (Moreno, 2013; Magone, 2016). This diverging power over material and symbolic resources at the EU level is expected to result in distinct processes of Europeanization and symbolic orders about Europe and the EU. This comparison, therefore, allows for an exploration of these different forms of Europeanization in relation to the symbolic orders and forms of EU contestation. Furthermore, the two countries can be compared in regards to the emergence of new political contenders in the aftermath of the euro crisis: The Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany and Podemos in Spain. Although these parties exhibit particular forms of EU contestation, they both share a critique of the political management of the euro crisis and a critical view of the EU. Hence, this study allows one also to compare the divergent ways of EU contestation in a northern and a southern country and by so-called left-wing and right-wing populist parties.

The main question addressed in this article interrogates how the forms of EU contestation are anchored and interact with previous symbolic orders about the EU at the national level. This article argues that the modes of EU contestation are not primarily related with the ideology, identity, or preferences of the actors; rather, EU contestation is connected to the historically contingent transformations of the relation between *power in discourse* and *power through discourse* (see Schmidt, 2017, 11). This research draws mainly on the theoretically-informed methodological toolkit offered by Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD). SKAD offers a coherent analytical package to explore the content side of discourse and at the same time allows for a delineation of the symbolic orders in which discursive practices draw. In regard to textual analysis, it provides various categories to reconstruct representations, argumentations and problematizations mobilized by particular actors (Keller, 2013; Keller et al., 2018).

The article is structured as follows: first, the concept of Europeanization and its application to this study are clarified. Second, I present this article’s approach to the study of discourse, power, and EU contestation. The next section concentrates on the methods and data used for the study of these two cases. The central part of this article presents the empirical analysis of the cases of Spain and Germany. I finally conclude with some remarks on the implications of this research for the study of EU contestation in Western Europe.

## 1. Europeanization and symbolic orders

As in many other research areas in political science, there is no unique and uncontested definition or approach to Europeanization but several perspectives to its study. Europeanization has been conceived of, similarly to European integration, as the process of constitution of EU structures of governance (Risse et al., 2001, 3). By contrast, other scholars define Europeanization as the top-down process to transfer policies from the EU level to the domestic level (see Siedentopf & Ziller, 1988; Radaelli, 2004). Recently, a more comprehensive approach to Europeanization as a multifarious, complex and circular process has gained ground within EU studies. In this last vein, it is conceived of as

*“processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies”. (Saurugger & Radaelli, 2008, 213)*

Knill & Lehmkuhl (1999, 3-5) identify three possible forms of Europeanization when describing such multilevel interrelations between the EU and domestic contexts: positive (when the EU prescribes policy directly), negative (when the EU dismantles member states regulations) and framing Europeanization (when the EU alters the beliefs, expectations, and discourses at the domestic level). These three forms are not separate instances of Europeanization; rather, rules, regulations and policies (in a positive or negative form) function as “infrastructures” related to discourse (Keller et al., 2018, 37). Hence, in this study Europeanization is conceived of as a complex political process in which certain historically constituted assemblages of discourses, regulations, policies, and practices at the EU level affects the governance of a given polity.

In analyzing the impact of Europeanization it is crucial to bear in mind, as it has been wisely noted by Bache (2008, 16), that “EU frameworks and policies have no absolute existence, but are subject to interpretation” (also noted by Dyson, 2003, 16). This observation stresses the importance of the thorough analysis of the responses, appropriations, and re-elaborations of EU-induced discourses or norms by specific actors in the public or political sphere at the domestic level. Radaelli refers to these processes as “horizontal Europeanization”:

*“The EU may provide the context, the cognitive and normative ‘frame’, the terms of reference, or the opportunities for socialisation of domestic actors who then produce ‘exchanges’ (of ideas, power, policies, and so on) between each other” (Radaelli, 2004, 5; see also Radaelli, 2003, 17)*

Therefore, to analyse the forms of contestation to the EU is paramount to take into account the “EU-induced environment” in which the actors under study operate. In a singular take, this article explores this topic within an interpretivist framework that permits us to capture processes of EU contestation as competing “problematizations” interpreted by the researcher (Yanow, 2014; Bevir, 2015). In the following section, I illustrate how the analysis of horizontal Europeanization and EU contestation can be operationalized according to the questions addressed in this study.

## 2. Horizontal Europeanization, contesting practices and power

Horizontal Europeanization refers to the interactions between multiple actors at the domestic level revolving around EU-induced norms, discourses, or policies. However, this does not mean that there are no relations of power in these processes. As Saurugger and Radaelli have rightly argued “no matter how complex the causal processes are, and no

matter how much learning may be produced by the contacts between the national level and EU policies, these processes are bound to create power” (2008, 214). In this sense, this article argues that horizontal Europeanization must be primarily understood as relations of power/knowledge between asymmetrical positions of social actors.

Following Foucault (1977; 2003), power is not merely the ability to repress or impose something on somebody but it deploys also as a productive network across the social body. Thus, a first distinction emerges between coercive and facilitating mechanisms of power. The former can be exemplified with the pressures and impositions (*power over*) to implement austerity measures in southern European countries; the so-called “coercive Europeanization” (Magone, 2016, 93 -94). It is possible also to distinguish among actors with diverging capacities and with more or less power over material and symbolic resources (Van Dijk, 2015; Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). On the other hand, the logic of power without coercion can be traced exploring the *power in discourse*, that is, the systems of knowledge that are historically legitimate and that constrain the production of new discourses (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016, 329; see also Bache, 2008, 11). There is a last type of power that can be called *power through discourse* (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016, 321) and refers to the discursive struggles not only over the best argument but also over alternative paradigms, representations and problematizations promoted by particular social actors. In the case of Europeanization, the power through discourse is illustrated by the member states negotiations to impose a specific economic paradigm. Furthermore, the power through discourse is also mobilized by the new representations and argumentations about Europe and the EU put forward by parties or movements at the domestic level. Hence, the forms of EU contestation of diverse actors are dependent on the power through discourse of which those actors are capable. These actors are contesting the EU in particular contexts in which processes of horizontal Europeanization take place through the interaction between power in discourse and power through discourse.

### 3. Methods and data

This comparative discourse study concentrates on two cases (Germany and Spain) that represent two instances of southern and northern European countries. As discussed above, these two countries show divergences in terms of political economy, political culture, and historical relations with the EU (Featherstone & Kazamias, 2000; Hall, 2017). According to the theoretical background of this study, it is expected that the symbolic orders in relation to the EU differ in Germany and Spain and, consequently, the processes to contest them. There are various reasons why this comparison is fruitful. First, it allows one to contrast the diverging forms of EU contestation in relation to the symbolic orders and processes of Europeanization in northern and southern Europe. Second, these two countries share the emergence of two challenging populist parties with singular interpretations of Europeanization and the EU in the aftermath of the euro crisis. The challenging parties are Podemos in Spain and the AfD in Germany. Although these parties differ in several aspects, they are considered in the literature a left-wing and a right-wing populist party, respectively (see Sola & Rendueles, 2017; Salgado & Stavrakakis, 2018; Lees, 2018; Havertz, 2018). The current analysis, therefore, shines also a light on the diverse forms of contestation of right-wing and left-wing populist parties. Finally, the emergence of these prominent contesting actors in the political sphere exhibits a parallel time line in Spain and Germany. Podemos was founded in 2014 and the AfD in 2013. By contrast, other western European countries have witnessed the emergence of populist parties much earlier such as Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Austria. Hence, these two countries are especially suitable for a diachronic discourse analysis of EU contestation.

To explore the discursive practices at the political sphere this study draws especially on the analytical categories offered by SKAD but it relies also on other discourse researchers, especially Van Leeuwen (2008). SKAD provides several theoretically-informed analytical categories to examine texts and reconstruct the discourses in which such texts draw through sequential analysis (a systematic line-by-line exploration of a textual corpus). This paper mainly focuses on the representations, argumentation schemes, and problematizations produced by political parties in particular historical periods. Representations are the particular ways of selecting and excluding specific elements in the classification or identification of actors, events or processes (Van Leeuwen, 2008, 6, 28). Political actors promote specific representations of Europe and the EU and disregard others. These actors also mobilize specific argumentation schemes to prescribe actions in regards to an object, in this case Europe or the EU (Schünemann, 2018, 95). Finally, problematizations or phenomenal structures in Keller's words (2018, 33-4) are symbolic ensembles of representations and argumentations that in more general terms define salient political problems, its properties, causes and effects, and the possible solutions or reactions in regards to them. These symbolic structures (representations, argumentation schemes and problematizations) can be captured in specific discursive events and/or textual manifestations. They are connected with organized and hierarchical discourses that produce a certain symbolic order and stocks of knowledge to go on with the world. Following SKAD, the analysis of various textual manifestations and discursive events allows us to reconstruct symbolic orders and interdiscursive relations (Keller et al., 2018).

The coding and classification of the textual material have been conducted with the software ATLAS.ti 8.0. The textual corpus is selected from two different sources: the main corpus is selected from the ratification debates on the various EU Treaties in the Bundestag in Germany and the Congress of Deputies in Spain from 1992 to 2011. In absence of ratification debates after the emergence of the new populist parties in Spain (the leftist Podemos) and Germany (the rightist AfD), the discursive practices of these actors are explored on the basis of manifestos and speeches between 2014 and 2017. Notwithstanding its limitations, the time span is significant inasmuch as it covers the so-called "constraining dissensus" period (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), where debates about the EU are expected to be more visible and tense. The Parliament is considered a site of research to explore how horizontal Europeanization takes place in the two countries' political spheres under study. The analysis seeks to capture the discursive struggles and hegemonic discourses about the EU and Europe.

#### **4. Europeanization in Spain**

##### **4.1 The modernization ethos: Europe 92 in Spain (1986-1996)**

During the second government of the social democrat Felipe González (1986-1989), Spain entered into a period of great transformation inspired in part by the European Economic Community agenda (Balmaseda & Sebastian, 2003; Ruiz Jiménez & Egea de Haro, 2010). The reforms of the government focused on the economic liberalization of the common market and sought to prepare Spain for the accession to the European Monetary System in 1989 (Milward, 2005, 25-26). The Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 established a consistent path of convergence and integration that marked also the governance in Spain (Balmaseda & Sebastian, 2003, 128). The main reforms concentrated on the inflation, fiscal deficit control, and the labour market. Spain adopted a "policy paradigm in which competitiveness was the fundamental objective" (Boix, 2000, 170). The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), as the ruling and strongest party in the Congress of Deputies, presented Europe and its unity as a positive and necessary goal.

*“Without the European Union we will not be able to maintain, consolidate or increase the prosperity that we have achieved in Europe - and also in Spain - and which, let us not forget, is the greatest ever known in the history of the continent”. (Congress of Deputies, 1992: 11098)<sup>1</sup>*

Europe was depicted as an abstract ideal of unity, prosperity and modernization in contrast with an isolated and underdeveloped Spain. In this sense, the PSOE emphasised “the position that we have managed to occupy in the international context after so many decades of isolation” (Ibid., 11098). Europe appeared also connected with the ideas of solidarity and peace (Ibid.).

The conservative People’s Party (PP) portrayed Europe as a positive union but composed by “diverse peoples with their particularities and a free market” (Ibid., 11084). This party integrated the free market as a crucial phenomenon to define Europe.

*“We believe that Europe must be built through the union between its peoples, we believe that this construction must be based on national identities and we believe, finally, that an integrated free market economy, with all the necessary solidarity resources, draws the only viable type of society.” (Ibid., 11084)*

The mainstream parties (the PSOE and the PP) referred to Europeanization processes as necessary reforms. There was a prominent argumentation of danger or threat: *If we want Spain to be safe from isolation, underdevelopment and war, Europe is necessary and within Europe, Europeanization processes.* The pro-Maastricht bloc, therefore, problematized the isolation and underdevelopment of the “old Spain” and Europe was presented as the solution. The PP included the discourse topics “nationalism” and “free market” as crucial elements of its representation of Europe.

#### **4.2 Neoliberal Europeanization (1996 – 2004)**

During the two PP conservative governments (1996-2000/2000-2004), Europeanization processes operated under the form of facilitated coordination. These Europeanization processes followed the parameters established in the Treaty of Amsterdam and the convergence requirements for the incorporation into the single currency. The government implemented successive public spending cuts, inflation controls, and reductions in the interest rates (Powell, 2003: 102). The Aznar government used a similar argumentative strategy as González did to justify these reforms. In the ratification debates on the Amsterdam Treaty, the interests of Spain were again linked to the European construction:

*“It is precisely in Spain's interest to make more Europe and not less Europe, that is, to strengthen the mechanisms of solidarity and cohesion, while at the same time re-constituting European unity, broken by the now fortunately defunct Berlin Wall.” (Congress of Deputies, 1998a, 9215)*

The PP abandoned the nationalist discourse and embraced a civic conception of the state in representing Europe. Accordingly, they mobilized an intergovernmentalist view of the EU with the nation-states as essential units. During this period, the PSOE put forward the discourse topic of the “United States of Europe” (Congress of Deputies, 1998b, 9887). In contrast to the PP, this view represented the future Europe linked to a strong social model, the European Social Charter, and the territorial cohesion of the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> The translations from Spanish and German to English are my own throughout the article.

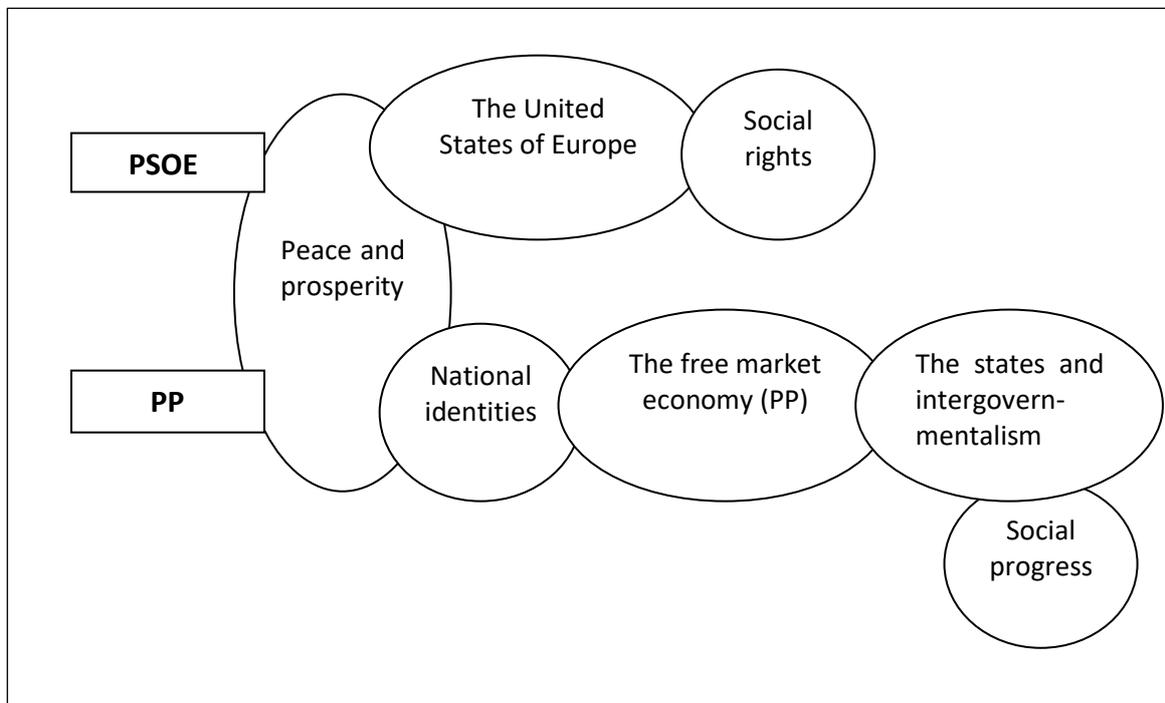
### 4.3 The European Constitution and the Euro crisis (2004- 2010)

Zapatero (PSOE), the new elected Spanish president in 2004, moved again to a supranational view of the EU and was able to defend this view in the debate on the European Constitutional Treaty in 2005. The PSOE government represented again European Integration as a guarantee against the atrocities of war, suffering and underdevelopment:

*“If we want to be fair to our recent past, we must not forget that European integration has enabled us to consolidate peace and democracy in Europe and to eradicate war and dictatorship in our countries once and for all”. (Congress of Deputies, 2005, 4259)*

The PSOE made a distinction between a Europe reduced to the free market and a “Europe beyond the single market” (Congress of Deputies, 2008, 15). During the ratification debates on the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008, the PP also depicted Europe in positive terms: as a “dream” (Ibid., 26) and as a guarantee of peace, democracy, and prosperity (Ibid., 27).

Figure 1: Representations of the main government parties



Source: One representation

To summarize, during the period 1992-2008, Europeanization operated through mechanisms of facilitated coordination, downloading policies and paradigms from the EU to the domestic level. The pro-EU bloc (mainly formed by the PSOE and the PP) mobilized several representations and problematization about Europe and the EU. There was a prominent problematization of Spain as isolated and underdeveloped country in contrast to the positive representation of Europe. Europe was linked to modernization, democratization and progress. As it can be seen in the Figure 1, in the view of the PSOE, European integration was a process to construct a supranational community, whereas in the case of the PP it was rather a cooperative area for the interrelations between nation states.

#### 4.4 EU critique and contestation in the Spanish party system

The left-coalition IU (the United Left) was the most prominent actor at the level of the party system showing certain Euro-criticism during the period 1992-2008. In the debate on the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, nine out of its 17 Members of the Parliament (MPs) abstained while the other eight MPs voted in favour. However, the IU self-defined as pro-European (Congress of Deputies, 1992, 11088).

The left coalition IU portrayed Europe in connection with different processes and events, emphasizing the European Social Charter instead of the free market. Europe appeared depicted as fractured and divided into two 'souls': the Europe of the unequal development and territorial asymmetries and the social Europe (Ibid., 11089). In the debate on the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1998, the IU criticized the direction of the European project arguing that "the concern for stability and convergence, now lasting, is always above Europe's social concerns and social cohesion" (Congress of Deputies, 1998b, 9886). The left-wing coalition proposed one EU turn consisting of:

*"The democratization of economic decision-making, what has come to be called an economic government that does not leave the European Central Bank in a vacuum of political legitimacy, so that it becomes an instrument in the creation of active employment policies". (Congress of Deputies, 1998a: 9203)*

The opposition bloc to the Amsterdam Treaty in 1998 only garnered 15 votes against the Amsterdam Treaty and 287 deputies voted for the ratification, due in part to the weakening of IU, which dropped from 21 seats to only nine. During the Treaty of Nice ratification debate, the new IU party leadership adopted a different view on EU issues, closer to the perspective of the PSOE and the idea of the "United States of Europe". The IU criticized "the insufficient Europeanism of Aznar, the government and the EU" (Congress of Deputies, 2001, 4959). They demanded an impulse of the EU towards a federalist and constitutional political union (Ibid., 4960). The IU did not vote against but abstained in the ratification of the Nice Treaty.

During Zapatero's governments (2004-2011) the contestation of the EU remained similar although a new prominent contesting actor emerged: the left-wing nationalist party Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC). It became the main contesting actor passing from one to eight seats in the Spanish parliament (the IU obtained only five seats in the 2004 election). The ERC rejected the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 because it did not recognize the nations without states. This party represented the EU also as lacking participatory and democratic mechanisms (Congress of Deputies, 2005, 4264). The IU remained in its soft criticism against the insufficient Europeanism of the EU and the absence of fiscal and social coordination and cohesion.

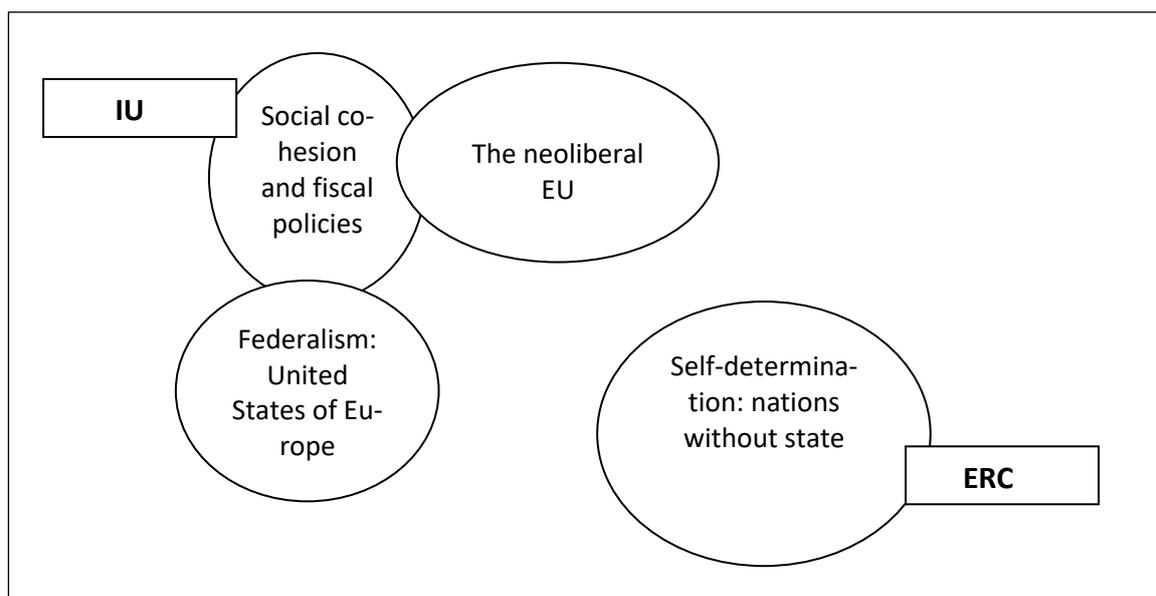
*"That critical European expression, of Europeanism that wants to go further, of Europeanism from the left, is taking place today in France, and is expressed mostly, in a remarkable way, among the left voters." (Ibid., 4268)*

During the Lisbon Treaty ratification debates (2008), the left-wing groups were even weaker as a result of the January 2008 general election. The IU and the ERC were forced to join in order to form a parliamentary group due to their bad electoral results (the IU only obtained two seats). The criticism of the EU was formulated in similar terms, emphasising the neoliberal direction of the European project and lamenting the abandonment of a political and social perspective (Congress of Deputies, 2008, 20).

All in all, the EU-contesting discursive practices, headed by the left coalition IU, were based on the combination of several representations and argumentations. In 1992, the

representation of territorial and social imbalances was prominent. The argument behind this representation was a critique of neoliberalism (Schünemann, 2018, 100) and a definition of the EU as linked to a neoliberal political project. An additional representation of Europe can be considered 'federalist'. The critique behind this representation was concerned with the specific policies and orientations of the EU rather than with the whole EU project as linked to neoliberalism. The development of the European Social Charter and a different fiscal policy were the measures proposed to remedy this wrong orientation of the EU policies. In 1998 and 2001 the representation of the territorial imbalances of the EU disappeared and the emphasis was placed on the lack of social cohesion and the lack of policies in this direction.

*Figure 2: Contesting representations of Europe and the EU*



Source: Own representation

It can be concluded that there were two problematizations of the EU: first, the phenomenon of neoliberalism as a project enshrined with the EU construction was the main problem to fight against in the early times of Maastricht. In a second period, the problem was not a class-based wide-world project such as neoliberalism but rather the unwise implementation of certain policies, leading to inequality, lack of cohesion and progress. The problematization of ERC was the oppression of the nations without states that was consolidated with the EU construction.

#### **4.5. Coercive Europeanization, crisis, and the emergence of Podemos**

Since 2009, the effects of the financial turmoil in Europe derived into political and social consequences for Spain, and the room to manoeuvre of the Zapatero government was drastically reduced. This was the starting point of what Magone (2016, 93 -94) calls "imposed or forced Europeanization."

The forced Europeanization in Spain changed the political and social environment and altered the symbolic order about the EU in the country. The anti-austerity protests of the 15-M movement criticized the political measures implemented by the government in response to the crisis. The public sentiments about the EU and Europeanization were also transformed during these years. In 2007, 73 per cent of Spaniards had a positive view of EU membership. By contrast, in 2011 this was only the case for 32 per cent of Spaniards, six points below the EU average (European Commission, 2007, 16; 2011, 47).

The credibility of the government deteriorated further when in 2010 it was forced to implement austerity measures imposed by Brussels (Petkanopoulou et al., 2018; Buendía, 2018). Europeanization in Spain turned from a modality of 'facilitated coordination' to other of 'coercive conditionality' when Spain "encountered difficulties in refinancing its debt in the financial markets" (Buendía, 2018, 65-66). The EU requirements focussed on decreasing labour costs, reducing the size of the public sector, and replacing welfare with workfare with measures such as reducing dismissal costs and unemployment benefits (Ibid, 66). The reform of Article 135 of the Spanish Constitution in August 2011 is the paramount example of this turn of Europeanization processes in Spain. This reform consisted of a balanced budget amendment that in practical terms implied the priority of the Spanish debt payments over social spending. The reform was approved with 316 votes in favour and only five against.

In this context, the PSOE represented Europe again as the source of solidarity, peace and opportunities and appealed to the responsibility and sacrifices of the Spanish population:

*"The economic and fiscal integration of the Eurozone requires partners to share structural deficit and debt criteria in order to gain European solvency as a whole. European solidarity, ladies and gentlemen; in order to guarantee the stability of the Eurozone as a whole and the welfare state." (Congress of deputies, 2011, 15)*

The main opposition party, the PP, used similar arguments to support the reform and portrayed Europe as "the greatest opportunity" but "also one of our main responsibilities" (Congress of Deputies, 2011, 13). The IU, with only two MPs in the Spanish parliament, confronted this interpretation and denounced what they considered the usurpation of the sovereignty of the Spanish people in a populist fashion:

*"We understand that this is a hard blow to the current Constitution, opening a period of restoration and democratic involution dictated by foreign governments and institutions not democratically endorsed by our citizens, replacing in practice the sovereignty of the people by the sovereignty of the financial markets, to which de facto the constituent power is transferred." (Congress of Deputies, 2011, 7)*

The dramatic emergence of Podemos in 2014 changed the balance of forces in the Spanish political sphere. The new party entered the European Parliament in May 2014 with eight per cent of the votes and it consolidated as the third political force in Spain with 21.1 per cent in June 2016 after two general elections.

Initially, Podemos represented Europe as a fractured entity divided between South European countries and North European countries, resuming the early depiction of the IU in 1992. The party directly alluded to Angela Merkel and Goldman Sachs as part of the elite that destroys Europe and uses the European project for the benefit of a minority.

*"We love Europe if Europe means freedom, equality and fraternity; we love Europe if Europe means social rights; we love Europe if Europe means human rights. The problem is not Europe, the problem is that the name of the president of the European Central Bank is Mario Draghi and he was representative of Goldman Sachs in Europe [...] Europe's problem is called Durão Barroso [...] that's why we say along with other southern Europeans that we want to recover the dignity and the future of our peoples and our countries". (Iglesias, 2014)*

There is, therefore, a first problematization that depicts 'the elites' threatening the idea of Europe and implementing policies against 'the people' and the countries of southern Europe. This antagonistic structure corresponds to what can be called a populist problematization of the EU. However, in the run up to the December 2015 general election the

representations of Europe and the EU became more nuanced. A second depiction of Europe associated with prosperity and social rights emerged, in connection to an open defence of the European project:

*“To defend social rights, public services, sovereignty and an idea of Europe associated with prosperity. I say this very clearly: either they take the hand of the pro-Europeans who understand that Europe without prosperity, without human rights, without civil rights, without social rights is not sustainable, or they will have to negotiate with Marine Le Pen.” (Iglesias, 2015)*

This excerpt illustrates the new dominant representation of Europe mobilized by the party Podemos. Europe appears as an essentially positive project in which the pro-Europeans should be united against the anti-Europeans (Marine Le Pen). The problematization here is based on an argument of threat in regards to the right-wing movements and the disintegration of Europe. The solution for Europe is to expand the social and civil rights. Europe operated as a positive reference in comparison with Spain and Podemos used it to legitimate demands such as the “convergence with 60 per cent of the average salary as established by the European Social Charter” (Podemos Manifesto, 2016, 38). On this basis, it is possible to identify a connection between the representations of Podemos and the symbolic order in the Spanish political sphere. The idea of prosperity linked to Europe and the strengthening of its social dimension resemble especially the representations mobilized by the PSOE. The populist portrayal of Europe is notably less salient than in the early times of the party, although it still persists as a minor representation:

*“Democracy is a movement that distributes power, a movement that tells whoever is in power, being the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the private investment funds, or multimillionaires that in a democracy power has to be in the hands of the people”. (Iglesias, 2015)*

To conclude, the power through discourse of Podemos to counterbalance the hegemonic representations of Europe was inspired in its early times by the anti-Maastricht appeal of the IU. However, the power in discourse of the symbolic order on Europe and the EU influenced the further representations and problematizations of the party. Hence, the low saliency of Europe and the dominant representations put forward by the party can be explained by the power in discourse and the reduced power over material and symbolic resources of Spain in the EU context.

## **5. Europeanization and EU contestation in Germany**

### **5.1. Maastricht and ordoliberalism**

Although Germany has been considered in the literature a semi-sovereign state or a “tamed power” (Katzenstein, 1988; Bulmer and Paterson, 1989), it had a prominent role in the design of the EU. Its economic preponderance and its strong position after reunification (although it also implied serious economic problems) gave Germany a dominant role in terms of *power over* material and symbolic resources in relation to the EU. Thus, Europeanization in Germany took during specific periods the form of *Germanization* when the uploading mechanisms were dominant (Dyson, 2003; Beck, 2012). In fact, the Maastricht Treaty was, following several authors (Dyson, 2003; Bulmer and Paterson, 2010; Jeffery and Paterson, 2003), the result of an uploading process to the EU of the German economic model. The State Secretary in the Finance Ministry (Köhler, 1992) referred to it as a way of “exporting this fine piece of German identity to Europe” (in Dyson, 2003, 17).

In December 1992, the German government – formed by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), its counterpart in Bavaria (CSU), and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) -

gathered considerable support in the German Bundestag for the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty with only 17 'no' votes. The government parties represented Europe as an achievement related to freedom, peace and prosperity. The CDU/CSU saw Europe and European Integration as a victory:

*"This yes to Europe is a victory; a victory for our country, a victory for the people. [...] If cooperation in the European Union becomes our guiding principle for action, then it must also make a contribution to solving the problems."* (Bundestag, 1992, 10811)

European Integration was portrayed as a positive process compatible with other important processes: the defence of the German interests and the expansion of the German project beyond its boundaries: "Europe has adopted the stability culture of the Deutsche Mark, and has done so successfully. For us, this is a reason for satisfaction." (Ibid., 20242). In the view of the CDU/CSU, Europe was the way to face the contemporary main challenges of the German society: first, the economic globalization (Ibid, 1998, 20243) and second and related to the former, the security and illegal immigration:

*"Amsterdam is making the greatest progress in internal security, in the fight against organised crime across Europe, in protection against criminals and smugglers, in asylum and visa policy - all of which are burning issues for our citizens [...] the European Union is taking Community action against organised crime and trafficking with human beings and protecting itself against illegal immigration."* (Ibid., 20242)

Hence, Europe is presented as a guarantor of peace and prosperity but it is also and primarily conceived of as a vehicle for the 'German victory' and the expansion of its values and socioeconomic model. There is an underlying *normative argument* in favour of Europe and also an *advantage argument* by which *if the German interests and the German values are expanded, then it is positive to belong to the EU*. There is an additional *argument of threat* or fear that can be summarized in the following terms: *Being within the EU we can protect us better from the dangers of globalization, uncontrolled migration and crime*. Europe, thereby, emerges within a problematization of the existence of Germany in the world and how this position in the world can be strengthened.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) presented Europe positively as opposed to the bad, destructive and racist tendencies of the German nation in the past. They refer to this past as "the old evil spirit":

*"But I know: that if European integration falls behind or even fails and Germany is left to its own devices, the old evil spirit would once again become socially and politically capable on a large scale. European integration is also an anchor for Germany's political stability."* (Bundestag, 1992: 10813)

Therefore, in the case of the SPD Europe appears not only as a 'vehicle' to implement the German interests but also as a contention against its own evils. Europe was related with peace and economic and social stability. Europe was also portrayed by the SPD as the best way to face the globalization challenges (Ibid., 10814).

## **5.2. From Germanization to Europeanization (1998-2005)**

The period covering the two governments of Gerhard Schröder (1998-2005) implied a turn from *inertia* in the Germany-EU relationships (Maastricht as the German model) to a period of absorption of the EU guidelines (the policy paradigms and frameworks that were created and modified in Brussels (see Dyson, 2003, 12-24; Bulmer and Paterson, 2010, 1054)). After internal tensions within the SPD, in July 2000 the Schröder government

implemented various reforms, such as a tax reform and a radical budget consolidation programme (Dyson, 2003, 21).

The SPD presented the EU as “the greatest story of success of the 20th century” (Bundestag, 2001, 18981). The EU was primarily seen as catalyst for reforms and a vehicle to face the challenges of globalization. The main processes related to the EU were security, terrorism and globalization:

*“Today, the European Union has a dense network of trade relations, direct investment and other transactions. Without this interdependence, Europe had never been able to achieve such a strong position in competition with the United States or Japan.” (Ibid., 18983)*

This connection between the EU and globalization was combined with a representation of Europe as a “model of society” (Ibid., 18983). “Europe stands for an economic, social, cultural and ecological balance” (Ibid.). In the 2005 debate on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty, the SPD depicted the EU as a guarantor against the atrocities of the past, similarly to prior representations. The party suggested looking at the European Constitution from the eyes of those “who witnessed and were victims of the devastations of the 20th century” and that would have dreamt with a united Europe (Ibid., 16349). There was, therefore, a primary argument related with the challenges of globalization and other *argument of threat* related with the atrocities of the past.

The CDU/CSU represented Europe as an entity in relation with globalization processes and especially with security and terrorism, in similar terms as the SPD. In the aftermath of the 2001 September terrorist attacks, the party referred to the EU in the following terms:

*“[...] it's not just the money that counts. We also have to ask ourselves why the balance sheet of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, which does exist, is so flagrant; why there has not been yet a single initiative by the European Union to stabilize crisis regions outside the European Union, for example.” (Bundestag, 2001, 18985)*

Angela Merkel (CDU/CSU) mobilized the representation of Europe as a site of peace and security arguing that “there is no alternative to strengthening Europe as a community of peace and values” (Bundestag, 2005, 16351). The CDU/CSU linked Europe also with freedom, equality and solidarity (Ibid., 16352) and with a community that ensures the principle of subsidiarity and the preponderance of the member states. Edmund Stoiber (CSU president and Minister President of Bavaria) stressed that “the Member States - this is decisively enshrined in this Constitutional Treaty - remain the ‘masters of the Treaties’.” (Ibid., 16364). He defended the need of a critique of European politics and rejected the easily attributed labels of populist or anti-European (Ibid., 16635). Therefore, the argument of Europe as a guarantor of peace and security in the world was combined with an intergovernmental view of the European model: ‘yes’ to Europe because Europe allows the States to be the masters of international politics.

### **5.3. Merkel and the Euro crisis**

Europeanization in Germany took again an uploading profile after the euro crisis, the unstable situation in the Eurozone, and the increasingly important role played by Germany (see Bulmer and Paterson, 2016, 2-3; Schweiger, 2014, 16). This turn in the balance of power among EU member states in the design and direction of the EU resulted in what Ulrich Beck has dubbed as “the German Europe” (2012). There were two different Europeanization stages under the two Merkel governments (2005-2009/2009-2013): The period after the failure of the Constitutional Treaty and the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007

and the period of the euro crisis especially since 2010. In 2008, the Lisbon Treaty was passed in the German Bundestag with a majority of 515 to 58 votes. In the ratification debates, the CDU/CSU presented Europe again in connection with the phenomena of security, globalization and border control (Bundestag, 2008, 16451). Europe was also contrasted with the important role of the nation states:

*“This ensures our understanding of Europe as a close political community, which is not and will not be a state, but a sui generis entity, a unique entity (Ibid.) [...] I believe that in the future we will have to face more strongly the task of deciding how to achieve the right balance between national tasks and European tasks.” (Ibid., 16453)*

In late 2009, however, the situation in the Eurozone changed, and the need for a coordinated action to stabilize and save the Euro was gradually more apparent (Crawford and Rezai, 2017, 96-7; Schweiger, 2014, 24). The dilemma of taking part or not in a direct action to find a solution to the euro crisis concluded in May 2010 with a first financial aid-programme for Greece. This marked the beginning of a new relationship between Germany, the EU, and the rest of member states (Bulmer and Paterson, 2010, 1062).

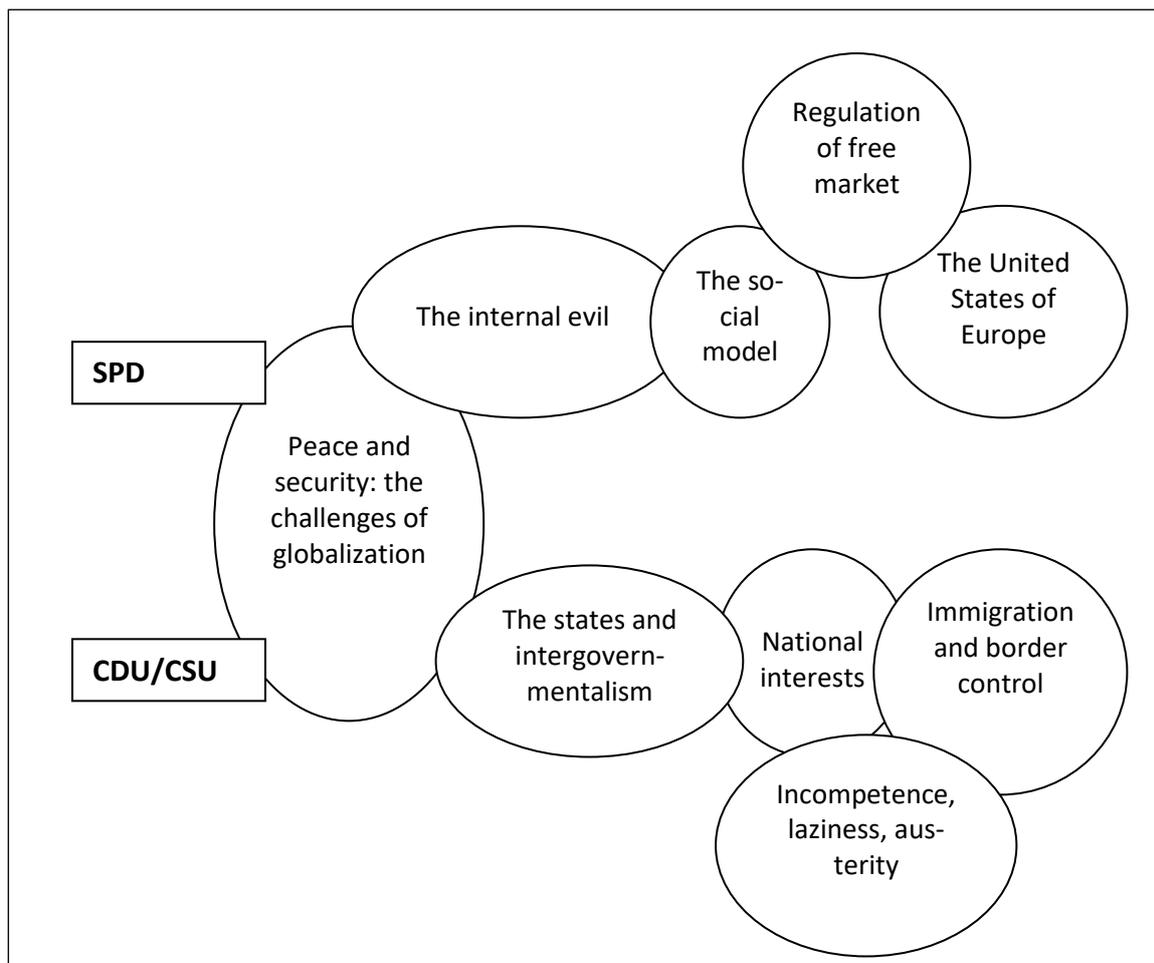
In the Bundestag debates in 2010, the CDU/CSU presented the financing assistance to Greece as a path without alternatives: the Greek bailout was the best solution for a problem affecting Germany and the EU and threatening the stability of the Eurozone (Bundestag, 2010, 3990). There was an argument of disadvantage in relation with certain incompetent countries and the costs of having an alliance with them. Thus, specific countries were portrayed as unable to reform themselves:

*“We're throwing Greece a life preserver. It has to swim to the saving shore itself. If it swims in the wrong direction, it lands on the open sea or even in Turkey.” (Ibid., 3991)*

The SPD, in a government coalition with the CDU/CSU in 2008, defended enthusiastically the Treaty of Lisbon but reaffirmed its willingness to move towards the “United States of Europe” (Bundestag, 2008, 16457), and materialize the ‘vision’ of a European Constitution. In the midst of the euro crisis and the financial aid package to Greece the SPD emphasized the need of financial market regulations:

*“For a Europe that makes itself strong and gives itself the necessary resources to ensure that it is no longer driven by wildly speculating financial actors in the future.” (Ibid., 3993).*

Figure 3: Representations of the main ruling parties



Source: Own representation

#### 5.4. EU-Critique and contestation in Germany

The EU contestation has been championed by the Party of Democratic Socialism/The Left (PDS/Die Linke), although there were also critiques coming from the right side of the political spectrum in Germany. In the ratification debates on the Maastricht Treaty the 17 MPs of the PDS voted 'no'; there were also eight abstentions from the coalition Alliance 90/the Greens (the Greens). Due to its historical anchor in East Germany (the old German Democratic Republic), the PDS criticized the Western bias of the construction of the EU.

*"Our objective is a peaceful, non-Militarist, democratic, constitutional, social and ecological Europe. When we say 'Europe', we mean 'Europe' and not just part of it, a continent on which states, peoples and regions work together voluntarily and on an equal footing." (Bundestag, 1992, 10819)*

The PDS presented the Europe of Maastricht as a bureaucratic and centralised supranational statehood that endangered democracy, social rights and cultural identity:

*"The people do not want a Europe of bureaucratic centralism, of political elites, but a Europe of creative diversity and regional identity, a Europe of citizens and democracy." (Bundestag, 1992, 10820)*

In the debates on the Amsterdam Treaty in 1998 the contestation of the EU gained prominence due to the ascendance of the Greens and the PDS. The Greens' 40 MPs abstained in the voting process, whereas the 30 MPs of the PDS voted against the Treaty. During the Amsterdam Treaty debates, the PDS held consistently its position and represented an alternative Europe with institutions centred on fighting unemployment and inequality. By

contrast, the current Europe was depicted as the Europe of security and police promoted by the CDU/CSU government.

*“Clear progress has been made with the police; no progress has been made in fighting mass unemployment and in establishing social standards. This by itself requires our ‘no’ to the ratification of this Treaty.” (Bundestag, 1998, 20255).*

The democratic deficit of the EU was other of the issues raised by the PDS during the Amsterdam Treaty debates (Bundestag, 1998, 20255). Similarly, the Greens portrayed a Europe with important lacks in terms of democracy, social rights, and environmental protection (Bundestag, 1992: 10822).

With the participation of the Greens in the two Schröder governments (1998-2002/2002-2005), the opposition bloc to European Integration weakened. Only the PDS voiced at the German Bundestag an alternative to the type of European construction promoted with the Nice Treaty in 2001 and the Constitutional Treaty in 2004. Against the securitization of the EU borders, the PDS proposed a peaceful approach to the EU:

*“In your approach to the fight against terrorism, it is precisely the military dimension that you give absolute priority to. Other options for solving the problem remain behind.” (Bundestag, 2001, 18995)*

The PDS rejected also the European Constitutional Treaty because of the lack of solid social measures and the democratic deficit (Bundestag, 2005, 16675). In the debates on the 2008 Lisbon Treaty, the new party Die Linke<sup>2</sup> was the unique opposition, with 54 votes, and it exhibited similar critiques of the democratic and social deficits of the EU. They emphasized, however, with more intensity their commitment with Europe: “Die Linke is committed to a Europe of peace, freedom, democracy, social and environmental security and solidarity” (Bundestag, 2008, 16460). Die Linke strongly criticized the bailout package and the austerity policies promoted especially for the debtor countries of the EU since 2010.

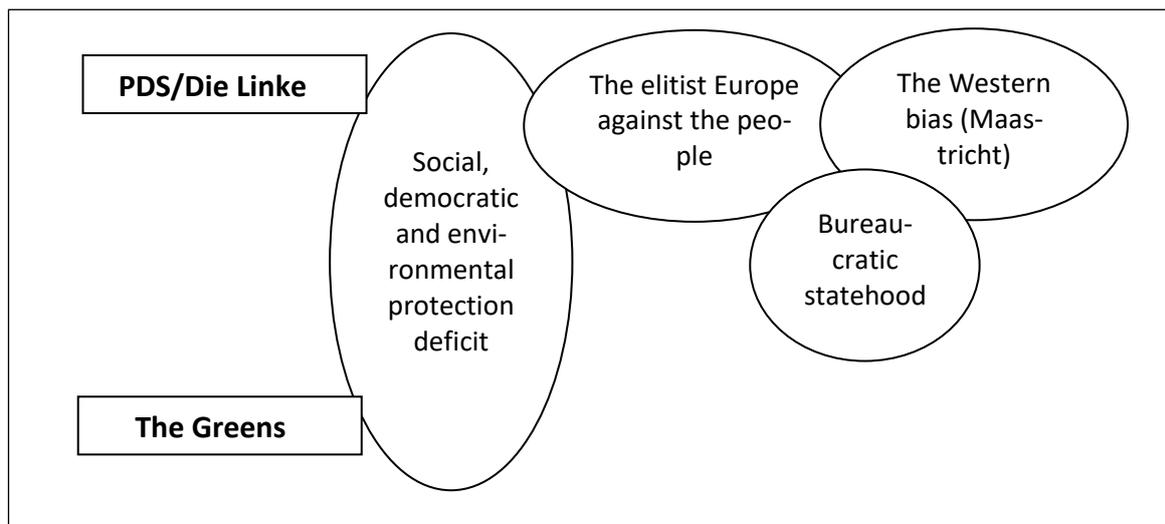
*“In Greece, wages and pensions are being drastically cut. The IMF and the European Union are demanding that the Greeks implement all the neoliberal nonsense that has caused so much damage not only in our country.” (Bundestag, 2010, 3996)*

Die Linke considered these measures an attack to the “working people, pensioners and unemployed people all over Europe” (Ibid.). In a more markedly populist tone, Die Linke asked Merkel: “Who do you actually make politics for, Mrs Merkel, for the markets or for the people?” (Ibid.). In sum, the PDS/Die Linke problematized Europe as a Western project initially. This was gradually substituted with an anti-neoliberal argumentation and a critique of the lack of social and democratic measures. Finally, Europe was depicted as a project of the elites protecting the interests of the financial markets.

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<sup>2</sup> This party was the result of the merging of the PDS with WASG in 2007. The latter was a party formed in 2005 by left-wing activists as a response to the policy approach of the Red-green government of Schröder.

Figure 4: Contesting representations of Europe and the EU



Source: Own representation

The approval of the first bailout package for Greece was followed by more rescues and conditionality measures for the southern and debtor countries within the EU. Against this background, in 2013 the anti-Euro and anti-bailout AfD was close to enter into the Bundestag with 4.7 per cent of the votes. In the following, the impact of this party on the symbolic order on Europe and the EU is explored.

### 5.5 The euro crisis and the *Alternative für Deutschland*

After the failed attempt in the 2013 federal election, the AfD gained 7.1 per cent of the votes in the 2014 European Parliamentary election. This was followed by several successful performances in the German *Ländern* elections and the AfD finally consolidated at the federal level in September 2017 as the third political force with 12.6 per cent of popular support. The AfD militated primarily against the euro and the EU in its early times. The EU was represented as “an artificial state remote from the citizens” (AfD Manifesto, 2014, 25). As Lucke stated:

*“This means that the European Union should have a serving function for the member states and not a dominating function”. (Lucke, 2014)*

Throughout the different stages of the party a distinct representation of Europe more related with the German nation emerged. The AfD also presented Europe in positive terms as an entity that can coexist with Germany as a sovereign nation state. This is opposed to a negative representation of the “United states of Europe” (AfD Manifesto, 2016: 10). In fact, Europe and Germany have common enemies and common threats in the view of the AfD. Among these threats, uncontrolled migration from ‘Islam countries’ is one of the most prominent:

*“Demographers [...], estimate that from the Islam arc of Africa up to 240 million are pushing towards Europe and by 2050 possibly up to 1.1 billion people will sit on their suitcases. Every migrant who comes to us costs us 13.000 Euros according to calculations by the German Institute for Economics”. (Gauland, 2017)*

The AfD takes up the classical representation of the national interests and the national identity in relation to Europe that was previously put forward by sectors of the CDU/CSU. One of the party arguments, indeed, is built on the threat of a European statehood and the dissolution of the subsidiarity principle. The classical argumentation related with EU

border control is further elaborated on and transformed into a harder 'othering'; a negative representation of the Islam and the uncontrolled migration in Europe.

## 6. Discussion, comparison and concluding remarks

This paper has shown how Europeanization matters to understand and explain the various forms of EU contestation in Western Europe. In regards to Spain, this country entered into a new configuration of power/knowledge at the EU level and adopted a subaltern position within the EU since its accession. This was accentuated with the impact of the euro crisis in Spain that reduced even more the room to manoeuvre of this country and the ability to mobilize power to negotiate at the EU level. In the case of Germany, the country gradually gained a prominent and central position in the design of the EU that was based on a greater power over material and symbolic resources at the EU level, as the Maastricht Treaty exemplifies. Europeanization/Germanization processes functioned primarily as a way to channel the national interests in a globalized world. Although this powerful position changed in the late 1990s, with the difficult economic and social situation of Germany, after the failure of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 and especially since 2010, Germany recovered again the dominant position within the EU.

This different *power over symbolic and material resources* at the EU level was related with the forms in which *power in discourse* influenced and constrained the debates on Europe and the EU in Spain and Germany. The hegemonic representations and problematizations of Europe in the case of Spain consisted of an established idea of prosperity, progress, and modernity linked to Europe. The interests of Spain in relation with Europe (or in contrast to) only appeared marginally during the debates on the Maastricht Treaty. The dominant problematization was the isolation and underdevelopment of Spain in relation to Europe. By contrast, in Germany the national interests and the problematization of the role of Germany in a globalized world were dominant in the historical discursive constellation.

The political actors, in order to develop their *power through discourse* advancing new representations and problematizations of Europe were forced to interact with these symbolic orders on Europe at the political sphere. Thus, in Spain, the critique of the EU and Europe has been confined to the different responses to the problem of isolation and underdevelopment. Both the IU and most recently Podemos attempted to articulate a novel representation of Europe as fractured by the north/south divide and the elite/people divide. This problematization emerged in the debates on the Maastricht Treaty and in the early times of the party Podemos. It tended, however, to be dissolved and subordinated to a more 'reformist' critique of the EU: the critique of the democratic and social deficit, more consonant with the dominant representations of the PSOE and the dominant discourse on modernization/democratization. In Germany, the classical critique of the EU was mobilized by the PDS/Die Linke putting forward a critique of the neoliberal model and the democratic and social deficit. However, the more resonant critique against the EU has been advanced by the AfD connecting with the classical problematization in Germany of its role in the world. The AfD reproduced and rearticulated, therefore, a dominant representation and problematization of Europe and Germany. This consisted of a joint articulation of the conservative idea of border control (CDU/CSU) and the novel 'islamophobic problematization' of the current state of Europe.

These results have several implications for the study of EU contestation. First, it implies that the reproduction and rearticulation of symbolic orders are paramount to explain EU contestation. It reveals the limits of conceptions of Euroscepticism as restricted to fringe or extreme parties with novel ideologies alien to the mainstream parties. The particular

representations and problematizations of emerging and contesting parties always draw to a certain extent on prior established discourses. Second, the penetration and scope of EU contestation have to do with the distribution of power at the EU level and the room to manoeuvre of the states to put forward action related with the prescriptive discourses of contesting actors. In connection with these two points, it can be concluded that there is a greater potential for the discursive contestation of the EU in Germany than in Spain. However, this ultimately hinges on the power through discourse of emerging parties and movements in these two countries and their ability to rearticulate or transform the current symbolic orders on the EU.

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# ‘Critique as a vocation’: Reconstructing critical discourses on Europeanization in German sociology, 1990–2018

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Europeanization can be regarded both as a social phenomenon, designating the influence of supranational European Union (EU) policies on the domestic level, and also as a new field of knowledge on European integration processes. In sociology, the historical formation of discourses on Europeanization always included particular forms of critique on its very object of interest, the EU. The strong nexus of theory-building, empirical research and intellectual critique is particularly relevant for disciplinary traditions of sociology that regard critique as part and parcel of its scientific vocation. Applying a sociology of knowledge approach, this small study offers a reconstruction of sociological discourses on Europeanization and the forms of EU critique it includes, based on conference papers of the German Sociological Association from 1990 to 2018. Results of the study refer to historical contexts, structural conditions and cognitive problem choice and content of sociological critique on Europe. Results are useful both for getting a sense of conflicting, often complementary forms of critique in contemporary sociology of European integration, and for understanding some of the critical functions of the social sciences in society at large.

**Keywords:** Europe, Europeanization, Critique, Sociology of knowledge, Sociology of European integration

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## 1. Introduction

When researchers are asked to give talks on European integration, inevitably they become subject to expectations: they are expected to ‘explain’ Europe to the lay public, to ‘advertise’ the European Union (EU) vis-à-vis potential voters or to ‘defend’ Europeanization against an increasing number of populist and nationalist citizens. To ‘criticize’ Europe, however, occasionally causes irritation, particularly in a public climate of heated debate over recent political events. A self-defeating prophecy, any critical remarks on the EU seem to unintentionally run the risk of promoting Eurosceptic movements and thus contribute to disintegrating Europe.

In contrast, this paper assumes that the critical function of science is constitutive for what researchers do; thus, critique is part and parcel of researchers’ scientific vocation. Reflecting on and criticizing the EU might have started in the legal and political sciences, but it is fed by the work of many scholars from various disciplines: economics, historical and cultural studies, and also sociology. While ‘European studies’ has always been an

interdisciplinary and international endeavour, we should not, however, neglect that our concepts and knowledge claims always carry considerable baggage with them: in terms of particular historical, social and cultural contexts of their use. Thus, taking both disciplinary and cultural contexts of the 'critique on Europe' explicitly into account can provide a more appropriate understanding of what that critique actually means, referring to particular interpretations, their limitations, but also their strengths.

This paper examines the formation of European integration research that has emerged in German sociology in previous decades. More accurately, the German sociology of European integration is analyzed as a definitive stock of knowledge, institutionalized in the conference proceedings of the German Sociological Association (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, DGS) from 1990 to 2018. By applying a sociology of knowledge methodology, findings show varying meanings of Europeanization and EU critique in its historical contexts, its structural conditions of being institutionalized in the discipline and in its cognitive content and problem choice. Thus, the results provide insights into the interdependent historical, structural and cognitive dimensions of EU criticism and its continuity and social change across distinct phases of the sociology of European integration. For sociologists, this small study stipulates a historically informed account of what is now known as a rather young, but well-established sub-disciplinary branch that three decades ago simply did not exist. For researchers from European studies, the analysis offers a useful understanding of the particular contribution of German sociology and its critique in this new area of research.

Some preliminary considerations on the idea of critique, the critical function of science and varieties of critique are drawn in section two. After outlining the conceptual framework of sociology of knowledge and how it is applied towards discourses of Europeanization in section three, samples and methods are described in section four. The presentation and discussion of findings in section five analyzes the three different phases of Europeanization discourses, making a distinction between historical contexts, structural conditions and the cognitive content of EU critique. Conclusions are drawn with respect to the relevance of the findings on the role of critique in contemporary Europeanization debates, some limitations of the approach are discussed and recommendations for further research given in section six.

## **2. Varieties of 'critique'**

One does not need to be a Marxist, or a fan of the Frankfurt School, to take the critical function of science as constitutive for science itself. To interpret 'critique as a vocation' (Lepsius, 1964) means to develop sociological theory and research as a form of 'applied enlightenment', typically promoted by researchers when active as public intellectuals. Foreshadowing some prominent writings of Max Weber on science and politics, and simultaneously referring to Joseph Schumpeter's (1946, 237) analysis of the structural conditions of intellectual practices, M. Rainer Lepsius (1964) has characterized 'critique as a vocation': Motivated by the debate on the 'Spiegel' scandal in the early 1960s, in which the freedom of public media was threatened by the German nation state, Lepsius asks what is constitutive for the criticism of political actors, journalists and public intellectuals. According to him, intellectuals are people that publicly evoke the power of the written or spoken word, but without enjoying a direct responsibility or mandate for taking practical and political action (thus, distant to political power), and without the expert knowledge of professionals (thus, practising amateur or 'incompetent' critique). Their most promising success exists not in the practical realization of their ideas, but in their actual or potential value as 'disturbing' the normality of social processes, in the consequences of their critique resulting from their writing and talking in the public arena. Lepsius considers the question of the legitimate or illegitimate nature of critique not to rest with its degree of professional

competence, semi-competence or incompetence; rather, he emphasizes the legitimacy of each form of critique that refers to values that are consensually binding as ideas and norms of social action. Thus, many professionals who are busy in socially mediating abstract norms and values actually act as critics. Lepsius also documented a fine-grained sense for the self-reflective needs of a changing discipline. What he held as constitutive for the vocation of public intellectuals, comes close to what Michael Burawoy (2005) more recently characterized as 'public sociology', taking forms of audiences as central to his differentiation of uses of the discipline. How can the recognition of the critical function of science, including social science, be applied to discourses on Europeanization? Which forms of (self-)critique on Europe does the sociology of European integration evoke, in particular in German sociology?

In scientific debates, critiques of Europe often manifest themselves as competing discourses on Europeanization, the meaning of which, however, is not always clear. This paper analyzes competing discourses, or controversies, on Europeanization and parallel forms of critique within a new stock of knowledge: the German sociology of European integration. The differentiation of that stock of knowledge has taken place in the last three decades in particular; the Europeanization concept's meaning and use can serve as a guideline to reconstruct that specialty and its forms of critique, by applying a sociology of knowledge approach. It is not claimed that this process adheres to the particular developmental model of any particular 'intellectual school'; rather, the study tries to show how and to what extent such a cognitive specialty has been quantitatively growing and qualitatively differentiated in German sociology from 1990 to 2018. This prompts several other questions on the identity and boundaries of neighbour disciplines, on the particularities of German sociology's debates and on the general characteristics of social and intellectual change in this growing field of knowledge.

The study reconstructs discourses and forms of critique on Europeanization at the conceptual, empirical and methodological levels. Conceptually led by a structural analysis in the sociology of knowledge approach, it considers the historical, institutional and cognitive contexts and conditions which have generated these discourses on Europeanization. Empirically, the German sociology of European integration is described by identifying different groups of actors from 1990 to 2018, their structural contexts and intellectual positions within changing historical phases of that differentiation process. Methodologically, particularities of this stock of knowledge are analyzed by applying procedures of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and of discourse analysis to a sample of conference proceedings of the DGS. The results aim at providing insights into the multifaceted meanings of the concept of Europeanization and critique on Europe. Its cognitive meaning is demonstrated by reconstructing its social form or 'Gestalt' in the discursive struggles of the sociology of European integration.

### **3. Conceptual framework: A sociology of knowledge approach**

In 1928, Karl Mannheim gave a talk to the German Sociological Conference on the topic of 'Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon' (Mannheim, 1928a), after having migrated from the East European provinces to the epicentre of German intellectualism, Heidelberg. Taking the so-called 'value judgement dispute' as a reason for demonstrating the task of a sociology of knowledge as a general sociology of sociology, his speech became highly controversial among the scholars of his time, resulting in a long-lasting debate in the discipline (see Meja & Stehr, 1982; Srubar, 2010). Mannheim's approach towards a sociology of knowledge is peculiar in that he considered a porosity between ideological and scientific explanations, and that he regarded the sociology of knowledge as being in between both, as a programme of (self-)critique and a 'self-reflective therapy' of both areas of knowledge (Kettler & Meja, 2000, 298). According to Mannheim, it is the sociology

of knowledge's task to give a comprehensive account of the dynamic and conflicts of competing styles of knowledge and thinking, by reconstructing their presupposed social and historical constellations, and thus to eventually transcend the difference between (social) science and ideology.

In the same year, Mannheim published an article on 'The Problem of Generations' (Mannheim, 1928b) and, by drawing a general analogy to class as a concept, made the following conceptual distinctions. A generation *location* (*Generationslagerung*) designates the objective opportunity or potential of contemporaries to experience collective historical events in the same geographic, cultural and social space. In contrast, a generation phenomenon *as an actuality* (*Generationenzusammenhang*) refers to the realization of this opportunity or potential, when actors actually have experienced that collective event as contemporaries. A generation *unit* (*Generationseinheit*), however, informs on how this collective experience was intellectually interpreted by social groups of actors, and which structures of thinking and ideological positions result from these for distinct social groups being part of the same generational context. The empirical fact of a generation *series* was less important to Mannheim than the analysis of generational units that characterize contrasting interpretations and intellectual styles *within* one generation. Simultaneously, styles of experience and structures of thinking also create and make visible commonalities *across* generations.

Reconstructing ideal types of styles of experiencing and thinking, Mannheim scrutinized the social situation of actors with reference to class and specific forms of intellectual engagement or interest. Analyzing particular intellectual styles of generation units, he focused on the use of concepts, contrasting and missing terms as a conceptual structure, and also different modi of critique (on the procedures of Mannheim's analysis, see Balla et al., 2007; Barboza, 2009; Endreß & Srubar, 2000; Kettler et al., 1989; Kettler & Meja, 2000; Knoblauch, 2014; Srubar, 2007). According to Mannheim, the main social function of the sociology of knowledge is providing a critical analysis that synthesizes inevitably partial views of particular social interest groups towards a dynamic transformation of contrary ideological positions.

#### 4. Sample and methods

In this study, the meaning and the uses of criticizing Europe, the EU and Europeanization processes are analyzed by taking the particular socio-structural, historical and intellectual conditions that generate these discourses into account. Focusing on the formation of the German sociology of European integration, as data sources I refer to articles published in DGS conference proceedings between 1990 and 2018. Inclusion criteria depended on whether the search terms 'Europe' and 'European' were used in the title; simultaneously this also resulted in excluding similar terms such as 'transnational', 'international', 'transition' or 'global' from the analysis. It is useful to focus on DGS conference proceedings, because they indicate how and to what extent that stock of knowledge has been institutionalized within the discipline. Articles were first presented, then published in plenary, lectures and Author meets Critics (AmC) sessions, in ad-hoc groups and poster sessions, and in working groups and sections. In the analysis, I kept these forms distinct, because they seem to serve different social functions in the scientific community.

Plenary, lectures and AmC sessions aim at broader conference audiences, thus authors are usually expected to refer to issues of more general 'relevance' to disciplinary identities in a particular situation. These formats typically also include invited speakers from neighbour disciplines and countries, enabling a dialogue beyond the particular frame of relevance of the professional association at national level.

DGS sections represent enduring networks of colleagues working in the same subfield on a long-term basis and are important for understanding long-term developments in a

specific field. The existence and social change of these sections not only illustrates how problem choice and research questions are interpreted (for the history of DGS sections until 1990, see Borggräfe, 2018). Sections also function as an opportunity structure for establishing mentor–apprentice relations between advanced and early career sociologists. Ad-hoc groups and poster sessions enable public interpretations of short-term events and incidents. Due to the flexible format, more innovative debates arise, by creating audiences and establishing new issues of relevance to the discipline. Occasionally they establish themselves as sections, reflecting a process of recognition, integration and institutionalization of knowledge in the community.

Since 1990, DGS conferences typically take place every two years at a particular university in Germany, where approximately two thousand members meet and discuss their work. In the period of interest, they met at universities in Frankfurt (1990, 2010), Düsseldorf (1992), Halle (1995), Dresden (1996), Cologne (2000), Leipzig (2002), Munich (2004), Kassel (2006), Jena (2008), Bochum/Dortmund (2012), Trier (2014), Bamberg (2016) and Göttingen (2018). In Bielefeld (1994) the World Congress of Sociology took place, in Freiburg (1998) and Innsbruck (2011) the DGS held its congress in cooperation with the Swiss and Austrian sociological associations. The 1992 conference explicitly referred to social change in Europe in its title. The first conference that took place in former Eastern Germany was in Halle in 1995, followed by those in Dresden, Leipzig and Jena.

Here I focus on four distinct phases that can be kept distinct according to ‘turning points’ (Abbott, 2001) or historical watersheds, both in general societal development and in the emergence of a sociology of European integration. From the universal set of 16 DGS conferences, a narrower sample of proceedings from each ‘round’ conference year and the last year was chosen (Zapf, 1991; Allmendinger, 2001; Soeffner, 2013; Burzan, 2019). This gave a sample of  $n_1 = 97$  articles (see Table 1), qualitatively bridging historical phases of the specialty’s formation, and quantitatively representing a quarter of the universal set. For a more fine-grained analysis, the sampling focused on plenary, lectures and AmC sessions, giving a sample of  $n_2 = 23$  articles (see Table 2). The sampling was based on the assumption that plenary papers are expected to refer more generally to cognitive aspects of the subfield in relation to the overall discipline. Nevertheless, the author’s account is also informed by reading ad-hoc group and section articles, by the experience of being a member of the DGS section since 2010 and by working in the field of concern for about two decades.

*Table 1. Quantitative description of a sample of papers from conference proceedings of the German Sociological Association (DGS,  $n = 97$ ), 1990–2018.*

Year of DGS conference	Source	Papers from plenary, lectures, AmC	Papers from sections, working groups	Papers from ad-hoc groups, posters	Papers, in total
1990	Zapf, 1991	7	0	9	16
2000	Allmendinger, 2001	2	0	0	2
2010	Soeffner, 2013	8	7	33	48
2018	Burzan, 2019	6	15	10	31
Total		23	22	52	97

Note: Included were papers with the keyword ‘Europe(an)’ in title.

*Table 2. Qualitative description of articles' sample, including papers from conference proceedings of the German Sociological Association, 1990–2018, restricted to plenary papers, AmC and lecture sessions (n = 23).*

Source, year	Sample	Author(s), year	Title
DGS, 1990; Zapf, 1991	Plenum	Schäfers, 1991	Einleitung zum Plenum: Westeuropäische Integration oder Desintegration?
	Plenum	Lepsius, 1991	Die Europäische Gemeinschaft: Rationalitätskriterien der Regimebildung
	Plenum	Kaase, 1991	Politische Integration Westeuropas : Probleme der Legitimation
	Plenum	Joerges, 1991	Die europäische Integration und das Recht
	Plenum	Kleinsteuber, 1991	EG-Integration zwischen Wirtschaft und Kultur. Das Beispiel Medienpolitik
	Plenum	Lipp, 1991	Europa als Kulturprozeß
	Plenum	Flora, 1991	Die soziale Dimension der europäischen Integration: Externe Grenzbildung und interne Strukturierung. Zusammenfassung
DGS, 2000; Allmendinger, 2001	Plenum	Sterbling, 2001	Auswanderungsregion Südosteuropa: Ursachen und Folgeprobleme
	Plenum	Oswald, 2001	Die Korruptionstriade. Zur sozialen Beziehungsform der Korruption in Ost- und Westeuropa
DGS, 2010; Soeffner, 2013	Plenum	Bach & Vobruba, 2013	Einleitung: Europa als Konfliktraum. Soziale Konflikte und institutionelle Integration der EU
	Plenum	Wobbe, 2013	Die EU als transnationale Vergesellschaftung. Eine inklusionstheoretische Sicht
	Plenum	Best, 2013	Cui bono? Elite-Bevölkerungsdifferentiale im europäischen Integrationsprozess
	Plenum	Fehr, 2013	Modernisierung und europäische Normen. Legitimationskonflikte in Ostmitteleuropa
	Plenum	Roose, 2013	Was wir von Simmel über Chancen sozialer Integration Europas lernen können. Integration durch Konflikt als Weg für EU
	AmC	Vobruba, 2013	Einleitung zu Author meets Critics: Mehrsprachigkeit in der erweiterten Europäischen Union
	AmC	Gerhards, 2013	Sprachliche versus soziale Hegemonie. Bedeutung des kleinen Unterschieds am Beispiel des Englischen
	AmC	Münch, 2013	Hegemonie des Englischen und Erhaltung kultureller Diversität

DGS, 2018; Burzan, 2019	Lecture	Bhambra, 2019	European colonial entanglements: Questions of historical sociology and progress
	Lecture	Walby, 2019	Rethinking the concept of social system: Theorising processes of societalization, Europeanisation and gender regimes
	Lecture	Phalet, 2019	Religion and national identification: A cross-cultural comparison of Muslim youth in Europe
	Plenum	Lengfeld & Kley, 2019	Sind die Europäer bereit Ungleichheit zwischen den Mitgliedsländern zu reduzieren? Ergebnisse einer 13-Länder-Studie
	Plenum	Gottschall, 2019	Transnationale Dienstleistungserbringung in der Langzeitpflege: Konstruktion von Ungleichheiten in West- und Osteuropa
Plenum	Gerhards & Priem, 2019	Wer ist bereit Geflüchteten in Europa Aufnahme zu gewähren? Ergebnisse einer 13-Länder-Studie	

Note: Included were papers with the keyword 'Europe(an)' in title.

To analyze that particular stock of knowledge with regard to meanings of Europeanization and critique on Europe, the methodical procedures of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge (see section three) and of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) were applied. The latter's axial coding paradigm provides a distinction between: a) conditions and contexts of the social phenomenon under investigation, here: Europeanization; b) strategies of actors dealing with Europeanization; and c) consequences of Europeanization processes (for the case of sociology's formation in two Central European countries, see Hoenig, 2012).

For example, critique on *conditions and contexts* of European integration might unearth critique on corruption in public bureaucracies when comparing particular countries in West and East Europe (Oswald, 2001). Critique on *strategies* of Europeanization might entail a critical analysis of supranational institutions and potential deficiencies with regard to its democratic legitimization by reference to nation state democracies (Kaase, 1991). Critique can also focus on *consequences* of Europeanization processes, for example, when successful integration in the Single European Market has the unintended effect of transnational labour migration (Sterbling, 2001). As we will see, foci and objects of criticism on Europe are tied both to particular historical phases and structural conditions of that discourse on Europeanization. So the systematic analysis of forms of critique on Europe illustrates at least three interconnected levels: a) the *historical contexts* of discourse formation with the wider cultural context of society at large, circumscribed by the generation concept; b) the *socio-structural conditions* of institutionalizing the German sociology of European integration in the discipline; and c) *cognitive problem choice and content* of EU critique, as manifest in sample articles of the DGS conference proceedings. These different levels of analysis are presented and discussed in the next section.

## 5. Results: Contexts, conditions and contents of critique on Europe

Applying Mannheim's concept of generations to the German sociology of European integration, three historical watersheds or turning points characterizing its historical context can be identified and kept distinct: the end of the NS-regime in 1945, the upheaval of the students' movement in 1968 and the turnaround of Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. These three historical watersheds were collectively experienced both by the broader population and by social scientists in Europe, thus characterizing the formation of different generations in the sense of Mannheim. Simultaneously, they coincide with certain biographical phases of critical self-reflection among these generations' young adults between 16 and 20 years of age. To characterize these shifting generations and their structural conditions of engaging in sociology as a discipline, let us also assume that scholars of European integration enjoy approximately 30 active academic years, which corresponds to the average employment duration of a senior academic researcher or university professor, between 35 and 65 years of age. This leads us to make a distinction between three generations of authors and four historical phases of Europeanization discourses as follows: the after-war generation of 1945 that set the conceptual frameworks for the pre-historical and pioneering phase of Europeanization discourses before 1990 and then from 1990 to 1999; the protest generation of 1968 which was particularly important in the establishing phases of the sociology of European integration in the 1990s and 2000s; and the turnaround generation of 1989 which characterizes the consolidation phase of the specialty since 2010 in particular, simultaneously being subject to deep structural transformations in public science.

Structurally, *within* each of these generations or phases, different generation *units* manifest, for instance, in the controversy of mostly theoretical, historical-qualitative accounts of Europeanization processes versus mostly empirical, positivist-quantitative approaches towards Europeanization. In addition, it is possible to make a distinction between the structures of experience and thinking of generation units, embodying certain meanings of Europeanization and critique on it, namely as a) *international* comparison of social spaces, territories and societies of Europe; b) *supranational* institution building and elite formation; and c) a special case of *transnational* practices from a cosmopolitan perspective of Europe (for details, see sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). These particular structures of experience and thinking involve cognitive differences both in perceptions of the 'European dimension' of integration processes and in corresponding forms of sociological critique on Europe.

How historical contexts and socio-structural conditions also strongly influence modes of cognitive critique on Europe in the German sociology on European integration, can be shown in detail by a careful study of a sample of DGS articles between 1990 and 2018.

A first variant of EU critique focuses on the *criticism of social inequalities*. Led by a comparative examination of West and East European welfare states, it thus makes visible peculiarities in pathways to modernization, the 'European social model', and informs on perceived deficiencies, both in societal developments and in sociology's capacity to appropriately reflect these. A second variant of EU critique highlights *legitimacy deficits in democratic institution building*. It is based on interpreting Europeanization as a supranational formation of institutions and elites, bounded to particular 'rationality criteria' of institution building in democratic processes as particularly European modes of integration. Accompanied by a theoretically informed critique on 'methodological nationalisms' in sociology's theory-building, empirically it critically examines competencies and functions, procedures and also the 'democratic deficits' of supranational institutions. A third variant of EU critique refers to *sociology's deficits in reflexively taking transnational dimensions of societal practices* into account: It is associated with transcending both national and supranational frames of analysis towards a micro-social examination of

transnational practices in social spaces such as border regions (for instance, tourism), or in particular sectors or 'fields' of society (such as the labour market and higher education). In theory-building, this approach is often associated with either Beck's cosmopolitanism and a compatible global critique on the (post-)colonial foundations of Europe, or with praxeological or neo-institutionalist 'field theory'. In some tension to this, empirical cross-cultural studies often present findings from quantitative opinion research in internationally comparative analyses. How each of these modes of critique presupposes both a particular meaning of Europeanization and a definite interpretation of the critical function of sociology in Europe, will be shown in the following subsection.

### **5.1. The pioneering phase, 1990–1999: International comparisons of social spaces, territories and societies**

#### **5.1.1. The historical context**

The European watershed of 1989 was also the beginning of the sociology of European integration which, in its early phase, was mostly influenced by the first generation of sociologists after 1945 in Germany. In its historical and social structure, these sociologists comprise of birth cohorts between 1927 and 1944 (more narrowly, between 1927 and 1931), who experienced the catastrophic World War II as young adults and were socialized in a first separated, much later unified German nation state. Think of Ralf Dahrendorf (1990), Jürgen Habermas (1998) and Lepsius (1991, 1992) in particular. Their proponents were rather distant to strong political ideologies, but pragmatically oriented towards establishing political institutions and democratic procedures in the evolving German nation state. Some of them were themselves talented in institution building in sociology (on Lepsius, see Rehberg, 2001; Bach, 2015). Early biographical and intellectual experiences of these pioneer sociologists in after-war Germany might partly explain why many of them were enthralled by legal and political questions of the EU after the Maastricht Treaty, and more generally, why the relation of national and European institution building was always at the heart of their theoretical interest. Their criticism should also be interpreted in the light of strong hopes that the EU more and more would prove capable of bridging devastating historical experiences of destruction, separation and conflict in Europe, particularly represented by Nazi Germany's successor nation states (Lepsius, 1989).

#### **5.1.2. The structural conditions**

Sociology on European integration in Germany is closely linked to its reunification in October 1990. In historical coincidence with this, the DGS conference on the 'modernization of modern societies' took place in Frankfurt (Zapf, 1991; Glatzer, 2013). Structural transformation of the discipline itself was remarkable in that process and included: a unification of the professional associations from West and East Germany (Schäfers, 2016); the founding of the journal *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* as an important communication organ; and the foundation of an ad-hoc group on 'East and Central East European sociology' with long-lasting effects. Based on that group, a permanent working group was later built, led by Bálint Balla and Anton Sterbling, which in 1994 became established as a DGS section chaired by Balla (1994–1999), Ilja Srubar (1999–2004) and Anton Sterbling (2004–2008). Renamed in 2008 as 'European sociology', it was chaired by Maurizio Bach (2008–2014), and since then its chair has been Monika Eigmüller.

The working group's initial name was intended to appeal to the entire region of East Europe while simultaneously expressing an explicit distance to the state socialism of formerly Soviet-dominated East Europe (Sparschuh, 2003, 389). It also transcended the usual separation of East and West Europe when trying to lay the foundations for a new

phase of sociological analyses of the region (Balla, cited in Sparschuh, 2003, 389). Research on East and Central East Europe continually increased during the 1990s (see Kaase et al., 2002; Keen & Mucha, 1994; Sterbling, 2001), referring to social change, modernization and transformation, sociology of work and of science, of nationalism and of migration (Sparschuh, 2003, 390). From 1996 onwards, the book series *Beiträge zur Osteuropaforschung*, edited by Sterbling and Balla, was published by the Krämer publishing house. While in 1992 the DGS organized its conference on the theme of 'Living conditions and social conflicts in new Europe', in the same year sociologists from several European countries met in Vienna, resulting in the foundation of the European Sociological Association (Haller & Richter, 1994). Sociology flourished, in particular by developing historically informed, internationally comparative research on the welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Flora, 2000; Rokkan, 1999). Stein Rokkan's historically, theoretically and empirically encompassing comparative analyses of the formation of modern nation states in Europe was especially highly influential in that regard. Still, there are many reasons to assume that it is the historical formation of 'the European social model' of welfare states that can be interpreted as a particularly European historical experience (for a historical account, Judt, 2005). Research on internationally comparative analyses on European welfare states presumably has been the most internationalized at an early stage of the discipline. It promotes the steady innovation of new research methods, contributes to more encompassing cross-national databases and is recognized for considerably altering the professional strength of the sociology on European integration (Haller, 1990; Gerhards, 1993; Hradil & Immerfall, 1997).

### 5.1.3. The cognitive content of critique

The first variant of criticism on Europe can best be understood when taking a common understanding of Europe as illustrating the development of particularly European welfare states into account. Generated by a comparative analysis of European social spaces, territories and in particular social policies, a more informed criticism on Europe's deficiencies in terms of social integration becomes visible. Comparative research unearths massive social inequalities and regional disparities between West and East European states, but also commonalities and differences in terms of specific pathways towards modernization, transformation and institution building processes.

The 1990 conference consists of a plenary discussion on 'West European integration or disintegration', including papers from sociologists (Schäfers, Lepsius, Flora), political (Kaase, Kleinsteuber) and legal scientists (Joerges) and historians (Lipp). In addition, the formation of an ad-hoc group on 'East and Central East European sociology' indicates that the comparison of traditional and evolving new nation states is of special importance, unearthing complex West–East relations in the sociology of European integration. Europe as a single term, without any specification, is rarely used and seldom criticized, perhaps because in these early days its meaning is rather vague.

Schäfer's (1991) plenary introduction illustrates that uncertainty and a corresponding need for construing a common history of interpretation. He starts from early pre-sociologists such as Saint-Simon and Schelling, frames modernization theory and comparative research of the 1960s as explicitly European, and emphasizes recent developments in which sociology aims at 'those social mechanisms institutionalized in the structures and processes of societies that promote integration or result into disintegration' (Schäfers, 1991, 306, translation added).

Additional speakers rather focus on supranational dimensions of European integration by discussing the idea of rationality criteria constitutive for institution building and the formation of new elites (Lepsius), criticizing problems of democratic legitimacy (Kaase) and emphasizing European integration by law (Joerges). Moreover, a cultural understanding of

integration (Lipp) and transnational practices in media politics (Kleinstauber) is illustrated. Independent of their own research affinities, however, all speakers recognize that the international comparison of social spaces, territories and societies of Europe is an indispensable stream of empirical research, rooted in a rich tradition of investigating European welfare states.

In particular, Kaase (1991) points out a rather critical view on problems of legitimacy in the political supranational integration of Western Europe. Hinting to respective *Eurobarometer* data, he considers a broad permissive consensus of Europe's population in supporting political elites as tenuous. Moreover, he calls attention to huge regional disparities within Europe. Lepsius (1991) highlights that the term 'West Europe' loses its distinctiveness when properties of Western political systems, economic marketization and institutional structures are universalized across the continent. Implications of this universalism are also critically discussed in the ad-hoc group: Points of critique concern perceived deficiencies both in societal developments and in sociology's capacity to appropriately reflect and investigate East European specific pathways towards (West) 'Europe'. Can sociology's modernization theories grasp deep transformations after 1989? How can its explanatory weaknesses when scrutinizing historically grown structural differences and commonalities in an evolving 'European social model' be avoided?

## **5.2. The establishing phase, 2000–2009: Supranational institution building and elite formation**

### **5.2.1. The historical context**

The first post-war generation of sociologists in Germany, briefly outlined in the previous subsection, strongly influenced the academic socialization of its students, and often identified with the aims of the student protest generation, at least partly distancing themselves from their academic forefathers and teachers. Members of the 'student movement generation' comprise of birth cohorts between 1945 and 1964 (more narrowly, between 1948 and 1952). As young adults they both experienced the pervasive conservatism in German society at large and searched for ways of realizing innovative ideas of the students' protest movement at expanding institutions of higher education. However, forms and consequences of social protest manifested themselves very differently in western and eastern parts of Europe. Many scholars of that generation also contributed to systematically theorizing and empirically scrutinizing the East–West relationship within German sociology. Starting from the 1990s onwards, and in the course of the 2000s, sociologists of this generation strongly influenced the developing German sociology of European integration.

Several of them also made fortunate use of the opportunity to study in explicitly European scientific environments and were inspired by teachers and researchers who were active in European institutions. A prominent example is the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence (on the EUI, see Boncourt & Calligaro, 2017): Founded in 1972 as an interdisciplinary, highly international, small-sized academic context, the EUI promotes social scientific research in European integration, and offers PhD curricula in European history and law, political science and sociology. The EUI was strongly influenced by (neo-)functionalist and institutionalist models of interdisciplinary social science, in particular from political science and legal studies, which from the 1950s onwards were transferred from the United States to Europe. Emigré scholars such as Ernst B. Haas and Karl W. Deutsch maintained their interest in European integration and from the point of neo-functionalism reflected on new forms of supra-nationality (Haas, 1958; Weiler, 1981; Schmitter, 2005), federalism (Scharpf, 1985), inter-governmentalism (Moravcsik, 1999) and transactionalism (Deutsch, 1953). That stream of research also influenced institutional

sociologists from Germany (Nedelmann & Sztompka, 1993; Lepsius, 1990; Bach, 2000). Since its inception, the EUI has been, and still is, a core institution of graduate study and of research on European integration at international level. Its highly interdisciplinary character might also contribute to a more encompassing understanding of institutions and institution-building developed by sociologists who did not find it plausible to distance themselves from the innovations of neighbour disciplines in which they were taught and in which they received their qualifications.

### **5.2.2. The structural conditions**

In line with that phase of (neo-)functionalist and inter-governmentalist understanding of the EU, these scholars interpret the specifically European dimension of integration as the supranational formation of European political institutions and a corresponding elite of administrative personnel and experts, for instance embodied in the European Commission or the European Court of Justice. This stream of research can be characterized as a sociological theory of institution influenced by modernization theory and political sociology in the tradition of Max Weber. Its strengths certainly are in analytical theory-formation, in the historical and qualitative comparison of social structures and milieus, in the critical reflection of processes of power and domination and in the reconstruction of procedures of legal and political integration. Its highly interdisciplinary nature, or at least its conceptual openness for insights of neighbouring legal studies, political science and economics, can be explained by the understanding of this particularly European dimension, but also by locating its origins in a historical phase in post-war Germany, in which sociology as a professionalized discipline was only beginning to be institutionalized and has hardly drawn strict boundaries against these also evolving neighbour disciplines. Simultaneously, the 2000s were years in which the young specialty of the sociology of European integration received much more attention and public interest than ever before. This was partly initiated by broader debates on the meaning of the Europeanization concept, such as in a volume on the Europeanization of national societies that presents and discusses several social sectors according to the influence of Europeanization processes in such different fields as the law and the media, the public and the agrarian industry, migration control and the role of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies (Bach, 2000). Further important collective volumes of that decade were a conference proceeding on theories of societies in Europe (Eigmüller & Mau, 2010) and a more empirically oriented handbook volume (Immerfall & Therborn, 2010). Important cognitive debates evolved around the concept of Europeanization and in particular referred to the still controversial idea of a European society or societies (Hettlage & Müller, 2006; Münch, 2008; Müller, 2007; Offe, 2001) and its dynamics (Vobruba, 2007). Both debates gained a stimulating impulse from the work of Beck on a cosmopolitan vision of Europe (Beck, 2005; Beck & Grande, 2004). At the congress in Jena in 2008, the section 'East and Central East Europe' was renamed 'Sociology of European integration' in order to develop a more encompassing and more general sociological approach towards explaining Europe and European integration. While Bach chaired the section between 2008 and 2014, since then the section has been led by Eigmüller and a younger team of scholars particularly busy in promoting transnational cooperation in the new scientific specialty.

### **5.2.3. The cognitive content of critique**

The second variant of EU critique is based on a supranational understanding of institutions and elite-formation as particularly European modes of institutional integration, accompanying a critique on 'methodological nationalisms' in sociology's theory-building in particular. Empirically, this line of research is particularly interested in critically examining

competencies, functions and procedures of supranational institutions such as the European Commission and the Parliament, the European Council and the European Court of Justice. This line of research is also most critical towards the persisting 'democratic deficit' of the EU and its respective supranational institutions.

Contributions to the DGS conference in 2000 already illustrated the critique on several unintended consequences of Europeanization processes that, rather successfully, took place during the 1990s. In particular, Sterbling (2001) emphasizes the negative effects of transnational migration practices towards Western labour markets, leading to a massive brain drain in East European states. On the same plenary question of what constitutes social justice in European societies, Oswald (2001) critically reflects on the case of corruption in (mostly national) public administration and bureaucracies, developing a model strongly based on Georg Simmel's formal sociology. In the same year as the 2000 conference, a special issue of the *Kölner Zeitschrift* on the 'Europeanization of national societies' (Bach, 2000) was published, which also illustrates the extent to which the field of knowledge has been differentiated since then. It should only be a couple of years before Beck publishes his visionary book on 'cosmopolitan Europe' (Beck & Grande, 2004; Beck, 2005), which will reframe the sociology of European integration as particularly relevant for understanding the young 21st century, insofar as it transcends the pervasive 'methodological nationalism' of the discipline as its most important issue of critique.

### **5.3. The consolidation phase, 2010–2018: Europeanization and critique as a special case of transnational practices from a cosmopolitan perspective**

#### **5.3.1. The historical context**

The most recent phase in Europeanization discourses can be characterized as a phase of consolidation of the German sociology of European integration. Its most productive authors are part of a new generation of researchers who were collectively influenced by the 1989 turnaround in Europe and the following reunification of Germany. Having studied at German graduate schools, also using opportunities for students' mobility such as provided by Erasmus, among them there seem to exist an increasing awareness of the need to promote European scientific mobility. A 'generation of the 1989 transformation' comprises birth cohorts between 1965 and 1984 (more narrowly, from 1969 to 1973), who have experienced the transformation of Europe as young adults. Compared to the student movement of their academic forefathers and teachers, they encountered very different conditions of science and research, for instance in project-based research as part of multiannual research programmes. On the other hand, they also contribute to the normalization and consolidation of the sociology of European integration within the scientific community.

The most encompassing European enlargement took place in the mid-2000s, when 10 new members joined the EU, so that transnational practices within civil society began to alter in importance, both in public discourse and in the sociological community. Moreover, a massive global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009 manifested in most European member states and led to massive social inequalities with devastating long-term consequences, in particular in southern European countries, and promoted political disintegration by populist, Eurosceptic movements in so many states of Europe. This general social development motivated sociologists to more intensely reflect on social phenomena of conflict, crises and disintegration of the EU. The Euro-crisis not only shifted sociology's attention towards analyzing phenomena of social disintegration, economic crises and the severe effects of the financial market upon EU institutions and European societies; it also significantly decreased trust in political institutions at large.

### 5.3.2. The structural conditions

Structurally, the sociology of European integration started to consolidate the cognitive field by developing two central streams of institutional resources, namely research funding and early career students. Both the German Science Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG*) and European funding programmes continuously feed comparative large-scale research on Europeanization processes. An important long-term programme in that regard has been the DFG-financed consortium on 'Horizontal Europeanization: the transnationalization of daily life and social fields in Europe' (Heidenreich, 2014 and 2019), integrating researchers based at several universities. They investigate transnational practices in different sectoral fields such as employment and higher education, migration and citizenship, trade unions and public health, social trust relationships and cultural memories. The general consolidation of the field has also led to its stronger differentiation in various graduate schools and study curricula, newly founded specialized journals and book series. While empirical project-based research flourishes, not least in the context of the large projects mentioned above, the development of integrating and encompassing theories on European integration is less pronounced, apart from a strong reception of Bourdieu's theory of fields and of neo-institutionalism.

Some additional critical and reflective accounts of the sociology of European integration in German-speaking countries should be mentioned here. Franz Heschl (2013) gives a detailed overview of the sociological literature on European integration; his empirical research focuses on a critique of the European Commission's political rhetoric that have emerged in EU-enlargements rounds since the 1990s. From rather different perspectives, Stefan Bernhard (2011), Sebastian Büttner (2011), Jan Delhey (2005) and Anja Keutel (2011) account for historical and conceptual developments in the sociology of European integration. The volume edited by Bach and Hoenig (2018) is one of the most recent collective works accounting for a consolidated stock of knowledge called the sociology of European integration.

### 5.3.3. The cognitive content of critique

In the sociological research of the last decade, Europe has been increasingly considered as a special case of transnational practices of cosmopolitan societal forms. Succeeding Beck's 'Cosmopolitan Europe' (Beck & Grande, 2004) and also post-colonial critique on Europe, the historical and global embedding of European modernity, and forms of global translation and circulations of knowledge are critically reflected. Thus, the third version of EU criticism identified here to a large extent focuses on sociology's existing, or assumed, deficits in critically reflecting its own methodological assumptions when doing research on Europe. There is emphasized an increasing need to transcend national and supranational frames of analysis towards a micro-social examination of transnational practices. This refers to studies on transnational practices in social spaces such as border regions (mobility by tourism and consumerism), or in sectoral 'fields' of society (such as the labour market and higher education, the asylum system and public health). While in theory-building this approach is often associated with either Beck's cosmopolitanism and a compatible global critique on the (post-)colonial foundations of Europe, or with praxeological or neo-institutionalist 'field theory' (Bourdieu, Fligstein), empirical cross-cultural studies often present findings from quantitative opinion research in internationally comparative analyses of welfare states.

While the focus on transnational societal practices also inspired the name of the DGS 2010 conference, the plenum discusses 'Europe as a space of conflicts', and tries to establish a conflict-theoretical view on critically reflecting the most recent phenomena of the Euro-crisis of 2008 and 2009. The volume on 'Theories of societies and European politics' edited by Eigmüller and Mau (2010), published in the same year, can also be understood as part

of this explicitly critical theoretical effort. In their plenary introduction to the DGS 2010 conference (for all papers discussed here, see Soeffner 2013, and Table 2), Bach and Vobruba emphasize the value of a conflict-theoretical perspective on European integration insofar as it reflects self-descriptions of European institutions from an explicitly critical perspective instead of simply reproducing them in research. In addition, the authors focus on supranational institutions of conflict-regulation, on social inequalities and structural cleavages between West and East European territories. Theresa Wobbe outlines a concept of social inclusion in the tradition of Simmel and Luhmann, for theorizing transnational societal processes. She critically reconstructs the nexus between transnational societal process and social inclusion in the Single European Market by examining 'person' categorizations such as 'employee', in Europe. More particularly, her critique of Europe refers to its gendered scripts of work and employment underlying divisions of labour in the Single Market, and she highlights opportunities of anti-discrimination strategies to combat social inequality and discrimination. Jochen Roose also refers to Simmel's conflict theory and tries to show its relevance for interpreting Eurobarometer data on social trust, media behaviour and the potential of conflict integration among European populations.

Both Heinrich Best and Helmut Fehr present research on elites and elite-differentials in different EU member states and thus provide important insights in one of the most controversial issues of critique on Europe. Best's results from quantitative opinion research on the EU orientation of nation-based elites do not show a broad, cross-cultural consensus of elites supporting European orientations; the latter rather must be interpreted by national contexts of action, and elites much stronger loyalty vis-à-vis their nation states. Fehr develops a historical-qualitative approach for examining nation-based elites and their support for European norms as part of modernization processes; comparatively he reflects problems of legitimacy in educational systems and environmental politics in Poland and Czech Republic. His conceptual framework is that of a 'partial modernization' theory that avoids weaknesses both of functionalist and reflexive modernization theories: While the former does not take crises of transformation into account, the latter does not refer to transformations in Eastern Europe. Thus, Fehr's research on elite-formation in East European societies simultaneously functions as an empirically and theoretically highly elaborated critique of particular streams of research in the German sociology of European integration. Finally, the AmC session on Jürgen Gerhard's empirical study on multilingualism in Europe (Vobruba; Gerhards; Münch) articulates critique against English as a hegemonic language and makes a point for maintaining cultural language-diversity, both in social life and in academic discourse.

Interestingly, the most recent DGS conference in 2018 (see Burzan 2019) illustrates a quite huge hiatus of sociological forms of critique on Europe. We find historically informed, but rather epistemologically oriented lectures criticizing sociology's historical Eurocentrism (Bhambra), androcentrism (Walby) and deficits of the discipline to deal with religious diversity in contemporary societies of Europe (Phalet). On the other hand, in the plenary sessions very specialized forms of expert knowledge and critique based on quantitative large-scale research are presented and discussed, encompassing data from more than 10 different nation states (Lengfeld & Kley; Gerhards & Priem). Gottschall's account on regimes of long-term care work in West and East European states, informed by a social constructivist gender perspective, takes inequalities by gendered forms of labour and West–East relations in care regimes as a point of departure from her multifold critique on social inequalities in Europe and the EU. In addition, the DGS conference of 2018 shows the highest female share of authors or speakers (50%) when compared to previous phases of the specialty such as the DGS 1990 and 2010 conferences' samples, where speakers were exclusively male. There is hope that critique of social inequalities in Europe will both

provide a refreshing outlook on the future of the specialty and have some long-term effects in more appropriately understanding multiple inequalities in Europe.

## 6. Conclusions

This small study has analyzed a presumed dynamic of competing discourses on Europeanization and EU critique within the specialty of the sociology of European integration in its formative phase in German sociology between 1990 and 2018. More particularly, DGS conference proceedings between 1990 and 2018 were analyzed in terms of the historical contexts, structural conditions and cognitive problem contents of sociological critique on Europe and the EU. In historical terms, there can be identified at least three different generations that contributed to the formation of a sociology of European integration from 1990 to 2018, while structurally three generational units – or styles of thought – simultaneously exist across these generations. Each of these streams of sociology developed its own meanings and interpretations of what is particular to European integration, and also distinct perspectives of critique on Europe.

By making use of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and his distinction of generations and generation units, distinct criticisms on Europe are interpreted in the light of historical contexts and structural conditions of their use. Though other conceptual frameworks, such as those of Bourdieu's field theory or Foucault's discourse analysis might also provide some tools for reconstructing symbolic struggles on Europeanization and EU critique, Mannheim's sociology of knowledge approach is specific in its strengths: It embeds the discursive analysis of a certain stock of knowledge in a historically and structurally informed investigation of particular generational contexts and structural styles of sociological thinking on Europe. Thus, the analysis enables us to come to a complementary vision of these intellectual styles of thinking and critique, their particular historical and structural presuppositions.

In terms of the *historical contexts* of discourses on Europeanization, distinct generations or social groupings were identified that contributed to the formation process of the German sociology of European integration. Pioneer sociologists of post-war Germany had a significant influence on the early phase of the 1990s in particular, which was characterized by the reunification of Germany and the deep transformation of West–East relations in Europe. In contrast, their former students represent the second generation in the German sociology of European integration that engaged in establishing the new cognitive specialty throughout the 1990s and 2000s, in a phase where EU enlargements and global crises significantly changed factors contributing to European integration and disintegration. The most recent grouping of sociologists was socialized by the second generation of European integration research in an already highly differentiated, consolidated field of research. Simultaneously, in their qualification and employment opportunities they are subject to more (trans-)national competition, but also new forms of cooperation increasingly characterized by large-scale projects.

Regarding the *structural conditions* of the specialty's formation, *across* these historical phases three styles of thinking about Europe are kept distinct, each with its particular interpretations of 'the European dimension'. First, there is a research tradition of internationally comparative research on European welfare states, historically and theoretically informed by modernization theory and empirically sophisticated in applying mostly quantitative research methods. Second, an additional research stream investigates supranational institution building and elite formation, primarily inspired by neo-functionalism and Weberian political sociology. Third, a line of research most prominently associated with Beck's cosmopolitan vision of sociology and its criticism on the discipline at large, focuses on studying transnational practices in social spaces or fields.

In terms of the *cognitive content* of critique, three corresponding forms of criticism on Europe are identified and kept distinct: critique on deficient social integration of Europe and its particular pathways towards a 'European social model' of welfare states, mostly manifesting in increasing social inequalities and regional disparities between West and East Europe; criticism on political deficiencies in a missing democratic legitimacy of supranational institution building and institutions decoupled from its nation-based democratic processes; and criticism on sociology's reflective deficiencies in rethinking Europeanization and its unintended effects, challenging both national and supranational levels of analysis by drawing attention to transnational practices and cosmopolitan visions of Europe itself.

There is no doubt that in the contemporary German sociology of European integration the third mode of criticism is currently the dominant one. It provides a fundamental criticism of the theoretical and conceptual repertoire of sociology, and does so by confronting theory-building with findings from empirical studies on Europeanization processes. As a detailed empirical analysis of DGS conference proceedings shows, its particular modes of EU critique, however, in part seem to manifest either as 'expert critique' of a highly professionalized and specialized empirical sociology that has already got rid of its more (self-)reflective forms of knowledge. Or sociological criticism presents itself as strongly influenced by cosmopolitan debates on Europe, including its (post-)colonial 'other', illustrating an epistemologically fundamental, possibly 'amateur', 'incompetent' critique on Europe.

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# European Union Studies as power/knowledge dispositif: Towards a reflexive turn

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In the light of the so-called ‘polycrisis’ faced by the European Union, this article engages the contemporary ‘crisis of European Union Studies’ (EUS) by exploring how this field has been historically formed and relationally constituted. Bringing Foucaultian tools to the history and sociology of knowledge, it foregrounds the strategic interplay of power and knowledge and unpacks two distinctive strategies that structure the epistemic field: on the one hand, the European Commission’s repeated interventions into the academic field through the Jean Monnet Programme and, on the other, scholarly practices that seek to arrest the identity of the field in the context of methodological and disciplinary competition. It will be argued that the respective valorisations they operate participate in an economy of knowledge that has deferred the engagement with other methodologies and objectivities. The findings presented in this paper eventually encourage a reflexive debate about what EUS stands for and how it possibly needs to be reconstructed.

**Keywords:** European Studies, Power, Sociology of knowledge, Crisis, Dispositif

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## 1. Introduction

Challenging the category of the universal, Michel Foucault has made a critical but oft-neglected contribution to the sociology and philosophy of science which have traditionally concentrated on the formal and natural sciences. Refuting Western humanism’s separation of power and knowledge, Foucault’s work incisively highlights the critical role played by the “dubious (...) disciplines”<sup>1</sup> of the social sciences and humanities (SSH) in the transformation of modern power, subjects and government (Foucault, 1989, 197). Strikingly, the analysis of the history and sociology of knowledge has not constituted a prominent endeavour in the similarly “dubious” field of European Union Studies (EUS). Recent contributions have started to address this gap (Rosamond, 2007, 2016; Jensen & Kristensen, 2013; Klinke, 2015; Adler-Nissen & Kropp, 2015; McMahon, 2017), but despite an emergent scholarly interest, EUS still lacks a collective reflection on its entangled historical,

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<sup>1</sup> The term “dubious” is not used here to judge the scientificity of the social and human sciences but to highlight their singular formation and ambivalent standing in the order of knowledge. In his archaeology, Foucault observes that the human sciences (sociology, psychology, history, literature) have emerged in the interstices of three dimensions of knowledge (philosophy, the natural sciences and the empirical sciences – biology, economics and philology). As a consequence thereof, its object of knowledge, Man, constitutes “a positive domain of *knowledge*” but not “an object of *science*” (Foucault, 2005, 400, original emphases). This distinction, however, does not aim at discrediting these disciplines. To the contrary, all of Foucault’s analyses have shown their tremendous significance in transforming power, subjects and rules under modernity.

social and economic conditions of production. Where the history and sociology of knowledge have been addressed, two genres have typically prevailed: intellectual histories focusing on the 'national' peculiarities of academic 'communities' (e.g., Bindi & Kjell, 2011) on the one side, and sociologies of knowledge that treat EUS as a transnational quantifiable field but usually display an Anglophone bias, on the other (e.g., Keeler, 2005; Jensen & Kristensen, 2013). Approaching the field through the transversal struggles, politics and power relations that structure it, in contrast, remains an under-explored topic that this piece taps into via Foucault's infamous conceptualisation of power/knowledge relations. As textbooks commonly present EUS as a methodologically pluralistic endeavour, this self-understanding has been increasingly challenged in the twofold context of the ubiquity of crisis discourses and the dominance of specific ways of knowing (Ryner, 2012; Klinke, 2015; Whitman & Manners, 2016; Bulmer & Joseph, 2016). Contributing to this critical literature, the article interrogates the intellectual and institutional shape of EUS, continuing reflections on the marginality and 'belated arrival' of those 'critical approaches' – inter alia, Marxist, Gramscian, postcolonial, poststructuralist and feminist approaches – that have developed over decades in other SSH fields. Instead of stocktaking anew 'theories', 'paradigms' and 'schools' in EUS, it explores the techniques and dispositifs that co-construct the domain of knowledge, its objects and subjects. It will argue that the rarefaction of critical perspectives in EUS is the side effect of the interlinking of (at least) two heterogeneous strategies that steer the scholarly environment: the European Commission's intervention into the field through its sponsorship of European integration studies as well as scholars' own steering through 'debates'. While these do not exhaust the constitution and enclosure of the field, they exemplarily highlight the interplay of power strategies and techniques of knowledge. The exposure of these entanglements, in turn, poses challenging questions to scholars, as it resituates their professional activity within social orders, normative spaces and struggles and recalls the fragile constitution of SSH disciplines. Through its exemplification of how scholarly knowledge-production unfolds in a field of power, this piece counters the depoliticisations that have obscured how order is contingently produced.

The article starts with a brief presentation of the epistemological crisis of Europe before introducing the power/knowledge dispositif as a distinctive possibility to investigate the "history of the present" (Foucault, 1995, 31). This analytical tool decentres the problem of the legitimacy of knowledge, foregrounding instead the strategic configuration of social, material and discursive relations that make specific epistemic endeavours possible. This relationality will then be explored through the European Commission's sponsorship of European integration studies. Special attention will be paid to how epistemic and social relations have been nurtured through the academic Jean Monnet Programme in which the Commission becomes at once the object of knowledge and its sponsor. The article then proceeds to a discussion of how the scholarly debate between rationalism and constructivism has intervened into the order of knowledge and sought to bring the category of European integration studies and European Union Studies under the control of rationalist political science.

## **2. The political and epistemological 'crisis' of Europe**

As 'Europe' stumbles from 'crisis' to 'crisis', from financial crisis to political disintegration via the patrolling of humanitarian and social solidarity, critical scholarship has pointed at the limits of 'mainstream' positivist-rationalist science in grasping ongoing transformations of political orders and social power (Ryner, 2012; Smith, 2014; Kreuder-Sonnen, 2016). Since the lawlikeness of social life and the predictability of the future are core tenets of positivist science, the inability of these theories to predict events such as Brexit or the Hydra of 'financial/banking/debt/Greek/Eurozone crisis' have cast a critical light on their self-proclaimed scientific superiority and their claim to best know what 'Europe' is, where

'politics' is, whose and what knowledge is most 'relevant'. The recent critique of the 'mainstream' suggests that the current 'crises' are not decoupled from academia but entangled with a crisis of knowledge. Critical sociology further hints at a crisis of critique, illustrated by the mainstream's uncritical acceptance of crisis discourses. By treating 'crisis' as an objective fact and external reality, positivist theory contributes to its objectification and simultaneous depoliticisation, as it refrains from seeing it as a political mobilisation (particularly recurrent in the field of foreign policy) and as a political category that needs to be interrogated (but is not, as neoclassical economic theory exemplifies) (Vauchez & Mégie, 2014).

Further analysis of the scholarly treatment of the 'financial crisis' has made two penetrating observations about Europeanist knowledge-production (Smith, 2014). First, economic knowledge in EUS journals has not been monopolised by economists but by political scientists. Second, the literature evidences an over-representation of neoclassical theory which conceals heterodox approaches that investigate economic and political contingencies. Methodologically, the analyses further concentrate on the whole, that is, the macro-level of analysis, thereby disengaging from and silencing the micro-levels. This politics of publication then produces an intellectual space which reciprocates the claim of the superiority of the orthodoxy: economic determinism epitomises the dominant framework of thought and action. It thereby continues the work of depoliticisation of the 'crises' by evacuating the analysis of political struggles and power relations from the publication circuits praised for their 'impact' and intellectual leadership in EUS. Smith (2014, 42), though, suggests that the rarefaction of critical scholarly discourse is less a peculiarity of the Europeanist field than a symptom of the general state of the social sciences.

The intellectual influence of the neoclassical approach has also been observed in mainstream EUS political science. According to Manners & Whitman (2016, 4), the empirical research agenda pursued by the mainstream has foregrounded "institutions, policy-making processes and a normative agenda focusing on institutional efficiency". This agenda has concealed "the neoliberal preferences for market economics" and normalised a bias that occults "the everyday socio-economic concerns of ordinary EU citizens and non-EU citizens" (Manners & Rosamond, 2018, 35). This taken-for-grantedness of the Single Market has further gone hand in hand with a continuous marginalisation of those approaches that decentre its frames, assumptions and interrogations (Manners, 2003). The fact that the critique of positivism only recently spreads in EUS when it has developed for decades in other networks and SSH fields is remarkable. It lends itself to an interrogation of the particular relations and temporalities that have been performed and made acceptable in the field. As critical scholarship accents the link between epistemology and hegemony and the exclusions it enacts, the precise techniques and strategic arrangements that steer epistemic orders merit a consideration of their own.

### **3. Power/knowledge dispositifs: Towards a critical sociology of knowledge**

Critical geographers and political sociologists have recently explored the nature of the link between European integration studies and EU institutions. Klinke (2015, 570) suggests that one of the reasons for the late mobilisation of so-called critical approaches is linked to a "policy-academy nexus" which tends to align research questions, problems and concepts with the frames, concerns and objectives of EU policy-makers. Critically dissecting the geopolitical dimension of the EU's Jean Monnet Programme, he observes two similarities between EUS and older area studies like Sovietology: first, a dependence on governmental funding and, second, a twin definition of the object of knowledge as "a geographical area and a particular polity" (Klinke, 2015, 581). Other research has similarly pointed at EUS as an 'academico-political' enterprise but as one conditioned by the porosity of the boundary of the political and academic fields rather than by ideology and domination (Vauchez &

Robert, 2010; Vauchez & Mudge, 2012). Lacking solid grounding in national disciplines, EUS has emerged in a transnational field in which professional mobility across European institutions, universities and think tanks is the norm rather than the exception. An “exceptional acquaintance with each other’s modus operandi” has exemplarily been observed in the field of European security (Kurowska & Kratochwil, 2012, 102). These critical insights have received little attention in the EUS literature, raising questions about the status of critique, the limited mobility of knowledge and the selective reception of pieces. It may not be wrong to suggest that the neglect of these reflections is partly linked to a positivist discourse of science and the divisions it operates (value/fact, truth/power, subject/object), which decouple knowledge-production from its historical, political and cultural contexts. Through this lens, scholarly introspection then can only take the form of assessments of theories and methods on the basis of positivist criteria.

Similarly, the ‘traditional’ sociology of knowledge accounts for the development of disciplines, drawing on a dualistic operation that separates ‘internal’ from ‘external’ determinants in order to establish ‘causal’ relations (Wæver, 1998; Bell, 2009). This inside/outside divide implies that disciplines are ‘pure’ spaces rather than social ones, either defined by autonomous and internal norms or, to the contrary, by ‘external’ events. Recent research has started to challenge these dualistic divisions by highlighting, for instance, the transnational roots of intellectual movements. These analyses contest the self-containment of disciplines within ‘the nation’ on the one hand, and the independence of disciplines from politics and societal power structures, on the other (Heilbron et al., 2008; Boncourt, 2015; Pfister, 2015; Boncourt & Calligaro, 2017). Like earlier Marxist contributions, this sociology acknowledges the social situatedness of knowledge but it does not treat knowledge as structurally determined by the ruling class.

Foucault’s work, in turn, offers new opportunities for analysing the conditions of possibility of fields of knowledge. His thorough historicisation of objects of knowledge, the subjects to be governed and the dividing practices that organise social life grants no privilege to universal categories of thought. Although he invited others to experiment with his original tools, the power/knowledge dispositif has been little employed in the history and sociology of knowledge. Peltonen (2014, 218) compellingly notes that “those social sciences designed to avoid historical specificity and create the illusion of a universality of concepts and methods” have “largely ignored” this analytical instrument while, reversely, finding Foucault’s “discourse analysis” more acceptable. The emergence of social scientific objects of knowledge, though, has a history which is at once more precise, mundane and violent than the institutional or philosophical discourses that naturalise and legitimise them.

*“Perhaps [...] we must abandon a whole tradition that lets us imagine that there can only be knowledge where power relations are suspended and that knowledge can only develop outside of its injunctions, its demands, and its interests. [...] We must admit rather that power produces knowledge [...]; that power and knowledge directly imply or implicate one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative institution of a field of knowledge, nor is there knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These [are] ‘power-knowledge’ relations” (Foucault, 1995, 27).*

Foucault here advances that knowledge and power are not antagonistic but presuppose each other. This means that objects of knowledge are neither anterior nor exterior to the power relations and discourses that make it possible to speak about them. In plain terms, “between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power there is no exteriority” (Foucault, 1978, 98). The crux of Foucault’s proposition is that power and knowledge are indissociable but yet not reducible to each other. Despite their constant interaction and articulation, they remain distinctive. Their precise relation and the form of reciprocation, in

turn, historically vary. Further, Foucault argues that in order to govern, power needs to know what to govern. What can be known, in turn, is shaped by the “processes and struggles that traverse it” (Foucault, 1995, 28). Hence, objects of knowledge are not the mirror of a transcendental principle and reality but dynamic constructions subject to transformations as knowledge and power strategies rearticulate themselves and shift. It is this idea that power and knowledge form a strategic link that will be scrutinised in the empirical parts.

Power/knowledge relations further develop in a strategic field which is captured by the term “dispositif”. A dispositif responds “to an *urgent need*” raised “at a given historical moment” (Foucault 1980, 195, original emphases). It consists of “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble (...) of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions” (Foucault, 1980, 194). As it encompasses a multiplicity of social, material and discursive elements whose connections constantly evolve, the analysis of a dispositif is always partial. The dispositif, however, should not be confused with a descriptive or ideal-typical concept. It neither denotes an ontological category nor a homogeneous or coherent unity. It is an *analytical tool* in that it stakes out “the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements” (Foucault, 1980, 194). It is a *strategic configuration* directed at the government of men and built on a moving ground of relations. Ultimately, this prism of analysis carves out a distinctive possibility to write the history of the present without falling prey to the universal and teleological histories of European integration.

#### **4. The construction of the ‘European’ academic: A transversal struggle to create a European civil society alongside the unified market**

Engaging the historical dispositif of European integration, this part identifies how political institutions such as the European Commission have supported the creation of European integration studies, as part of a strategy that aims at constructing a unified ‘European’ civil society. It particularly scrutinises the premises and workings of the Jean Monnet Programme, how it nurtures power relations and which methodological valorisations have resulted from the Commission’s interventions.

##### **4.1 Involving academia through the University Information Policy**

Although the European Community had no official policy and no legal mandate to act in the field of higher education, relations with academia have been established and shaped through the Communities’ Press and Information Service since the early 1950s. As hosted by the European Coal and Steel Community’s (ECSC), the Press and Information was divided in two units: one branch provided the trade union sector and the European Assembly with technical and economic information on European integration and the other one furnished political communication and information to the wider public (Rye, 2009). It was then assumed that information activities would contribute to educate ‘European’ citizens and assist the formation of a ‘European’ public opinion, along the same lines as ‘national’ public opinion. As Harrison & Pukallus (2015, 234) put it, the Information Service aimed at „facilitating a European civil consciousness that would provide the basis of European citizen’s rights and a sui generis European identity“. When the different Information Services of the Communities merged into the „Joint Press and Information Service“ in 1958, a special unit for “Youth and University Information” was set up. Identifying the university as a political stake was consonant with the view that had led to the creation of vocational institutions such as the College of Europe. Notably, the Brussels Treaty of 1948 whose primary purpose was to establish collective defence also aimed at the promotion of “economic, social and cultural collaboration”. Seen as “tools of diplomacy”, higher education

and culture were deemed to have “a ‘cultural propaganda’ mission” (Corbett, 2005, 37). As Jacques-René Rabier, Head of the Press and Information Service, himself put it, scholars would provide “a sort of legitimacy of a great significance by making [European integration] the object of research, teaching and examination” (Rabier, 1965, 20). While universities had been instrumental in forming the national unity and national elites, it was believed that they could play a “similar role in the formation of the European unity” (Calligaro, 2013, 21). The nurturing of special relations with young researchers and scholars interested in European integration was thus part of a political strategy that aimed at creating ‘European’ citizens supportive of European unification. For Calligaro (2013, 21), this marks the Commission’s “militant approach to information”.

Already in 1953, Rabier had offered French historian, Pierre Gerbet, a contract to write about the origins of the Schuman Plan. In 1959, a Community prize for theses on European integration was launched. A *Centrale de Thèses* collecting and circulating doctoral theses to relevant Commission services was also established and in 1961, the “Institut de la Communauté Européenne pour les Études Universitaires” was tasked with the production of a regular bulletin on “University Research and Studies on European integration” (EC, 2014, 12-14; Lastenouse, 2011, 7). From 1963 on, the Commission started to provide small research grants to students of European integration. In the same year, European Documentation Centres (EDCs) were launched in several member states as well as in East European countries and in China. These allowed students and scholars to access original publications from the European institutions as the former were held to be “one of the major groups of EC information users” (Calligaro, 2013, 22). In addition, the centres were to be managed by researchers and professors themselves rather than by the university administration. This enabled the Press and Information Service to establish direct contacts with academics through informal structures (EC, 2014, 18). While the university has been historically central in the creation of national imaginaries, it has also watched over its independence from political interference. Consequently, the establishment of and the provisions tied to the EDCs were tactically adroit as they circumnavigated potential resistance from national administrations. Surprisingly and despite the Communities’ critique of nationalism, the role of universities in the consolidation of nation-states was not deemed “a problem to avoid” but, to the contrary, “an example to be followed” (Calligaro, 2013, 45).

In 1962, the Press and Information Service commissioned the first Community-wide opinion poll (Aldrin, 2010, 86). This survey concluded that a large majority of the public was supportive of European unification, yet lacking passion for the political project. It further highlighted considerable variation between groups, for instance, “men were better informed than women, industrialists were better informed than workers, and educated people were better informed than the uneducated” (Rye, 2009, 154). As the repartition of the Community budget in the subsequent years indicates, the Communities did not close this gap but continued to target opinion leaders more strongly than mass opinion. In other words, priority was given to “a group of already convinced Europeans” as it was believed that these groups would exert the strongest influence on the dissemination of information and the shaping a favourable public opinion (Rye, 2009, 154-155). It is worth to note that when Jacques-René Rabier left the European Commission and became a Special Adviser in 1973, he launched the Eurobarometer project as a technique for optimising the Communities’ information policies through the production of a pan-European reality and the measurement of public attitudes. Empowering quantitative empirical social science, this new instrument has served to construct the European public opinion by demonstrating its existence and making it both statistically visible and governable (Aldrin, 2010). From a political science perspective, it is also interesting to highlight that the paternity of the term “Eurosphere” has been precisely attributed to Rabier (Meynaud & Sidjanski, 1965).

Since 1962, the Commission has further involved scholars in reflections about the professionalization of the Europeanist academe, supporting the launch of associations to promote European integration studies and thereby facilitating the construction of scholarly networks. The French Commission for the Study of the European Communities was born out of these in 1965, followed by the British University Association for Contemporary European Studies and the German *Arbeitskreis für Europäische Integration* in 1969. As national associations kept mushrooming throughout the 1970s and 1980s, they were brought under the umbrella of the European Community Studies Association (ECSA) in 1987, sponsored by the Commission. All these small actions point towards how a multiplicity of micro-events has fostered both the monitoring of the academic investment and the establishment of relations between an emergent Europeanist scholarship and the Community institutions. By targeting the academic subject as a relay of European integration and encouraging the development of collaborative relations, Community services have facilitated the production of new relations, while intervening in a transversal struggle to create a unified European public.

#### **4.2 Rewarding Europeanists through the Jean Monnet Action**

Universities, though, were not evenly instituting teaching and research on European integration. Throughout the 1980s, the DG Press & Information (DG X) intensified its actions towards the university milieu. This continuous effort notably coincided with the rise of the democratic deficit critique, the problematisation of the still unrealised European polity and subsequent attempts to 'fill this gap' through the launch, for instance, of the Erasmus project designed to facilitate students' mobility. The University Information unit proposed a new instrument to consolidate relations between academics and the politico-administrative spheres and to stabilise the existing informal networks. The creation of a grand-scale university chairs project became the means for pursuing this consolidation and for valorising European integration studies as this specialism remained widely hidden behind the labels of 'traditional' disciplines (HAEU, EN-2053). The DG sought the support of ECSA professors who acquiesced to the idea and became involved in the preparatory work for the Jean Monnet Action (JMA). Indeed, ECSA's role was not solely to coordinate academic associations in the field but to provide support to the project and to legitimate the Commission's action in this sensitive field. DG X's ability to show that there was a demand and support by professional themselves would facilitate its negotiations for the provision of Community funds. The "Liaison Committee of National Conferences of Rectors and Presidents of Universities" was further tasked to explore the feasibility of the project and, by the same token, to secure its acceptance by the universities (EC, 2011, 278). The "Confederation of University Rectors" had already proven to be a precious ally for the launch of the Erasmus project (HAEU, EN-2079). In 1989, a Commission-sponsored conference on "The Place of European Integration in University Programmes" discussed the possibilities and design of the JMA. In addition, the "University Council for the Jean Monnet Action" was set up. This informal advisory group was conceived as an "immediate relay" between the Commission and the universities (HAEU, EN-2053). It was composed of four representatives from ECSA, four members from the Liaison Committee and presided by the President of the European University Institute (EUI).

Initially, the University Information unit projected the creation of "teaching and research units on the construction of Europe in each university of the Community" (HAEU, CRE-365). For the promoters of JMA, the implementation of European Chairs would continue the educational purpose and help „to form European citizens endowed with a strong European consciousness“ (Calligaro, 2013, 31). Eurobarometer statistics served to legitimate the endeavour and to argue that young people aged 15-25 were favourable to European unification when they had knowledge about Community affairs. As the Treaty of Maastricht which

would institute European citizenship was being negotiated, the opportunity was given to assert the need for knowledgeable students and to coin that students' demand for European integration curricula was on the rise. Interestingly, the University Information unit was not solely concerned about the decline of doctoral theses on European integration but also about the marginality of political science in Europe and the predominance of American theorisation on European integration (HAEU, EN-2054). Established in 1989, the Jean Monnet Action focused on the social sciences as these were seen to develop a 'European dimension'. The selected disciplines were notably the same as those instituted at the EUI: law, economics, political science and history. In order to secure Community funding, the JMA was first presented as a 'pilot' action instituting 'European chairs'. Evaluated as a success, the JMA was constantly renewed throughout the 1990s with the steady support of the European Parliament. Modules and courses were additionally introduced in 1995, followed by centres of excellence in 1997.

Calligaro (2013, 17) underlines that the Commission has managed to provide incentives to work on European integration at universities in a way that would disarm the critique that it would spread „a gross form of propaganda“. Indeed, through the involvement of the University Council, the JMA could be presented as an action designed for the academic world and run by academics themselves. In the period 1989-1999, Jean Monnet projects were assessed by the University Council. The latter ensured the projects' follow-up and advised the Commission in setting priority areas of action. It was also in charge of evaluating the Action in 1993, 1995 and 1998. The background and individual trajectories of the members of the University Council are worth to point out. First, prior to his appointment as President of the EUI (and of the University Council), Emile Noël had been serving the European Commission for twenty years (1967-1987). This position enabled Noël to act at once towards the university milieu and towards the Commission for brokering support for the JMA (Calligaro, 2013, 33). Second, some members of the University Council became Jean Monnet professors while serving on the University Council. As the members of University Council were renewed, nearly all of them had been recipients of the JMA before acting on the University Council. Third, since 1997, the Presidency of the University Council was no longer held by the President of the EUI but by members of the European Parliament<sup>2</sup>. The representation of the European Parliament on the University Council could be seen as the valorisation of an institution which provided crucial support to the continuity of the JMA. As Helen Wallace observes, the JMA has brought "friends of the project" together (EC, 2011, 245). These backgrounds add some nuances to the 'independence' of the University Council, not least given that some of the advisers became beneficiaries of the programme. Closing the circle, with the exception of the first one, all ECSA Presidents were also Jean Monnet professors.

This special "umbilical cord relationship" that connected the University Council and ECSA to the Commission did not last, though (EC, 2011, 274). In the 1990s, the continuity of the JMA remained fragile due to its delicate legal status, which made the Action dependent on its political promoters. The transferral of the JMA from DG X to DG Education & Culture in 2001 was not insignificant: it contributed to the stabilisation of the JMA budget, as the Action became a Community programme in 2004 (and subsequently integrated in the "Lifelong Learning Programme" in 2007 and in the "Erasmus+" Programme in 2014). This administrative transfer also led to the dissolution of the University Information unit. The corruption scandal that had brought the Santer Commission down in 1999 and the following reforms carried out to enhance the transparency of the Commission also affected the

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<sup>2</sup> These were Leo Tindemans and José María Gil-Robles who respectively served on the University Council from 1997 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2017 – year in which the University Council was removed from the Expert Group Register of the European Commission.

JMA. By 2001, the University Council was no longer the exclusive advisor of the Commission which meanwhile drew on a larger “pool of experts” (EC, 2004, 40). The Jean Monnet Programme was also submitted to external evaluation. The transformation of the links between the European Commission and the University Council was also furthered by the setting up of the “Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency” (EACEA) in 2006. This Agency was in charge of implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) whereas the definition of “objectives, strategies and priority areas of action” remained the prerogative of DG Education (EC, 2013, 11). If the University Council had played a “navigational and arbitrational role” throughout the 1990s, its role diminished in the 2000s. As DG Education expanded its control over the Jean Monnet Programme through the LLP, the selection of projects became more political (EC, 2014, 40). While the University Council also used to define the conference topics of the ECSA/Jean Monnet Conferences, these were now determined by the Commission (later joined by the European External Action Service), unsurprisingly foregrounding policy themes of primary interest to the Institutions (EC, 2014, 26). The EACEA further holds that it has assisted the Commission “in building up a higher political impact of the JMA through various channels” (EACEA, 2016b, 27). Retrospectively, Jacqueline Lastenouse, who had developed the JMA, regrets that the University Council was not institutionalised and endowed with the prerogative to conduct the JMA on behalf of the Commission (Lastenouse, 2011, 18).

Since its inception, the University Council had actively promoted the consolidation and expansion of Jean Monnet activities. In this period, the official criteria guiding the assessments were fourfold: first, a focus on European integration; second, the proposal ought to represent a new initiative in the applicant’s university and, third, target the first and second cycles of studies; and fourth, evidence academic quality (HAEU, EN-2004). While the Commission aimed at achieving a geographical and disciplinary balance, it also prioritised actions towards single fields. Teaching of Community law was, for instance, deemed too marginal and thus deserving special attention (HAEU, EN-2053). Selection criteria started to change in 2001, leading to a devaluation of the required ‘newness’ of the initiative, stressing instead “scientific quality and excellence” (OJ, 2001, 23). Under LLP and Erasmus+, the criteria were further redefined, with the notable introduction of the criterion of “impact and dissemination”. The JMA was, indeed, from the outset legitimated through a ‘politics of numbers’. The early success of the Action was measured in terms of the discrepancy between the high number of expressions of interest and the limited number of grants. Current strategic targets of the Commission are twofold: increasing the number of nation-states targeted by the Jean Monnet Programme as well as the number of students and of the ‘wider public’ reached by the Jean Monnet activities. Governed by numbers, the promotion of scholarly “excellence” is meanwhile also linked to the EU’s foreign policy goals. Initially responding to the need for the creation of ‘European’ citizens and the objectification of the ‘European dimension’ through university teaching and research, the JMA has been remoulded into a dispositif that promotes “European (Union) Studies” and the EU’s image abroad, effectively becoming an instrument of “public diplomacy” (Yang, 2015).

##### **5. ‘Mainstreams’ and epistemological competition**

If power was omnipotent, there would be no need for inventing techniques and refining dispositifs of government (Foucault, 1980). The previous section has illustrated the different techniques through which the European Commission has intervened into the university milieu by sponsoring teaching, research and professional associations on European integration. Empowering the academic minority of ‘Europeanists’, it has produced new relations of intellectual collaboration, incentivised by funds and recognition. Using academics as multipliers of European integration, the JMA has not solely aimed at educating

citizens and building the European civil society that was missing in the economic construction of Europe. It has also linked the Jean Monnet professors to its political prisms and working methods (policy and problem-solving), making this kind of association not only acceptable but ‘prestigious’ (EC, 2014, 28). While the JMA has made an important contribution to the mainstreaming of the category of ‘European integration studies’, political scientists in particular have pursued the ‘scientific normalisation’ of the study of the EU in its struggle for authority, recognition and funds. This section discusses how the diffusion and rationalisation of ‘European integration studies’ and ‘EUS’ as social sciences have (dis)incentivised the collaboration with the wider SSH.

### 5.1 The Commission’s interventions into the economy of knowledge

While the Jean Monnet Programme does not prescribe the contents of teaching and research activities, it nurtures the order of knowledge by arranging the relations between disciplines.

To start with, the Jean Monnet Programme has disentangled the ‘social sciences’ from the ‘humanities’. Sociology, philosophy, geography and arts, for instance, are not actively targeted by the Programme. Yet, they may benefit from funding “when they include an element of teaching, research or reflection on the EU and contribute, in general, to the Europeanization of the curricula”<sup>3</sup>. Given the Commission’s early interest in building a European civil society, the neglect of sociology as the study of society is remarkable. As the quote above evidences, sociology is not deemed to be genuinely ‘Europeanist’ and sociologists themselves have observed the predominance of a “methodological nationalism” in their field (Guiraudon & Favell, 2007, 3). In this respect, it is interesting to note that the pan-European public opinion surveys pioneered by the Press and Information Service and refined through the Eurobarometer instrument were themselves producing a specific kind of ‘sociological’ knowledge (on collaborations between social scientists and the Commission, see Aldrin, 2010).

Alongside the divide enshrined by the Commission’s definition of ‘Europeanist’ disciplines, the support granted to the individual disciplines covered by the Jean Monnet Programme in the period 1990-2018 displays significant asymmetries (EACEA, 2019). The notorious under-representation of History has already been addressed. Calligaro’s analysis details the struggles that took place during the 1970s and 1980s between the European Commission and historians of ‘European integration history’. It shows how the Commission actively intervened into historical methods by promoting a teleological and elitist approach to History. Most importantly, it recounts the Commission’s successive attempts to establish the EU’s History Department and the “Liaison Group for Contemporary Historians” as its privileged academic interlocutors (Calligaro, 2013, 39-74). As both had failed, the Jean Monnet network became the new space for cultivating a privileged partnership. It is not accidental that the Commission presents the Jean Monnet community as its own “think tank” (EC, 2014, 4) and refers to Jean Monnet professors as “ambassadors [of European integration] in the Member states, in the candidate countries, and around the world” (EC, 2011, 18). Indeed, some of these professors had been involved in the elaboration of EU concepts and policies such as European “governance” or “Constitution” (Vauchez & Robert, 2010). As recent clusters meeting of Jean Monnet professors show, the link between academia and political mobilisation is not deemed problematic. To the contrary, recent reflections have focused on “how European Studies could better support the EU Commission” and help “to shape favourably the public debate about the EU” (EACEA, 2016a, 3-8).

<sup>3</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-b/three-key-actions/jean-monnet-activities/aims-of-jean-monnet\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-b/three-key-actions/jean-monnet-activities/aims-of-jean-monnet_en) (retrieved on 28 July 2019).

As the Jean Monnet budget was consolidated in 2007, the ‘traditional’ disciplines and interdisciplinary studies were complemented by new subfields and subject areas. This extension encompassed knowledge fields that are foremost relevant to foreign policy: “International Relations and Public Diplomacy”, “Comparative Regionalism”, “Intercultural studies” and “Communication and Information Studies”. In numerical terms, interdisciplinary studies have become the most targeted field since 2008. Since then, the number of grants attributed to this field has oscillated between a third of the total number of grants per year and more than a half thereof (55% in 2013)<sup>4</sup>. Among the disciplines, legal studies have prevailed in the period 2008-2018. Political science ranks second if one regroups the Commission’s categories ‘political and administrative studies’, ‘International Relations and Public Diplomacy’ and ‘Comparative Regionalism’. Support to economic studies, in contrast, has continuously decreased since 2008, regularly falling below the 10% bar and only exceptionally accounting for 12,4% of the grants in the year 2012. While the marginality of economic contributions in EUS outlets has been noted (Smith, 2014), the Jean Monnet data also evidences a decreased sponsorship of economic studies by the European Commission.

If actions in the field of law, history, economy and political science aim at mainstreaming the ‘European dimension’ in each of these disciplines, interdisciplinarity represents the ‘mainstream’ in numerical terms. By valorizing specific disciplines and certain methodologies, the JMA sustains at once the establishment of ‘Europeanist’ streams within ‘established’ disciplines as well as their collaboration and productive entanglement. It thus simultaneously nurtures the disciplines and counters their closure. Finally, the JMA illustrates disparate and heterogeneous effects on power relations: it has simultaneously empowered margins and minorities (most clearly through the category of ‘European integration studies’ but also through the promotion of the ‘interdisciplinary’ methodology), amplified existing asymmetries (see Popa, 2007, in terms of internationalisation) and also created new ones (by establishing the ‘prestige’ of the Jean Monnet Community over the rest of academia).

## 5.2 Scholarly steering in the competition of knowledge

Prior to the 1990s, the categories of “European Union Studies” and “European integration studies” were almost inexistent. Some argue that their creation is linked to the “mainstreaming of the EU” and to a growing professionalization of academia (Manners & Rosamond, 2018). Others detail how these categories were mobilised to oppose two objects of knowledge (European integration process vs. political system) and two methodological approaches (‘IR grand theorising’ and ‘comparative political science mid-range theorising’) (Rosamond, 2007). Notably, the production and diffusion of these labels coincides with the institution of the Jean Monnet chairs which initially promoted ‘European integration studies’ in European universities and, later, ‘European Union Studies’ in the world. Just as this domain was becoming an academic “boom field” (Keeler, 2005), the patrolling of epistemological boundaries has also intensified. As observed in the literature, “the mid to late 1990s saw the possibility of an opening to genuine pluralism, including constructivist and post-structuralist scholarship” but “this door was swiftly closed up” (Manners & Whitman, 2016, 7). The stakes were eminently high, as the modern order of knowledge and the project of positivist science were radically challenged across the SSH and relayed by a minority of scholars in European integration studies (Diez, 1999).

Researchers familiar with IR will easily note that the so-called “Third Debate” proclaimed in the late 1980s was never paralleled in EUS (Lapid, 1989). This is not to suggest that disciplines undergo isomorphic transformations but since some scholars were ‘double-

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<sup>4</sup> This data was derived from the Jean Monnet Directory (EACEA, 2019).

hatted', simultaneously publishing in 'IR' and 'EUS' outlets, the small degree of cross-fertilization at first surprises. It is less surprising though, if one considers that the critique of 'post-positivist' approaches primarily targeted the dominance of (Neo)Realism in IR – a dominance that has never been matched in EUS as European integration theories represent variants of liberal, positivist and rationalist science (Hussey, 2010). Europeanist scholarship, in turn, has participated in the 'rationalist-constructivist' debate. The way in which it has been conducted in EUS illustrates the mobility of the argumentations and references that were initially used by IR 'rationalists' against their 'reflectivist' contenders. In IR, social constructivism had precisely emerged as a bridge between the incommensurable poles epitomised by 'reflectivism' and 'rationalism'. By positioning social constructivism as a "via media", its proponents had made ontological dissent about the status of 'ideas' and 'culture' possible but rejected the possibility of epistemological dissent (Wendt, 1992). The anterior division between rationalists and reflectivists had been meanwhile reworked into an opposition between "Science" and "Dissent". The participation of EUS in this debate has played its part in legitimating the peculiar social constructivist position. Spatial metaphors used in IR were relayed in EUS, positioning social constructivism as a „mediator between incommensurable points“ (Christiansen et al., 1999, 538-536). Yet, the intellectual topology, premises and cleavages in EUS, as noted above, significantly differed from IR. As one commentator pertinently observes:

*“Thanks in part to extensive prior debate in IR, constructivism arrived in EU studies without heavy meta-theoretical baggage. Constructivists mostly attacked the substantive explanatory limits of rationalism rather than its positivist epistemological foundations. Methodological debates were rare and focused on how to show empirically that, and in which way, ideas and discourse matter on European integration. Constructivism in EU studies is not tied to critical or post-positivist meta-theory or interpretative methods” (Schimmelfennig, 2012, 35).*

What “constructivism in EU studies” was, was briefly but fiercely debated. From 1999 onwards and in the pages of so-called ‘top’ journals, proponents of positivist and rationalist political science have drawn clear boundaries between selected interlocutors from the (social) constructivist side whose propositions were worth discussing and the more radical ones with whom debate would be pointless (Moravcsik, 1999b, 670). Post-positivist critics who challenged the superiority of the norms of positivist science were branded as illegitimate interlocutors and as “European activists”. In contradistinction to them, “most *leading* constructivists” would agree that empirical research must submit to the ‘scientific method’ of empirical falsification (Moravcsik, 1999b, 670, emphasis added). The ‘scientific’ study of Europe was to be the exclusive playground for hypothesis-testing considered as “the ultimate, and [...] the only standard of what constitutes ‘good work’” (Pollack, 2000, 17). “Social theory”, as dubbed by its opponents, would not belong to “social science” (Moravcsik, 1999a). Indeed, political scientists’ cherry-picking in the philosophy of science and the foregrounding of the figures of Lakatos, Popper and Kuhn was not to be debated (Jackson, 2011). Critique raised at the philosophical and empirical level (Diez, 1999) was considered as a mere diversion from the social scientist’s ‘true job’ which would consist in the accumulation of knowledge through empirical tests (Checkel, 2006, 59).

Indeed, while rationalist proponents have argued that the constructivist vs. rationalist debate was benign for EUS and proof of its scientific maturation (Risse, 2009, 144), lesser emphasis has been placed on the fact that it also resulted in the consolidation of the social position of political science in the competition with adjacent disciplines. The rationalism vs. constructivism debate was largely conducted by *political scientists*. As social constructivism had become an acceptable competitor and part of the mainstream, ‘Europeanist’

political science could then more easily claim that ‘sociological’ accounts were part of the methodological canon of EU/European integration research.

As the constructivist vs. rationalist debate unfolded, a new journal was launched. It consecrated both the turn to ‘European Union Studies’ and the techniques of comparative political science. For the journal’s editors, the time was rife for outpacing “the past dispersion of European Union research” as their present showed “a cross-disciplinary convergence towards a unifying approach”. Political scientists, regardless of their specialism, were identified as “traditionally [...] the most active groups in European Union studies” (Schneider et al., 2000, 6). The launch of the outlet was supported by the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR). Promoting the ‘unification’ of knowledge and the superiority of positivist rationalist methods and assumptions, comparative political science has advanced an apolitical empiricism that neglects that its methodologies are dependent on ‘data’ produced or commissioned by political institutions, administrations or commercial actors (Adler-Nissen & Kropp, 2015, 162; Aldrin, 2010). While the literature has critically observed that the rise of comparative political science has displaced the study of ‘European integration’, one can add more sharply that the scientific project of the unification of knowledge has been pursued by taking the political unification of EU member states for granted.

Scholars have been tempted to argue that Europeanist research was structured by a transatlantic divide with ‘Europeans’ inclined to ‘constructivist’ and qualitative techniques and ‘Americans’ to ‘rationalist’ and ‘quantitative’ methods (Verdun, 2003; Moravcsik, 1999b). Jensen & Kristensen’s analysis (2013) has provided more nuanced results, confirming a quantitative preponderance of comparative political science in the field but also an epistemological fragmentation within Europe. Interestingly, the authors identify the EUI and Mannheim University as major producers of rationalist comparative political science. These institutions are particularly striking for their historical ties to EU institutions: the EUI by its legal design and funding structure and Mannheim as a producer of Eurobarometer surveys.

The constructivist vs. rationalist debate has valorised political science as a knowledge-producer. By speaking knowledge to itself and to its subfields rather than engaging the existing plurality of techniques of knowledge, it has severed a twofold exclusion: within political science and towards other SSH fields. The competition in defining what Europe is and how to teach it was further fuelled by a project sponsored by the European Commission, entitled “Enhancing Political Science Teaching Quality and Mobility in Europe”. Conducted by the European Political Science Network (2001-2003), it discussed the possibility and desirability of developing a ‘core curriculum’, featuring political science as the major contributing discipline (Bache, 2006). EpsNet, indeed, competed with the ECPR, seen as an organ of American and Northern European political scientists and aimed to better integrate Southern and Eastern Europe. Due to lack of membership, the network was ultimately integrated into ECPR in 2007 (Boncourt, 2016). The conduct of the rationalist vs. constructivist debate has aimed to re-structure the field and to steer the conduct of academics. It has thereby missed an opportunity to constructively engage other forms and techniques of knowledge, asserting instead the superiority of its methodological specialism and choice over the rest of the field.

## 6. Synopsis

This piece has illustrated how the European Commission’s technique of sponsorship and the scholarly technique of debates intervene into unsettled orders of knowledge. It has showed how the promotion of ‘European integration studies’ has served the political purpose of constructing a ‘European’ polity and educating ‘European’ citizens. Through multiple actions, the Commission has co-constructed European integration as an object of research, turning an evolving political construction into an ontological positivity and

'Europeanist' academics into relays of the political project. Two sets of relations have been particularly nurtured through the Jean Monnet Action and Programme: first, it has produced a normative field in which the collaboration between the funder and object of research, on the one side, and scholars, on the other is not only acceptable but comprised in the definition of leadership and scientific excellence. Second, it has enshrined disciplinary hierarchies by separating selected 'social sciences' from the wider SSH and providing uneven support to the targeted disciplines and fields of study. Just as the category of 'European integration studies' was promoted by the European Commission throughout the 1990s, assisting its multiple institutionalisations, disciplining interventions by political scientists intensified. These took the form of 'debates', consolidating political science as a whole and a specific genre thereof in particular. These have given rise to two types of 'distinguished communities': the interdisciplinary Jean Monnet community on the one hand and the 'positivist' political scientists on the other. While both processes appear to be antagonistic, they converge in the economy of knowledge by marginalising alternative objectivities and critical discourses. The consolidation of positivist-rationalist political science was, in fact, far from being as intellectually innovative and revolutionary as comparativists had it, as the development and mainstreaming of this kind of empirical science started long before with the Communities' militant information policies. The findings therefore provide historical and empirical ammunition to Chris Shore's suggestion (2000, 29), according to which "it would not be unreasonable to assume that 'European Union Studies' are not as critical of the EU as might otherwise be the case". As Europeanist political science has obscured and narrowed what is 'political', the 'critical turn' may be a welcomed opportunity to lay bare the relations through which this field has been constructed.

## 7. Conclusion

This article has highlighted historical and social specificities in the continuous formation of European integration and European Union studies. It has introduced Foucault's power/knowledge dispositif as a tool of analysis which, as was argued, makes a substantive contribution to the history and sociology of knowledge by undoing the internal/external dualism and the truth/ideology binary. Focusing on the strategic arrangement of discursive and material relations, the article has illustrated the operations of a power/knowledge nexus in which scholarly and bureaucratic practice reciprocate each other in the construction of scholarly mainstreams and the marginalisation of specific forms of knowing. The analysis has shown how a new political actor developed specific instruments for intervening into the scholarly field by sustaining networks and infrastructures, promoting an object of knowledge and a Europeanist citizenry. It has further shown how scholars themselves steer the epistemic enterprise through scholarly debates, mimicking disciplining techniques and selective science discourses deployed in adjacent SSH disciplines. As the European Commission is only one among many sponsors in the 'Europeanist' field, further research is needed on the relations that condition the continuous production of the scholarly field and the resistances these trigger. Ultimately, there is no easy answer to the question of how to recast the relation between scholars and those political sponsors who are also the object of research. Yet, by showing the interpenetration of two heterogeneous strategies in evolving dispositifs of government, this paper is not an endpoint but hopefully the beginning of a reflexive discussion on the collective positionalities of the field.

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# EU-topia? A critique of the European Union as a model

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The paper critically appraises the idea, both descriptively and normatively, that the European Union (EU) system can and should serve as a model for governance beyond its own borders. Engaging the postcolonial literature, it proposes a critical analysis of the idea, discourse and practice of Europe-as-a-model. We argue for a problematization of the label “model” without denying the value added by EU governance for the rest of the world. We start by developing an analytical heuristic that builds on three semantic meanings of the term model and outline the challenges of interpretation and translation that are associated with each. We then discuss these challenges along the Hegelian three-step of the model idea (thesis), its postcolonial antithesis and our constructive critique that seeks to steer a middle ground. We advocate greater reflexivity on the part of Europeans, that is, to systematically question assumptions behind their discourse and practice. If the cosmopolitan promise is to be retrieved from the radical critique of Eurocentricism, Europeans need to infuse the EU’s message and practice with an ethos of mutual recognition as a crucial feature of a post-colonial agenda for the EU’s role in the world.

**Keywords:** European Union, EU as a model, Governance, Critique, Postcolonialism

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Our European model of integration is the most developed in the world. *Imperfect* though it still is, it nevertheless works on a continental scale ... and I believe we can make a convincing case that it would also work globally.

– Romano Prodi, former President of the European Commission

## 1. Introduction: Do as the Romans do?<sup>1</sup>

The inside and the outside are two sides of the same coin, not only in the European Union (EU).<sup>2</sup> This special issue is mainly concerned with the critique of internal practices and discourses, but the recent crisis makes it harder than ever to ignore their intimate link. The “migration crisis”, which has triggered a new current of anti-EU sentiments exploited by right-wing populist parties in many EU countries, has roots in the EU’s trade policy with

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<sup>1</sup> This article has benefitted from countless discussions over the last few years. We would like to thank in particular our collaborators Nora Fisher Onar, Berny Sebe and Juri Viehoff.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout, the article employs the term ‘European Union’ except in an explicitly historical narrative (pre-Maastricht) where the term ‘European Community’ (EC) might be used.

Africa (for critical takes on EU trade policy with Africa, see Hansen & Jonsson, 2015; Langan, 2016, 2018; and Weinhardt & Moerland, 2018; on EU migration policy, see Buckel, Kannankulam, Wissel, & Georgi, 2017). Similarly, the Euro crisis and Brexit both have profound repercussions for the EU's image beyond its borders.

Our contribution to this special issue thus turns towards this internal-external nexus: we draw on post-colonial and related critical theory in order to take stock of and criticize the discourses and practices associated with the EU as a model beyond its own borders – in short, the EU as a new Rome, a beacon for transnational governance. The story is this: from many corners of the globe, Brussels was proclaimed in the 1990s and early 2000s as the new lighthouse of civilised relations between countries. To be sure, the 2005 constitutional fiasco, followed by a financial crisis that engulfed world capitalism and tested European resilience to its limits, and now Brexit, have dented this narrative. But even as it struggles through this critical juncture, the EU continues to see itself as a reference point in the search for ways of managing problems that transcend national borders and, more idealistically, in the search for grounds to believe in the possible transformation of world politics. According to its own perception and narrative, this is a post-modern Rome or “benign civilizer” which does not seek to wield its power to coerce others and is not bent on imposing its rules, norms or values through conquest and domination but committed to spreading them through inspiration and persuasion. And therefore, ‘do as the Europeans do’ ought to be our motto ... when in Europe, or when elsewhere.

As authors and as European citizens, we have long been fascinated and baffled, proud and embarrassed, wry and confused about this story. What should we think about the idea and practice of ‘Europe as a model’? Is it basically sound or intrinsically flawed? Does selling our model outside our borders amount to neo-imperialism? In this contribution, we do not reject what we call “model talk” altogether, but offer a method that draws on Hegel's dialectics in order to parcel out the problematic from what can be salvaged in this modern exercise in projecting normative power. We seek both to give its due and to “deconstruct” the idea of Europe-as-a-model and, ultimately, to suggest ways for Europeans of rescuing the narrative through self-reflexive engagement with the assumptions and beliefs on which it rests. This approach follows earlier calls for reflexivity in EU foreign policy (see, for example, Diez, 2005; Nicolaïdis & Howse, 2002; Nicolaïdis, 2015; more generally, see Linklater, 2005), but goes beyond them in offering a systematic framework for grounding a normative critique of the EU-as-a-model idea that centres on identifying its assumptions, tensions and inconsistencies along three analytical dimensions: interpretation, translation and action. Overall, our approach calls for putting power back at the heart of discourse and narrative. We write in the vein of authors such as Thomas Diez, who argue that the hegemonic lens is best suited to reinstating the critical purpose that a concept like normative power was supposed to have from the start (Diez, 2013; see also Diez, 1999).

We proceed in five sections. We start by dissecting the notion of model, both semantically and analytically, and using the resulting structure as a heuristic to identify key challenges associated with the idea of the EU-as-a-model (section 2). We then discuss these challenges along the three-step of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Section 3 describes how European policy-makers and academics alike draw on the idea to tell a progressive narrative about Europe. Section 4 outlines the radical critique of this idea, which highlights the implications of member states' colonial histories for the EU. Section 5 formulates our own normative benchmark with a view to reconciling the potential inherent in the idea and its radical critique, and section 6 assesses the EU's model practices on that basis. We conclude with a short summary of our argument.

## 2. The idea of the “EU-as-a-Model”: Meanings and challenges

The term “model” can have three semantic meanings revolving respectively around representation, aspiration and inspiration. These meanings involve decreasing levels of unilateral emulation from the original source, and while each of them is implicated in the discourse and practice of the EU as a model, each meaning poses different challenges across the analytical realms of interpretation, translation and action. We summarize the main elements of our argument in Table 1.

Table 1. EU as a model: Heuristic framework

Core meanings	Referent	Challenges		
		Interpretation	Translation	Action
<p><i>One</i></p> <p>A <b>representation</b> of something meant to support its <b>reproduction</b> (<i>architecture, engineering</i>)</p>	Features selected as essential to the model itself (e.g. model of cooperation).	Which EU and/or national characteristics are selected as essential features?	How can something stay the same while changing in scale and context? <i>Prototype; template; blueprint; copy</i>	How can the EU model be adopted? Strategies of Adoption
<p><i>Two</i></p> <p>An object of aspiration, worthy of imitation. (<i>psychology and role models</i>)</p>	Features which aspirants wish to appropriate for their particular function (e.g. power, effectiveness, legitimacy)	What EU qualities or functions do outsiders value even if they do not correspond to specific features?	How can one translate something exceptional to a different context? <i>Beacon; Vanguard; laboratory, experiment, microcosm</i>	How can the EU model be adapted? Strategies of Adaptation
<p><i>Three</i></p> <p>That which serves as an <b>inspiration</b> and the object of <b>re-interpretation</b> (<i>figurative art</i>)</p>	Features which are amenable to reinterpretation and can be borrowed and considered in isolation (e.g. a single part of the institutional ‘body’)	What specific EU features or functions do outsiders value?	How can one explicitly transform and subvert the original features? <i>Quarry, toolbox; exemplar</i>	How can the EU model be appropriated? Strategies of Appropriation

Source: own elaboration

### 2.1 Three meanings

We can distinguish three meanings of the term “model” according to their core ontological features, the use of the term in everyday language, and the referent that is implied.

The *first meaning* of model refers to its essential character and can be defined as “something which accurately resembles or represents something else”, or more precisely as “a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original” (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 1991). This understanding of model as a representation is most common in ‘technical’ disciplines such as architecture or engineering, where a model helps designers to capture the main characteristics of an object on a smaller scale, either by reproducing the object after the fact or by providing a model to be reproduced in the future (architect’s model). It hinges on the existence of two different objects with a specific relationship between them: the central features of an original (past or future) are represented in the form of something different, the model. The model is an ideal type (see Weber, 1968), a simplification, a smaller, simpler, purer version of the ‘true’ or ‘real’ thing. As such, a model is always selective in what

it represents. Its idea is to capture the main features of an original, not to replicate it in its entirety. The main challenge, from this perspective, is to select these main features.

In contrast, the *second meaning* directly concerns the functions, which the features of the model are fulfilling in the eyes of the outsiders. In this vein, the Oxford English Dictionary defines model as “a person or thing eminently worthy of imitation; a perfect exemplar of some specified quality.” We are interested here in *how* a model is used, that is, its relationship with its ‘viewers’, ‘admirers’ or ‘clients’. This meaning is often used in psychology, when scholars try to understand human motivation. If something is considered worthy of imitation, or viewed as a ‘role model’, this is because it is perceived to possess some qualities that others of the same class do not. In essence, a model in this sense is something that one generally ought to aspire to, an apex in a hierarchy among units involving normative choices. Yet it also entails the subtext that a model in this sense can never be fully reached; it always remains in important ways “out of reach”, or unique. From this perspective then, the main challenge for an admirer is to make the model suit his/her own circumstances.

The *third meaning* of model involves inspiration and interpretation, but like “a person employed to pose for an artist, photographer, or sculptor” (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 1991), the model is only a starting point for its interpreter to follow her or his own design. This meaning is employed in the figurative arts, when an artist does not reproduce the model but interprets it to fit a vision, which is her own reality. She is inspired by specific features of the model and interprets them according to her vision of the final product. Such appropriation entails that the model may not be recognizable any more in the final product. Here, the main challenge is to decide which aspects of the model to interpret and how to interpret them.

## 2.2 Three analytical realms

These three meanings point to different challenges to the EU-as-a-model idea across three analytical realms: interpretation, translation and action. Interpretation refers to the question of how actors make sense of the EU model, how they understand its main features at the “source”. Translation concerns the question of how actors may transfer the EU model, thus understood, to a different context. And action involves the question, for both the EU and its counterparts, of how to implement (or refrain from implementing) the idea of the EU-as-a-model by adopting, adapting and appropriating it.

*Interpretation.* Constructing a model involves interpreting the original object and considering the purposes of such interpretations for different actors. What are the original’s main features? Which of its elements are essential, such that the original would not be recognizable without them? Often seen as a merely technical exercise, processes of interpretation entail a subjective element that reflects certain interests and dispositions. Poststructuralism teaches us that such processes involve struggles over contending interpretations of an object, which are infused with power, values and interests (Campbell, 2016; Walker, 1993). So when European policy-makers or academics refer to the ‘EU model’, they never talk about the EU as *is*, i.e. the ‘original’, but about a representation of it as they perceive the EU or deem its representation strategically advantageous. As Diez (1999, 603) puts it succinctly, “The power of discourse is that it structures our conceptualization of European governance to some extent, rather than us simply employing a certain language to further our cause.” More importantly, the depiction of Europe as a ‘model’ involves struggles over competing interpretations of the model whereby even inconsistencies may not undermine, but be part and parcel of normative power (Diez, 2013). Hence, the way in which the

EU is represented as a model tells us something about the interests and beliefs of those who refer to the Union in this way.<sup>3</sup> *What* the EU model is depends on who is doing the interpreting.

In this vein, the most evident challenge in ‘model talk’ lies with the range of referents at hand, the plurality of potential essential characteristics. There is no consensus, and much potential dissensus, about what constitutes an accurate representation of the EU. ‘Model’ may refer to EU policies, concrete institutions or decision-making methods, or to what is claimed as specific European understandings of more general notions. The EU has been called a model of trade liberalization and competition policy; a model of supranational adjudication in the form of the European Court of Justice; of supranational democracy epitomized by the European Parliament or of well-balanced supranational decision-making as embodied in its finely weighted system of qualified majority voting; and even a “model of international cooperation in science, technology and sustainable development” (Stein & Ahmed, 2007; see also Zaleski & Mittermay, 2009; Laffan, 1998; Farrell, 2005; Jones, 2006). The EU may also serve as a stand-in for its main “constitutive values and principles” such as sustainable peace, social liberty, and inclusive equality. And more broadly still, the EU is often seen as representing a particular model of pooled or limited sovereignty – what Keohane (2002, 749) calls “a model of co-operative mutual interference.”

But the idea of the EU as a model is more fundamentally plural in another way. That is when it refers not to the EU itself as a supranational institution but to features that the various national communities have in common, a range of national “models” honed within member states as self-contained but connected polities. In this case, we should speak of European models – such the social model(s), model(s) of capitalism, model(s) of democracy, legal model(s), model(s) of social integration – but in the EU model discourse these get aggregated somehow into some essence of a European model, as when Romano Prodi (2000) claims that “our social model can be a shining example to others.” Indeed, there may be a fundamental tension between the idea of model embedded in the polities which compose the EU and the idea of model applied to the EU itself as the EU often works through inverting national realities. So, for instance, when the legacy of a majority of member states is monolingualism, the EU is a model of multilingualism. In this latter case, an individual member state (e.g. Belgium) can be selected as a “model” for the EU model.

Ultimately, problems of interpretation run deeper than the mere diversity of referents – e.g. what does the model refer back to? The very way in which we can characterise the EU as a whole or its components is both contested and in flux. Hence, to ask about the “EU model” is to produce a range of interpretations or readings that may themselves change over time even on their own terms. The “EU model” that is to be projected does not exist in an even more fundamental sense. Instead, that which is projected is what actors *conceive* to be internal EU norms, institutions and practices rather than some objective reality. At one level, this is a trivial statement if we believe that social reality is always constructed (Wendt, 1999). But we mean this here also in a more literal sense, that is, that EU actors tend to “construct” an EUtopia which they then project on the outside. It is the EU as they would wish it to be that is to be projected, partly focussing on immanent “positive” features and underplaying other, less positive ones, partly by colouring interpretation with normatively informed prediction. And we as analysts are not exempt from this pathology of wishful projecting (Nicolaidis & Howse, 2002).

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<sup>3</sup> Even though worthy of further study, we do not problematize here who the actors of such struggles are, be they EU officials or political actors in other parts of the world.

These diverse interpretations and the contestation among them are most evident in the first meaning of model as representation where people argue over what is the “correct” representation of the EU. As we enter the more decentred realm of aspiration and finally vague inspiration, the question of interpretation becomes more subjective.

*Translation.* We must therefore ask about the exercise of translation between the EU model itself and what/whom it is supposed to serve. In the first meaning of model, translation is supposed to be as loyal as possible with the constraints of change in context. The challenge becomes greater and more central with the second semantic meaning of model where referring to the EU as a model does not call for slavish copying, but still means that it is not simply seen as one instance among many of a particular class of units, but as *primus inter pares*. European exceptionalism is inherent in model talk. Hence, whoever deploys the notion of the EU as a model, implicitly or explicitly, evokes this normative superiority by presenting its way of doing things as the one that is universally valid and (albeit not automatically) applicable to others (see Niranjana, 1992). Hence, in the most straightforward sense of regional integration, the starting point seems to be simply that as a formal project, it is older and deeper than others. But the claim is generally broader and entails the conviction that the EU represents a more ‘civilised’ mode of interaction between states. Only with the third connotation of the model idea do we open up the possibility that the model is only a useful toolbox among others from which the interpreter can pick and choose.

Obviously, the boundary between meanings Two and Three is porous. From a psychological perspective, even though imitating a model may enable someone to reach hitherto seemingly unreachable goals, such imitation always involves finding a form of imitation that is suitable to the imitating person’s own characteristics and his/her distinct environment (Hartup & Coates 1967). In this view, the term model involves “an image of imitation as an ongoing [process of] translation” that mixes copying and innovation in creative ways (Sévon, 1996, 51). How can one translate something exceptional to a different context? Conversely, how can one imitate something unique? And, more to the point, how can the EU model be relevant to others who do not accept the normative ordering inherent in this understanding of model? And how can it be potentially relevant to homothetic and heterothetic contexts?

Different semantic moves reflect different takes on these questions and the degree of external agency involved. At a most basic level, reference to an EU *template* or *blueprint* carries with it a connotation of reproduction with an emphasis on the technical dimension of the project. Talk of the EU as a *beacon* or a *vanguard* clearly contains the connotation of superiority, exceptionalism, or a city on a hill worthy of imitation as a role model. Referring to the EU as an *example*, presumably among others, amounts to toning down the rhetoric of superiority but not necessarily of asymmetry. The EU as a *microcosmos* of the global lead us to infer that there are differences in scale but not in the nature of the problems and contexts at hand between the EU and the global. As is the reference to *laboratory* or *experiment*, which suggests replicability – as well as fallibility and the sense that trials and errors in one context are relevant to the next. Alternatively, other terms suggest a more piecemeal and *à la carte* approach to translation as with the EU as *quarry* or *toolbox*. In the latter case, there is also an implication that the rest of the world can come and help itself, that the lessons are there for the taking rather than being actively sold outside of the EU.

Indeed, the original model(s) always seems to be ‘lost in translation’. The EU model will not be recognisable as such somewhere else, as a translation to other contexts can only be successful when it is internally consistent with the realities of these contexts. In this vein, EU actions pertaining to such export always risk falling prey to what has been called, in the context of the emulation of the EU model of integration, the “fallacy of transposition” (Langhammer & Hiemenz, 1990; see also Lenz 2012).

Take the example of regional courts modelled on the European Court of Justice. Whereas the European Court of Justice is often seen as a success story in terms of ensuring compliance with EU law, other courts that have similar institutional designs have found it much harder to ensure a similar level of compliance due to differences in context. The Tribunal of the Southern African Development Community, for example, was entirely dismantled by member states after a controversial ruling over land reform in Zimbabwe (Cowell, 2013; see also Lenz, 2012), while the Andean Tribunal has survived by being much more reluctant to infringe upon member state sovereignty (Alter and Helfer, 2010). This example raises probing questions: How and to what degree is the ‘EU model’ flexible and adaptable enough to stay internally consistent when ‘translated’ elsewhere? If it was true that the EU is a ‘Kantian island’ operating in a world which does not share much of its assumptions - a ‘Non-European world’ - why should European recipes be translatable? And if on the other hand, the world does increasingly fit EU assumptions, why would the model even be necessary?

It may be that translatability hinges on choosing what is deemed translatable in the first place. Hence, when it comes to “exporting” the EU model, norms and institutions are as connected externally as they are internally: European norms or understandings do not float freely in the international governance universe but manifest themselves in concrete policies or institutions. Hence, the EU may try to export market legislation that directly springs from its own internal market model; or it can externalize the rule of law in a way that runs along the lines of internal understanding. In the first case, it runs the risk of over-translation; in the second of under-translation.

*Action.* A third analytical realm is that of action or “model practices” to which we will turn in greater detail at the end of this article. Action here ultimately refers to what non-Europeans end up doing when confronted with an EU which we can situate somewhere on a passive to active spectrum – an asymmetric relationship ultimately defined by power asymmetries. In Table 1, we characterise the core questions related to action as how best to adopt, adapt and appropriate the EU model beyond Europe’s borders. These questions refer to both sides, namely the EU and its counterparts, and to the ends (what) and means (how) that characterise them. We assess these questions through a normative benchmark – self-reflexivity and mutual recognition – that we develop as the synthesis of the potential inherent in the idea of “Europe-as-a-model” (thesis) and its radical critique (anti-thesis).

### **3. An unfolding story: The cosmopolitan way?**

With the increasing assertion of the EU’s external role in the first decade of this millennium, the idea of ‘Europe as a model’ for the rest of the world became highly fashionable in policy and academic circles alike (Khanna, 2008, chapter 2; Leonard, 2005). The term “Europe” generally tends to stand for the EU although part of the appeal of the model idea lies with the ambiguity. While the idea of “model” is generally associated with the passive, the painter’s or engineer’s *object* of translation from one medium to another, this story does not rest on opposing the EU-as-model and the EU-as-actor, but about Europe as an *acting* model. So, if with the term ‘model’, we refer to a set of European beliefs about the

character of the EU itself and its *relevance* outside its borders, the overall policy agenda of “EU-as-model” generally refers to the set of practices enacted outside the Community’s borders, which rest on such beliefs. While the existing literature on normative power Europe and EU foreign policy recognizes that internal EU policies and institutions often serve as the source of external practices (to name but a few important works, see Manners, 2002; Diez, 2005; Farrell, 2007; Sjursen, 2006; Lenz, 2013), a systematic characterization and normative assessment of this discourse and the associated practices under a single label are missing.

The Union, as the story goes, may seek to become a more prominent actor on the international stage, but not any old actor. With increasing explicitness its representatives have developed a powerful message: our actual or potential role in the world is not (only) about what we do, it is about who we are. The EU’s own internal success may be seen as imperfect or a work in progress, but it nevertheless offers valuable lessons for the rest of the world. Romano Prodi (2000), former President of the European Commission, and quoted at the beginning of this piece, captures this mainstream mindset. In the last half-century, we have invented and fine-tuned a supranational system of governance, based on the values of freedom, human rights, the rule of law and democracy, which has brought peace and prosperity to a once war-torn continent. In this sense, the EU is a model that “provides a structure for the civilised resolution of global disputes and a civilised approach to the new global agenda”, as former External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten (2003) notes. Is it not worth replicating such an achievement beyond our borders? The process we have followed can serve as a model for others: incrementalism built on a spillover logic, economic integration as a vehicle to achieve political ends, intergovernmental bargaining serviced by supranational institutions (Haas, 1958). Or in the words of David Miliband (2007), former British minister of foreign affairs:

*“For the EU because nation-states, for all their continuing strengths, are too small to deal on their own with these big problems, but global governance is too weak. So the EU can be a pioneer and a leader. Our single market and the standards we set for it, the attractions of membership, and the legitimacy, diversity and political clout of 27 member states are big advantages. The EU will never be a superpower, but could be a model power of regional cooperation.”*

Whether as an object of slavish emulation or selective inspiration (according to the three meanings developed above), the EU’s *raison d’être* on the international scene centres on the relevance of the *être* itself.

In the story, being and doing, which correspond to the internal and the external, are intrinsically linked. As Javier Solana explains: “In Europe we have learned the hard way that sustainable peace and security require regional cooperation and integration ... That is why supporting regional cooperation is such a ‘growth area’ in our efforts” (cited in Farrell, 2007, 299). To be sure, “the model talk” is compatible with a range of practices on the part of the EU, from a passive *blueprint* or *toolbox* or *quarry* for others, to an active teacher, a preacher, a partner in shaping governance beyond the state. The EU’s mission *as a model* is to “steadily *reshape* the nature of international politics and forge new mechanisms to manage interdependence and tackle cross-border problems” (Javier Solana cited in Farrell, 2007, 299), its contribution to world order to invest in globalizing the kind of regional order it has created within. This is reflected, for example, in the European Social and Economic Committee’s (2006, 124) insinuation that the European social model is a “global reference model...a source of ideas, experiences and inspiration for other countries or groups of countries.” In practice, a number of concentric circles emanate from the core “model”.

Closest to home, the EU has helped conflate the process of state-building and member-state building in Central and Eastern Europe and is seeking to do the same with countries and regions in its direct neighbourhood in South East Europe and across the Mediterranean (Bechev & Nicolaidis, 2010; Bicchi, 2006). Further on, the Union is increasingly involved in teaching its lessons of regional integration to other actual or potential regions (Lenz, 2012; Lenz & Burilkov, 2017). And at the global level, appeals to use the EU are supposed to inspire the creation, adaptation and reform of institutions ranging from the World Trade Organisation to the environment regimes to the G20 (Maur, 2005). In short, the promotion of the EU as a model has touched most dimensions of world politics in the past few years.

The turmoil and crisis ushered in by the global financial crisis of the late 2000s have not fundamentally altered this narrative. To be sure, the feebleness of the EU's response and capacity for adaptation have demonstrated once again the fallibility of the European project and the reversibility of an economic and monetary union considered as its core pillar. In the broader context of a world of rising powers, many of which have weathered the storm more effectively and are steadily outpacing the EU (Murphy, 2010; Roberts, Armijo & Katada, 2017), this may have dented the credibility of the model story. But if anything, the story goes, the crisis demonstrates that the world is direly in need of supranational governance mechanisms for which the EU experience can provide useful pointers if not a wholesale blueprint. No one can deny that any ambitious project advances in fits and starts, advocates argue.

One of the striking dimensions of this story is the back-and-forth and mutual reinforcement between theory and policy. This is not a new story. Jean Monnet was convinced that the EC was not an end in itself but a means towards a better world (Monnet, 1978, 524) – as was Alexandre Kojève (1973) when he wrote of the EC as the vanguard of the “end of history”. The idea of Europe as a model for potential regional replica around the world has been around since the 1960s. Indeed, it is through these formative years that the discourse was forged, culminating in Duchêne's famous characterization of the EC as a ‘civilian power’ built “to *domesticate* relations between states”, internally as well as externally (Duchêne, 1973, 19-20). Although Duchêne (1994, 408-409) later claimed that the EU “is not in any simple way a model”, he still regarded it as the most innovative existing solution to the dilemma of international anarchy. When Ralf Dahrendorf, also a scholar turned diplomat, gave a series of speeches in Africa contemplating the prospects for a new world order (shortly after leaving his post in the European Commission in the mid-1970s), he still tagged a question mark to his ‘Europe: A Model?’ For him, especially given the wide failure of other attempts at regional cooperation in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the continued ‘relevance’ of European integration process was undeniable: “Thus it may be that there is something to learn from this story” (Dahrendorf, 1979, 37). This hesitance in the discourse largely had disappeared by the early 1990s following the transformations in the international system after the end of bipolarity and the Community's own deepening with the Treaty of Maastricht. By then, a number of analysts confidently called the EU a ‘civilian model’ in the spirit of Duchêne's original conceptualisation (Hill, 1990, 41).

The birth of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999 unsurprisingly altered the perception of the EU as a civilian model. The EU was no longer contributing “to a different kind of international relations, in which civilian instruments are wielded on behalf of a collectivity which had renounced the use of force among its members and encouraged others to do the same” (Smith, 1998, 79). Nevertheless, the ESDP did not signal the end of the EU's civilian power image, but seems to have cemented it. How? Simply by

emphasizing the (civilian) ends rather than the means of EU foreign policy. In this light, 'civilian' means non-state, *not* non-military (Forsberg, 2011). The EU is a civilian power in the international system as a result of its emphasis on multilateralism, mediation, trade and human rights.

In this spirit, the civilian power paradigm was 'upgraded' or, as some critics contend, 're-labelled' as normative power, that is the "ability to shape conceptions of normal" beyond its borders (Manners, 2002, 240). Robert Kagan's provocative quip about Europe as a Kantian island in a Hobbesian world may have been meant as a mockery of Europe's weakness but nevertheless told a powerful tale, in the wake of the Iraq war, of how "the transmission of the European miracle to the rest of the world has become Europe's new *mission civilizatrice*..." (Kagan, 2003, 61). And the flurry of responses which it provoked in turn led to further elaboration on the special features of the EU model (for example, see Nicolaïdis 2004). Indeed, some analysts could not resist an all-out defence of the EU as the *only* viable model, poised to "run the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Leonard, 2005; McCormick, 2007).

Most recently, the EU-as-model has made headway in the realm of international relations theory and more specifically normative theory and global ethics. The end of the cold war opened the way for mainstream IR scholars to increasingly question the (neo)realist vision of the immutable nature of international anarchy and power politics beyond the state, and to inquire about the transformative potential inherent in world politics. Building on the idea put forth by the English School of the potential for change from a "pluralist" to a "solidarist" international society of states, constructivists like Alex Wendt suggested that the European project could be seen as an incipient form of Kantian anarchy that could eventually characterise the global international system (in contrast, or combined with a Hobbesian or a Grotian system). Cosmopolitan writers followed in using the EU as an exemplar of the kind of cosmopolitan ethics called for at the global level. Since the wider world was "in need of more and better governance" it should take inspiration from the EU brand of 'civilizing process' (see also Beck & Grande, 2007; Linklater, 2011). Jürgen Habermas expressed his admiration for the inherent potential of European integration as a model of 'post-national governance' including because he saw in Europe the kind of rational deliberative potential that alone could create the basis of a mature transnational political community (Habermas & Derrida, 2003). And notwithstanding talk of a democratic deficit in the EU, its form of democracy beyond the state could be considered a forerunner of things to come in global politics (Bohman, 2013).

In sum, ever since the inception of the European integration process, and with increasing vigour in recent years, the question of whether and how the EU's experience is relevant to the wider world has been a theme in discourses mobilised both by European policy-makers and academics. Today, the EU is at a crossroads. It has spent half a century negotiating the transition to a non-European world, focused on surging from the ashes of its internal past. Having navigated this transition, its domestic experience is now increasingly invoked beyond its borders while the EU is becoming an actor in its own right. An ambition of benign influence through the upholding of its values by peaceful means and the selling of its genuine European brand of 'civil' relations between states to other relevant arenas of governance, be they national, regional or global. The mainstream has been largely uncritical in telling this story. But there is of course another side.

#### 4. The radical critique as cautionary tale: Eurocentricism, EU universalism and the politics of denial

It is often said that the EU is grounded in the memory of the past and that the need to transcend such a past still constitutes the glue that binds Europeans together (Diez, 1994; Wæver, 1998). Here, the past that is invoked is the past of the civil-war-turned-world-wars which tore our continent apart 70 years ago. The EU, with its liberal and democratic ethos that eschews nationalist grandeur, stresses multilateral decision-making and cooperation in areas of 'low politics', is the direct counter-model to the prevailing form of 'intra-continental' politics during the 'European civil war' in the period between 1914 and 1945. The EU thus embodies the collective rejection of fascism, communism, exaggerated nationalism and militarism. In this well-known Europeanist account of the historical *raison d'être* of the European institutional model, other 'pasts' of European and non-European history are not normally included as relevant. This narrative may have been defensible as long as the EU was as a vehicle for the self-improvement and self-realization of Europeans, as it has been for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

But as the narrative of the European project turns from the exercise of internal (or intra-continental) self-realization towards global transformation, so should its memory frame. This is when 'other pasts' – both European and non-European – assert their relevance (Chakrabarty, 1992; Kleinfeld & Nicolaidis, 2009). When projecting the European model into a non-European world, i.e. demonstrating its relevance to non-Europeans with vastly different experiences and political structures, Europeans must confront aspects of their past that cannot be inserted as easily into the pre-war / post-war matrix of the original EU narrative. Foremost is the colonial experience, which structured Europe's interaction with the rest of the world from the beginning of the colonial era in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the end of official colonialism in the 1960s. It was European states that specified 'standards of civilization' – a set of liberal norms that defined criteria for membership in the international society of states – in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then set out to act as gatekeepers for such memberships, as the 'international society' in question originally started as the European continent (Bull & Watson, 1982). And it was Europeans who sought to spread these norms through more or less violent imperial practices to other parts of the world until decolonisation, which coincided with the creation of a new Europe in the guise of the EU – notwithstanding the diversity of member states' pasts to which we will come back.

Thus, we need to start by understanding this *clash of memories* between the Eurocentric 20<sup>th</sup> century memory of the great European wars turned world wars and the global memory of colonialism. Paying attention to alternative memory frames calls for a move away from Eurocentrism by appealing to the perception of others as well as by appealing to a re-reading of global history away from the western canons that have dominated the study of IR in general and European integration in particular.

So, a critique of "EU model talk" must start with an act of decentering memory itself as a first way of confronting the challenge posed by the vast post-colonial theory literature, itself reflecting and informing the widely held defiance of Eurocentrism in many parts of the world. In Nayak and Selbin's characterization of decentering, the expression denotes a state of "interrogating, disturbing, engaging, reframing, challenging, mocking, or even undoing mainstream, privileged ways of viewing the world" (Nayak & Selbin, 2010, 8; see also Fisher Onar & Nicolaidis, 2013). In the eyes of all those around the world who still collectively "remember" Europe's colonial past from a non-European perspective, the EU's inward-looking narrative of self-improvement and vaccination against auto-aggression can be seen as a recycled, if more sophisticated, version of a bygone era. As Samir Amin (1989,

166) explains, “Eurocentrism is not, properly speaking, a social theory, which integrates various elements into a global and coherent vision of society and history. It is rather a prejudice that distorts social theories.” Engaging with the debate around Eurocentrism in the post-colonial literature helps us problematize some of the claims of the model talk, which has up to now largely escaped the scrutiny of post-colonial gaze. To be sure, accusations of neo-colonialism do not seem to have significantly dented the cosmopolitans’ belief in the progressive and transformative promise carried by the EU in a re-invented version of its civilising mission (see Bhambra, 2016). Three deep features of the model talk explain why.

*The construction of EUniversalism.* A radical critique of the “model talk” must go back to the origins and understandings of universalism itself. The idea of the universal can depict anything that everyone recognizes and accepts as fundamental, indivisible and relevant to all human beings. In its most general acceptance, universalism then is a shared belief regarding the validity of a set of principles for all – starting with “the doctrine of universal salvation or redemption” (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 1991). In its secular version, it is a “belief in the brotherhood of all men in a manner not subject to national allegiances.” The Weberian definition describes universalism as “the insistence on treatment of all men by the same generalized, impersonal standards.” But who does the ‘sharing’ in such a ‘shared belief’? In contrast to the ‘bird’s eye view’ version of universalism, the use of the term historically has served to name a particular discursive tradition originating in Europe and directed outside Europe. In short, universalism has historically been a project for the world as much as a vision of the world, from the late medieval, culturalist formulations of Christian fraternity to the rediscovery of classical Stoic thought during the Renaissance, and the dawn of secularism. As a project of a particular human community then, universalism has remained a discourse on the ability of one’s community to define, embody, uphold, whatever it is that is deemed to be universal and the legitimacy of promoting it in the rest of the world. It is a claim about oneself as much as about the rest of the world. If, in Ruggie’s (1982) formulation, hegemony is the fusing of power and purpose, a universalist discourse extends this logic by rooting the avowed purpose in the power of attraction rather than power tout court.

*The politics of denial.* But the EU has generally not been viewed as the specific incarnation of a consistent *long-term* universalist project. Instead, decolonisation was the handmaiden of a new “virgin birth” for Europe (Nicolaïdis, 2015). In reality of course, the EC was initially as much a *product* of colonisation, representing in the eyes of its founders a way to collectivise and pacify the colonial pasts of founding members such as France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands (Hansen and Jonsson, 2015). Paradoxically, and with decolonisation, the first decade of the EC’s existence combined the rejection of Europe’s presence in the world with the historical culmination of the internationalisation of the European society of nations: a world of sovereign states with territorial boundaries based on presumed homogeneous nations which had ‘earned the right’ to remain sovereign. But just as Europe finally and unwittingly succeeded in shaping the world according to its own Westphalian image by retreating from it, a *new* Europe started to broadcast a new story about pooled sovereignty. As the idea of EU-as-a-model gained ground, a new narrative was invented for a decolonised world where the EC was supposed to be as much a newcomer as the newly independent states, a partner in development, which had nothing to do with its members’ pasts. As former Development Commissioner told his African audience in the 1970s: “The Community is weak, it has no weapon... it is completely inept to exercise domination... The European Community is young, it has no past.” (Claude Cheysson cited in Grilli, 1993, 102). In imagining the EU model as not-its-member states (reason against passion;

supranationalism against nationalism) and as transcendence of those episodes in which Europeans have turned on each other, the history of Europe's colonial past has been erased from the official account – this was them, the EU is something else. As Hansen and Jonsson (2014, 446) aptly note, "Europe as an intergovernmental and supranational political project and entity has been placed outside and beyond the history of colonialism."

*Atonement and Redemption.* But of course, the story is not that simple. In the EU narrative, denial also gives way to the search for some kind of redemption. The EU becomes a means of atonement on behalf of its ex-colonial states, through special deals with ex-colonies and its development agenda. The denial lay in the continued assumption that the idea of a unilaterally defined mission could still be acceptable in the post-colonial world while the atonement lay in the attempted reinvention of European relations with the so-called third world in ways which genuinely serve the interests of the latter. Europe could do it again, export its ways and all, but get it right this time. Redemption lies with the idea that Europeans, manned with their unique insights into self-destruction and subsequent reconciliation and reconstruction, are in a position to help the rest of the world overcome the evils of nationalism and power politics – it seems fascinating that Europeans often do not see the ironic spirals involved in such reasoning (Nicolaidis, 2015).

As a result of these discursive features of EU universalism, the core tensions inherited from Europe's past – the tension between the two faces of European universalism – remained in a different guise. Is promoting the 'EU model' a late echo of conquest and domination, the imperial sense of mission, or a mark of transnational responsibility and cosmopolitan solidarity? To be sure, the discourse and practice of the EU-as-a-model could hardly be seen as a simple remake of the expansion of European 'international society' all over again in a world, which is no longer structured to allow for such Euro-centric expansion. But it does constitute a complex *rewriting* of the old story, with caveats and cautionary notes, bells, whistles, silences and all. And the question for us is whether and how such re-writing can be seen as legitimate.

### **5. Our benchmark: Self-reflexivity and mutual recognition**

If there is no doubt that the legacy of Europe's imperial past resonates to this day in many corners of the globe, the question remains whether the EU can transcend Europe's past – or rather the past of a number of its member states. What would it take for the EU to act as a genuine 'post-colonial' power in this realm, self-reflexive about the echoes of colonialism and legitimate in the eyes of other countries? How best can the EU live up to its post-colonial aspiration? Conversely, can we not argue that today's idea and practice of the EU as a model with its hands off and non-coercive character amounts to a toolbox for governance, which has precious little to do with the *mission* of yesteryear? Is it possible, in short, to avoid denying the EU's transformative promise while at the same time questioning its fundamental premise? We call for exploring these questions with an open mind. We reject the idea that one could or should be for or against Europe-as-a-model *per se*. But we are critical of the idea and practice *as is*. In particular, we are uncomfortable with the label "model" itself and prefer alternative ways to encapsulate the value added of EU governance for the rest of the world – alternatives which are more humble and convey a certain state of mind.

The state of mind we ourselves hope to share is simply one of reflexivity, that is the ability to reflect critically and openly upon both discourse and practice, the systematic questioning of the assumptions behind one's methods, and the capacity to draw lessons from outside one's world – whether from the past or from the perceptions of others. Andrew

Linklater (2005, 144) has aptly described this state of mind as a normative perspective that is “less concerned with passing normative judgment on domestic practices elsewhere than with investigating the ways in which their own actions [and discourses] destroy, frustrate, demean or in other ways harm other peoples.” Reflexivity here is called for both on behalf of “real world” actors and the world of Social Science – including in the ways in which these two worlds overlap. Some scholars have already pointed in this direction, from the “Eurocentric norms” and “paternalistic discourse about Africa” expressed in EU-Africa relations (Staeger, 2016, 981) or the finding of a “soft imperialism” inherent in the EU’s interregional relations (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2005) to a recasting of EU normative power as hegemony in order to reinstate the concept’s critical purpose (Diez, 2013) and an analysis of the EU as an “imperial power” (Behr & Stivachtis, 2016; Zielonka, 2008). But a comprehensive appraisal and critique is still needed (for a recent overview, see Hansen & Jonsson 2018).

It may be that this self-centredness is due to the fact that the drive for EU external action is fundamentally internal – the balance of power, rivalries and turf games, which EU actors play among themselves (Bickerton, 2011). Nevertheless, we regard reflexivity as a normative ambition that European actors ought to aspire to in their foreign policy (see inter alia, Fisher Onar & Nicolaidis, 2013; Keukeleire & Lecocq, 2018). If the EU’s main hope for international relevance does lie in its ability to affect the definition of what is normal in international relations (Manners 2002), European policy-makers ought to engage in a constant process of reflection of what it is that they are advocating as ‘normal’, as if we could not see through what Spivak castigates as a strategic essentialism – e.g. “a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (Spivak, 1996, 214). Any depictions of the EU that may be seen as what Diez (2005, 636) has aptly described as “a self-righteous, messianistic project that claims to know what Europe is and what others should look like” needs to be eschewed. Conversely, the EU ought to avoid “utopian normativity” (Nicolaidis & Howse, 2002, 789) and embrace a genuine modesty about the claims of such practices. This may mean retaining very little of the EU-as-a-model practice. The simple transfer of EU institutions, policies and regulations to other parts of the world seems inadequate because the era of the *civilising mission* is over. Europe’s continued relevance is at that price. Ex-ante, therefore, reflexivity calls for modesty about goals and means. Ex-post, it calls for the ability to honestly evaluate the effect and relevance of EU practices, including from a decentered perspective, admit policy failures and change course. But how can we tell?

Reflexivity can lead one to many conclusions, indeed many legitimate conclusions. Nevertheless, we ourselves wish to promote our own bias as we hope and believe that it can lead both practitioners and analysts to infuse the EU’s message with greater legitimacy. This bias is an ethos of mutual recognition. Mutual recognition is about symmetry, reciprocity, partnership and mutual respect, indeed “mutuality” in the fullest sense. It means eschewing Eurocentricism, decentering both our practice of cooperation and our way of understanding the world. It means standing out of a European viewpoint and imagining the kind of world we would want to see even if Europe did not exist. Mutual recognition in this sense calls for Europeans to internalize the “post-colonial condition”, that is, the awareness of the implications of their colonial past both in terms of structures – of the international political system and globalization – and in terms of echoes and perceptions; and it implies a willingness to resolutely and self-consciously move beyond colonial patterns – patterns recognised as such by others.

We do not naively deny the structural realities of today’s global system, its fundamentally hierarchical nature and the asymmetries of power, which underlie contemporary inter-

national relations, including in the EU's external relations. A relationship of "influence" involves by definition an element of inequality and hierarchy. But the discourse of the EU-as-a-model is often grounded on a sense of superior normative or cognitive power, which Europeans somehow feel and believe continues to be their prerogative. This is where, we believe, self-reflexivity is in order. The question is to what extent it is possible to introduce more symmetry in the "model" narrative. Mutuality entails that EU model practices are not a one-way street, but that learning and development in the relationship is mutual. This includes the possibility that EU actors learn from the other side not just how the EU model may best be adapted to fit their context, but how the EU model itself may be enhanced based on their experience. Genuine mutuality, therefore, is the lesson to learn from the EU's colonial experience and its echoes, and it provides the basis for "levelling" the field of international politics that is still very much dominated by power asymmetries and status hierarchies between the EU and many of its partners.

### **6. A constructive critique: Action in the light of self-reflexivity and mutuality**

Finally, we come back to the third realm within which the EU-as-a-model is deployed, the realm of action. It is when we reach the issue of action that the radical critique is most likely to bite. After all, laying out and seeking to translate a model can amount to cheap talk. The rest of the world is welcome to engage in the exercise – or not. What happens when the EU acts on it? The EU can export, spread, externalize, transpose, advance, push or impose its model. Less proactively, it can also simply present, exhibit, offer, suggest, advertise, glorify, parade or showcase it. All of these notions, extensively used before the EU's poly-crisis of the last decade, may have come to be used with more circumspection but they remain part of the EU repertoire. Which of them best captures the essence of the EU's model practices? And what practices are most legitimate, if any?

In practice, the EU model *problématique* stretches across the whole range of EU external relations that range from relations with individual countries via groups of countries and inter-regional relations with other regional organizations to the EU's actions in different arenas of global governance, such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization. In all of these relations, the EU seeks to exercise "external governance" (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2010), that is, it attempts to transfer the EU model to various degrees to its partners. As one radiates outward from the EU's immediate neighbourhood towards more distant countries and regions, the EU's ability to leverage (accession) conditionality and its structural "power in and through trade" (see Meunier & Nicolaïdis, 2006), and thus its ability to control outcomes, diminishes. Nevertheless, in all of these settings the logic of interaction is the same: the degree of convergence to European or otherwise "universal" norms and standards is a function of "the club" to which one belongs or is expected to belong; and states gain some measure of access to the EU (from its markets to financial support and ultimately to membership) as a quid pro quo for some degree of convergence with its standards. Thus, whereas changes in structural asymmetry affect the likelihood of particular outcomes, the normative question of how relevant actors can best adopt, adapt and appropriate the EU model remain similar. We discuss questions of content and agency in turn.

#### **6.1 The what question: Sensitivity vs. consistency**

Our take on the what question lies with consistency and its many facets. Most basically, people ask, is action consistent with discourse? Of course, neither the EU nor most political actors, nor indeed most of us can live up to the standards of our discourse. Our concern with consistency is more specific to the model *problématique* and refers to the "consistency between the internal and external planes" of EU activism (Nicolaïdis & Howse,

2002, 771). To be considered credible by others, actors not only ought to act upon what they preach abroad but, more importantly, ought to do abroad what they themselves are doing 'at home'. From this perspective, it is problematic, for example, for the EU to ask other actors to engage in 'open regionalism' that does not discriminate against outsiders shortly after the founding of a regional grouping when European integration itself was based on sustained protectionism for most of its first four decades. This challenge refers to potential gaps between the actual model the European member states have constructed at home and the practices they seek to export. It raises a number of crucial questions: does the EU act in ways, or demands from others to act in ways, that are consistent with the way in which European states organize their joint affairs inside Europe? In other words, how authentic are EU model practices? And, conversely, does it practice inside what it preaches outside? What of the way, for instance, negotiated intervention is practiced outside of but not between member states? And if the model that is projected onto the international scene is but an idealised version of what is an EUtopia, as argued earlier, consistency is all the more difficult between what happens inside the EU and what it does outside its borders.

But do others really or always prefer a consistent behaviour? Or more subtly what does consistency really mean – is it the same as sameness? Or does it require adaption underpinned by sensitivity to differences in circumstances and the preferences of others? We are back to the old question of whether the EU is *sui generi*, an n of 1. Legal philosophy has long recognized that treating unequal actors equally is deeply unethical. Indeed, European integration happened in a unique historical and geopolitical context creating underlying conditions hardly replicable elsewhere: the states of Europe had just fought two devastating world wars, which deeply altered their conception of sovereignty and self-interest; the US provided a security umbrella due to the geopolitical constellations of the Cold War; and the longest phase of economic recovery and boom in the post-war era facilitated compromise and common decision-making. Conditions are different, elsewhere and at other times, especially in developing countries. Consistency between internal and external practices in EU action may therefore be counterproductive. It is thus problematic when the EU expects from third countries the same level of services liberalization or investment protection that it champions internally.

EU actors therefore ought to be sensitive to the context to which model practices are transferred. Such adaptation can occur along two dimensions. First, the width of adoption may be altered, depending on the context. Consistency between the inside and outside does not require the wholesale adoption of the EU model. We may conceive of the EU model as a toolbox of governance, from which individual elements can be authentically drawn, while others are simply deemed inappropriate in a different context. In short, we can think of the EU model as something that is 'disaggregatable'. Second, the specificity of EU models can be adapted to suit a specific domestic environment. Rather than transferring concrete trade standards or specific norms, EU actors can draw on general ideas and principles when engaging in EU model practices and think about how they may be implemented most profitably in a different context.

More broadly then, if international influence requires both power and legitimate social purpose, the question we must ask is when we should (generically) insist on shared universal purpose and when we should on the contrary uphold our own purpose and beliefs as a benchmark for other actors' behaviour. We are not necessarily moral relativists; but at the same time we need to avoid the kind of structural hypocrisy that is the hallmark of the imperial logic – that is, promoting one's standards in pursuit of our material interest

while arguing that this is for the greater good or the other side's amelioration. Of course, that can also be the case, but not necessarily: the two must be distinguished. So, when it is in our interest to promote our standards, we need to state it as such. But if there is neither a moral nor a material imperative, we need to be adaptable and pragmatic. And we need to consider seriously the other side's standards, as stated earlier.

In sum, the *consistency-sensitivity tension* poses a challenge because the two guidelines for action are not implementable simultaneously when taken to their respective extremes. For one, consistency and sensitivity are opposites that can only be combined when trade-offs are accepted or a situation for action is parcelled into small bits so that either one of the two concepts guides action in a specific case. In addition, strict sensitivity essentially requires the new formulation of a policy in each case that is particularly geared at suiting a local context. In such a situation, EU action falls into the realm of general foreign policy, leaving the sphere of EU model practices that we are concerned with here.

## 6.2 The how question: Passive vs. proactive

The most basic distinction relevant to the how question is whether the EU's influence is passive or active. This is clearly a spectrum, as with Manners' list, which ranges from contagion, cultural filter, to informational diffusion, procedural diffusion, overt diffusion and transference, where the last four are 'active' measures by the Union (Manners, 2002, 244-245). These correspond to a gradation of tools or policy instruments, from least to most coercive: learning, socialisation or enmeshment; indirect support for actors abroad; provision of financial and technical support; coercive diplomacy and conditionality; sanctions and the use of forces.

Clearly, the former leaves greater room for agency and mutuality. European policy-makers, we believe, are usually not better suited than local actors to discern how the European experience may be adapted elsewhere. Local actors may use the EU as a source of inspiration in general or a more specific reference point, they might reject it or ignore it – it is their choice. Indeed, the EU has affected developments elsewhere by exerting impact "through what it is, rather than through what it does" (Maull, 2005, 778). Eduardo Duhalde, Mercosur's Head representative, for instance announced in regard to the founding of the 'South American Community of Nations' – a regional integration arrangement that combines Mercosur and the Andean Community –, that "our mirror will be the European Union, with all its institutions" (cited in Harris, 2005, 418). Except in fairy tales, mirrors do not talk back – and, in such a way, the EU has affected other integration schemes (see Lenz 2018).

However, local actors may explicitly ask EU actors for help, not only in supplying them with information about the EU, but also more specifically in the design and creation of policies or instruments. It is precisely because such demand-driven EU activism falls short of proactive promotion that it generally enjoys greater legitimacy.

But to the extent that the EU does act, we can find it acting in more or less coercive ways. Whether there are ever any legitimate grounds for the latter is surely a topic for intense debate. The fact of coercion itself is sometimes difficult to ascertain, as it ranges from open military imposition to much more subtle forms. Some associate the Gramscian concept of hegemony with coercion, despite the fact that it is based on the consent of the 'recipients' (Buckel & Fischer-Lescano, 2009; Cox, 1983; Howson & Smith, 2008; see also Diez, 2013). The direct military imposition of European models was characteristic of European colonial practices. Today, while such practices have been abandoned, memories still resonate

strongly with political and civil society actors not only in parts of the world formerly colonized by European countries but also in many European countries themselves, from Ireland to Poland. It is especially against this background that we argue that the EU must be particularly careful today to avoid associations of coercion when engaging in its model practices.

While the worst forms of coercion have been abandoned by Europe, the EU still uses a wide range of measures to induce changes in behaviour outside its borders, from negative conditionality related to aid and trade to benign forms of influence through persuasion. The EU has been groping to find a form of positive conditionality faithful to this approach but with limited success. As a general rule, the less coercion the better but of course even some local actors might value being empowered by stronger forms of incentives. In short there may be a trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness (Kleinfeld & Nicolaïdis, 2009). Our view is that “empowerment strategies” may come closer to the spirit of mutuality that we espouse since they consist not in dictating one’s standards to the other side but in helping out those among local actors who are most likely to promote practices compatible with the EU model. There is, of course, a highly interventionist and possibly paternalist connotation to picking the actors that ought to be empowered. Can we rescue the “rescue narrative” of yesteryears? Is the promotion of specified processes rather than substantive standards the best way to obtain legitimacy?

Ultimately, we need to take our analysis of the *how* to the structural level. We need to ask when a multilateral approach to devising and enforcing certain standards and practices is desirable and doable. And whether the “universality” of standards and practices that may legitimately constrain the action of states can ever be determined unilaterally, including by the gatekeepers of the “EU model.”

## **7. Conclusion**

In this paper, we have presented the building blocks of our critique of a discourse and a praxis, namely that of the EU as a model. Starting with semantics, we have suggested that the very term “model” may offer several meanings which in turn can serve as a heuristic for assessing the characteristics and legitimacy of the EU’s model talk and its political translation. Loosely drawing on Hegelian dialectics, we proceeded by describing the thesis of the EU-as-a-model, as it is commonly related by European policy-makers and academics alike. We then contrasted this progressive narrative with the radical post-colonial critique that centers on member states’ colonial histories. From these two poles, we developed a normative benchmark, emphasizing self-reflexivity and mutuality as key criteria, and assessed the EU’s model practice in this light. Our main conclusion is that the idea of the EU-as-a-model can be partially salvaged to the extent that the EU empowers its counterparts, both discursively and in practice, to adapt and appropriate the EU model to suit their own local contexts.

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# The logic of populism. Consequences of the clash between complexity and simple thinking<sup>1</sup>

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The clash between complexity and simple thinking is likely to cause populism, which imagines a personal relationship between politics and the whole "people". Populism is characterized by particular features that are logically related to each other, resulting in a dynamic from which it is hard to escape.

**Keywords:** Populism, Social complexity, "the people", Representative democracy, Simple thinking

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## 1. The populist constellation

Populism results from the attempt to cope with the complexity of society with simple everyday thinking. The thesis is based on two conditions.

The first condition is that everyday thinking relies on a simple understanding of causality that follows the logic of action. What does logic of action mean? The actor anticipates the effect of his action and makes it the goal of action. Schütz and Luckmann (2003) state: Action takes place *modo futuri exacti*. One imagines the consequences of his action with the intention of producing these consequences (see also Simmel, 1900/1989, 354). One intention is the anticipation of the success of the action in connection with the will to produce it. Intention determines the logic of action, with the logical interpretation of the world being reinforced by language. The practical necessity to signal connections between actors and objects leads to the fact that the logic of action is represented in the syntax. How strongly and directly action shapes the formation of language can be seen from the fact that in the syntaxes of almost all languages the subject is arranged in front of the object (Dux, 2017, 288, 289). The subject stands in the sentence before the object, the intention comes before the effect, the cause precedes the effect.

In the logic of action, a fact has an intention as cause. There is a 1:1 ratio between intention (cause) and effect (effect). In the context of the logic of action, explaining therefore means attributing an effect to an action-guiding will as its cause. This understanding of causality follows the logic of action. I call this logic of everyday thinking "simple thinking" (Vobruba, 2019).

The second condition is that there is a secular tendency in social development from simpler to more complex relationships. This process is a result of the increasing range of "functional interdependencies" (Elias, 1969/1980, 351) in the spatial and temporal dimensions. This means that spatially and (therefore) temporally distant events become relevant for

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<sup>1</sup> I presented some parts of this paper at a conference on the occasion of the 65th birthday of Maurizio Bach at the University of Passau and as guest lectures at the Europe University Flensburg and the University Lüneburg.

each other. The consequences of this are ever longer "chains of causality" (Simmel) which become increasingly unclear for the actors. Drivers of this secular tendency are technical and social innovations that lead to an ever more intensive division of labour, increasing transnational trade, increasing mobility of production factors and of information (to decreasing costs). All this increases the complexity of society. Social behaviour is perceived as complex in particular when intentions lead to results that are qualitatively different from the intentions. In other words. The intentions are not reflected in the results. In sociology such processes are described as "emergences", and they are causally traced back to mechanisms which produce emergent effects. „Common to all usages of the term emergence in the social sciences is that it is only applied to effects produced unintentionally“ (Mayntz, 2009, 144). Mechanisms cause something, but do not themselves embody intention. They interfere between intention and effect, they break intentions and are thus their antithesis; the opposite of an action-logical 1:1 coupling. The paradigm for this is the market. The degree of complexity of society increases to the extent that social facts are determined by mechanisms.

Social complexity becomes a problem when it penetrates and is felt in the people's immediate *Lebenswelt*. I call the clash of complex social conditions and simple thinking: the populist constellation. Processes of rapid social change, transnationalization, economic integration, migration, and the acceleration of information make the emergence of such a constellation probable. In this perspective, populism is inevitable.

## 2. The promise of populism

Populism has a strong affinity to *Gemeinschaft* as a model for the reorganization of society (Vobruba, 1986). It promises simple solutions in the face of complex, opaque social conditions. In this way populism reacts to a broadly shared attitude to life, namely the widespread feeling of a loss of control. The populist promise of simple solutions seems seductively comforting.

Populism follows the logic of action in personal relationships: The decisive factor is the will of those involved. For the right politics, therefore, only the right intentions are needed. And if something goes wrong, there are evil intentions behind it. Consequently, populists have a tendency to go with conspiracy theories. There may be simple solutions in individual cases, but populist politics normally offer sham solutions. But it would be mistaken to understand populist programs as simple lies. The promises of populism are not only believed by parts of the public. Most likely, many populist politicians act in honest conviction. They are rather authentically simple than simply cynical. They really believe that refugee flows are directed by George Soros, that high vegetable prices can be lowered with fines, and that sexual offences can be prevented by tightening penalties. But authenticity doesn't make things better, on the contrary.

"Populist" is not a term for this or that policy content. Populism is a special idea of how the formation of a political will takes place. In the logic of populism, it takes place in a direct relationship between the political elites and the electorate. Marine Le Pen's "Rassemblement National" (formerly known as „Front National“) consistently promises "une véritable révolution de la proximité". The immediate relationship between the politician and the people indicates: The populist knows what people want and acts on their immediate behalf (Puhle, 1986, 12ff.).

This immediate relationship is a fiction with real consequences. It requires the construction of a unified counterpart to populist politics. It is the construction of homogenous "people" („das Volk“) that enables the deceptive simplicity of populism, but the people as a uniform entity does not exist. People have different worldviews, preferences, concerns and interests. Populists have little inclination and talent to mediate between such different positions. Compromises are not yours. In the logic of populism, the different interests and

desires in society are rather a kind of menu from which one chooses suitable starting points for one's own politics. Some desires are very suitable for this, others not at all. In this respect, populism is selective in its content as a concept of political order. It advocates antipluralism, anti-nationalism and scepticism against science, and it opposes the separation of powers. From this follows: Left-wing populism does not work. When the left adopts populist logic, they slip to the right.

### **3. The fiction of „the people“**

Since the homogenous people is a fiction, the populist cannot in reality receive his political mandate from the people. In fact, it is the other way round. The populist first projects his political ideas into the fiction "people" and then refers to this people to legitimize his politics. The populist imagines the unity of the people and himself as its exclusive representative. That this is a fundamental element of populism can be seen in the reason why Viktor Orbán, as an opposition politician, stayed away from the sessions of the Hungarian parliament: the people cannot oppose themselves (Müller, 2016).

Antipluralism is the logical consequence where the fiction of the unified people comes up against the diversity of values, interests, etc. in real society. Those who do not fit into the fiction of uniformity are pushed aside, excluded. Following this logic, Turkish President Erdogan calls those who support the "People's Alliance" between the ultra-national MHP and its Islamic conservative AKP as "faithful, patriotic people" in the Communal election campaign 2019. On the other hand, those who follow the opposition "alliance of the nation" are in his eyes "supporters of a terrorist organization". This distinction is compelling in the logic of populism: apart from the claim to represent the authentic will of the people, deviant expressions of will have neither place nor meaning. Those who oppose the will of the people exclude themselves from the people.

### **4. Internal and external restrictions**

In the logic of populism, the scope of action of politics is imagined as very broad in principle. The consequence of this is the tendency to place politics above the democratic separation of powers. It is equally imperative to populists that restrictions on the political scope for action, from within and from without, are fought against.

Internally, populist politics is directed against all institutions and instances that stand in the way of the direct relationship between the populist and the "people," i.e., against all instances that mediate between the interests within the population and elite politics, set framework conditions for politics, or control politics. There is therefore little room for interest groups, for the autonomy of central banks and courts, for independent expert knowledge and for critical journalism. That's why Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to scourge the Turkish central bank. That is why Donald Trump calls critical media and courts "enemy of the people". Hence the attempts of the Polish PiS government to bring the judiciary under political control. This is why populist politics fuel scientific scepticism, for example on the subject of global warming.

The downside of scepticism towards all mediation and control over authorities in politics is the populist preference for beer tents and - more modern - for social media communication. The attractiveness of twitter and co. is immediately apparent in the logic of populism: social media simulate an unmediated relationship between politics and people. Thus social media fit with the promise of populism.

When it comes to addressing the outside world, the logic of populism leads to the illusion of unlimited national sovereignty. Depending on the position of power in world politics, the illusion of sovereignty may result in the non-recognition of international institutions and a tactical relationship to loyalty to treaties, or in political isolationism with the risk of collective impoverishment. Great Britain's rhetoric of sovereignty, which has gotten out of

hand, has led to Brexit. "Taking control back" was the slogan in the campaign for the Brexit, with which the desire for liberation from confusing transnational contexts was translated into politics. This was not matched by an understanding of the benefits of these contexts. No other populist illusory solution is currently doing such damage – not even remotely. Finally, populist politics is protected against transnational contexts by the construction of external enemies. President Erdogan, in view of the rapidly rising vegetable prices, demonstrates how internal problems can be linked to the construction of external enemies: "Concentrate on prices for bullets and not for tomatoes".

Central features of European integration are very much in line with the logic of populism. Firstly, it is an ideal opponent against whom one can present oneself as a defender of national sovereignty. Secondly, as an area of free personal mobility, the EU can be linked to fears of alienation - not only by refugees from outside Europe, but also by migration within the EU. Thirdly, the EU institutions stand in the way of the populist illusion of a direct relationship between the political elite and the people. It goes without saying that the EU protects rather than impairs the Member States' remaining room for manoeuvre in the international system; that Europe's ageing societies urgently need migration; and that the relationship between political leaders and people is a populist illusion. That is not the point. Their failure to cope with reality hardly questions populist politics. Why?

### 5. Populism as a drug

Populism has a drug effect. Populist policies that try to ignore complex interrelationships remain ineffective or make things worse: import duties cannot prevent the US trade deficit from rising further. Political appeals for patriotic support for the Turkish lira are intensifying the flight into euros and dollars. In the logic of populism, more of the same is being said; higher tariffs, more passionate appeals. There is hardly any escape from such vicious circles. This means that in the logic of populism there is a dynamic of radicalization.

It is likely that the populist constellation will last, for the mismatch between complex relationships and simple thinking is likely to increase. This constellation points at the main danger of populism: Populism always has the potential for gradual radicalization. In the logic of populism lies radical nationalism (Lepsius, 1966) and the turning away from representative democracy.

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# „Beinahe in der ganzen Welt existiert der Kapitalismus ohne Demokratie“

Ágnes Heller \*1929 - 2019

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Am 19.09.2018 sprach Rafael Alvear Moreno mit Ágnes Heller über zwei Jahrhunderte Karl Marx. Das Interview thematisiert u.a. schwebende Kapitalien, demokratisch gewählte Tyrannen und verkehrte Umverteilung in der zeitgenössischen Gesellschaft. Ágnes Heller ist am 19.07.2019 verstorben und hinterlässt ein großes philosophisches Erbe. Die Veröffentlichung dieses Interviews ist ihr gewidmet<sup>1</sup>.

„Ob es einen Widerspruch [zwischen Kapitalismus und Demokratie] gibt? Ja, natürlich gibt es ihn. Aber das hängt davon ab, ob man von liberaler Demokratie oder von Demokratie ohne Liberalismus spricht“.

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*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Frau Heller. Ich möchte Sie gern einladen, die Unterscheidung von *Kapitalismus und Demokratie* mit einem Blick auf die Marxsche Theorie und die heutige Gesellschaft zu thematisieren. Die Idee ist, dass wir erstens über den *Kapitalismus*, zweitens über die *Demokratie* und drittens über die *Beziehung beider miteinander* reden.

*Ágnes Heller:* Die Beziehung zwischen beiden ist das Einfachste. Ohne Kapitalismus gibt es keine Demokratie. Und im Gegenteil gibt es aber Kapitalismus ohne Demokratie. Das Erste braucht man nicht zu erörtern, weil es eine Tatsache ist. Das Zweite muss ich jetzt erörtern.

## 1. Kapitalismus

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Lassen Sie uns alsdann mit dem *Kapitalismus* anfangen. Im *Kapital* hat Marx den Kapitalismus als eine *Produktionsweise* definiert, die von den Menschen ermöglicht wird und unter der sie gleichzeitig leiden. Ihr Kern zeigt sich als eine „ungeheure Warensammlung“ (Marx, 1971, 15), die zu einer „sachlichen Gewalt über“ die Menschen wird, die ihrer „Kontrolle entwächst“, ihre „Erwartungen durchkreuzt“ und ihre „Berechnungen zunichte macht“ (Marx & Engels, 1978, 33). Es sind ungefähr 150 Jahre seit dieser gesellschaftstheoretischen Beobachtung vergangen. Kann die Marxsche Theorie noch behilflich sein, um die Logik des heutigen Kapitalismus zu verstehen?

*Ágnes Heller:* Alles verändert sich. Marx hat im Wesentlichen das Kapital als ein gesellschaftliches Verhältnis verstanden. Dieses gesellschaftliche Verhältnis existiert auch noch heute, aber ob dieser sogenannte freie Markt existiert, das ist die Frage. Denn die Marxsche

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<sup>1</sup>Eine gekürzte Fassung dieses auf Deutsch durchgeführten Interviews wurde bereits auf Spanisch (in *Cuadernos de Teoría Social*) veröffentlicht. Die Vorbereitung dieser Version des Interviews wird von CONICYT [Fondecyt de Postdoctorado 2019] im Rahmen des Projektes Nr. 3190389 unterstützt.

Konzeption des Kapitals war ein menschliches Verhältnis, wo alles auf dem Markt passiert. Marx' Markt verteilt, doch hat er nicht über die Umverteilung gesprochen. Zu seiner Zeit existierte die Umverteilung nur in einem sehr geringen Umfang. Die Umverteilung des Profits war noch keine Aufgabe des Staates in der Zeit von Marx und auch in keiner Weise realisiert worden. Das passierte erst später im Wohlfahrtsstaat. Das Kapital „liebt“ im Wesentlichen die Güter, aber es gab dann im Wohlfahrtsstaat eine Umverteilung, die der Staat übernahm. Denn wie Marx sagte, geht das Kapitalverhältnis von einer Situation der Gleichheit aus, aber von dieser Gleichheit kommt Ungleichheit. Diese Gleichheit produziert Ungleichheit. Man kann diese Gleichheit nicht verändern, aber diese Ungleichheit kann man mindern. Das war der klassische Kapitalismus zu jener Zeit des 20. Jahrhunderts in Europa, wo die Umverteilung stattgefunden hat.

Jetzt hat sich die Situation ganz verändert. Der Profit des Kapitals, d.h. der freie Markt operiert auf der Weltbühne. Aber konkret regiert in allen Ländern eine sogenannte politische Elite, die ihre eigene Oligarchie schafft. Es gibt in der ganzen Welt überhaupt keine Demokratie, es gibt nur Menschen, die die Macht erobert haben und eine Oligarchie schaffen. Und es gibt eine verkehrte Umverteilung. Die Umverteilung der Güter bringt die Reichen gegen die Armen auf und das ist ein wesentlicher Grund für die immer radikalisierte Verarmung der Bevölkerung der Welt; für die immer größere Kluft zwischen Reichen und Armen. Und das hängt nicht notwendigerweise vom Profit ab, es hängt von der negativen Umverteilung der Güter ab, was heute in der ganzen Welt der Fall ist.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Bevor wir darauf eingehen, möchte ich Sie gern noch etwas über die Marxsche Beschreibung des Kapitalismus fragen. Was hat Marx Ihrer Meinung nach am klarsten gesehen? Was könnte er heute (noch) auf den Tisch bringen, wenn es um den Kapitalismus geht?

*Ágnes Heller:* Man kann den Marx *Ökonom* und den *Philosoph* unterscheiden. Als Ökonom hat er das Kapitalverhältnis sehr gut beschrieben. Was er als Ökonom sagte, hat sich verwirklicht, ist heute Gemeinplatz. Er sprach über Konzentration des Kapitals – das passierte. Er sprach über die Kapitalisierung der Agrikultur – das passierte. Er sprach über Globalisierung und das passierte auch. Überall sind Sachen, die passierten und nichts davon ist mehr interessant. Warum ist es nicht mehr interessant? Alles, was empirische Tatsache ist, ist nicht mehr interessant.

Auf der anderen Seite ist er ein Philosoph gewesen. Er hat eine philosophische Konzeption gehabt. Nach ihr ist die Arbeitszeit der wichtigste Faktor nicht nur für die Ökonomie, sondern auch für die menschlichen Verhältnisse und für die moderne Welt. Er hat die Konzeption gehabt, dass die Entwicklung der Produktionskräfte die Produktionsverhältnisse verändert und die letzten Produktionsverhältnisse, die von Ausbeutung leben, „Kapitalismus“ heißen. Der Kapitalismus ist das Letzte, das Höchste, immer noch das Beste, wo die Arbeiter ein zufälliges Verhältnis zu ihrer Klasse haben. Nach dieser Konzeption kann nur eine Überwindung des Kapitalismus kommen. Das ist seine philosophische Theorie. Als Theorie wird das nie verwirklicht. Aber in der Philosophie macht das überhaupt nichts aus. Weder bei Platon noch Aristoteles, Kant oder Hegel hat sich so etwas verwirklicht. Aber es gibt bei dem Menschen eine Fantasie über eine transzendente Welt. So eine transzendente Welt ist nicht empirisch, empirisch wird sie nie existieren, aber es ist eine sogenannte Norm, die den Menschen begeistert. Davon ist die Rede. Das heißt, es wird nie passieren, was sich Marx vorstellte.

Nebenbei ist seine Vorstellung sehr traditionell gewesen. Nämlich seit Francis Bacon, aber sicher seit Condorcet haben alle Philosophen geglaubt, dass, wenn sich die Ökonomie und besonders, wenn sich das Wissen vermehrt, wenn wir mehr und mehr Wissen anhäufen,

die Kumulation oder Akkumulation des Wissen auch zur einer menschlichen, glücklichen, gerechten Gesellschaft führen wird.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Fortschritt, nicht wahr?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ja, aber das war nie der Fall gewesen und wird nicht der Fall sein. Das heißt, das fing mit dem Feuer an, denn das Feuer – das hat schon Sophokles gewusst – kann man gut und schlecht benutzen. Auch das Internet kann man gut und schlecht benutzen. Alle Technologie und alles Wissen kann man zum Guten und Schlechten benutzen. Nie wird eine Gesellschaft deswegen gerecht, glücklich usw., weil sich das Wissen vermehrt. Das war eine grundlegende philosophische Idee und Marx folgte hier Condorcet und Immanuel Kant in dieser Konzeption. Aber wir müssen wissen, dass es eine Idee ist, die als Idee schön ist und es wird immer Menschen geben, auch Philosophen, die entzückt von dieser Idee sind. Aber es ist keine empirische, es ist eine transzendente Idee.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Sie selber haben u.a. eine Theorie der Bedürfnisse in Anlehnung an Marx vorgelegt, bei der jene Bedürfnisse eine besondere Rolle spielen, die vom Kapitalismus erzeugt werden und von ihm nicht befriedigt werden können (die sogenannten *radikalen Bedürfnisse*). Wie sehen Sie die Evolution der *radikalen Bedürfnisse* im zeitgenössischen *Turbo-* oder, wenn man es auch so nennen kann, *Digitalkapitalismus*? Welche neuen Erwartungen auf Befriedigung von Bedürfnissen werden heute durchkreuzt?

*Ágnes Heller:* Das ist eine gute Frage. Als ich von den radikalen Bedürfnissen geschrieben habe, da war ich der Überzeugung: in allen Gesellschaften, selbstverständlich auch im Kapitalismus, produziert man solche Bedürfnisse, die man in dieser Situation nicht befriedigen kann. Das ist die Tatsache und deswegen sind diese Bedürfnisse immer radikal. Radikale Bedürfnisse sind nach meiner heutigen Meinung sogar transzendente Bedürfnisse, sie wollen die Position transzendieren, unsere Welt transzendieren. Solche Bedürfnisse haben wir immer, auch heute. Diese Bedürfnisse mobilisieren die Menschen, sie haben eine Mobilisierungskraft. Aber das heißt nicht, dass, wenn diese Bedürfnisse befriedigt werden, keine anderen Bedürfnisse zustande kommen, die nicht befriedigt werden können.

Das war eine Idee von Marx, denn Marx hatte eine Voraussetzung, nämlich, dass die Natur uns alles freigibt. Das heißt, nur die Arbeit schafft Werte. Ein Dschungel hat z.B. keinen Wert. Nur wenn man die Bäume fällt, dann werden diese Bäume einen Wert haben, denn menschliche Arbeit wird investiert. Das war eine schlechte Konzeption. Das war ein Bedürfnis, das vom Kapitalismus auf eigene Weise bestimmt war. Nur im Kapitalismus dachte man, dass allein die Arbeit Wert schafft. Locke hat schon gesagt: 99% aller Werte kommen durch die Arbeit und nur 1% kommt von der Natur. Das heißt wirklich, dass es ein Bedürfnis war, das die bürgerliche Gesellschaft erzeugt hat. Da war die Überzeugung, dass die Natur uns alles freigibt. Und das ist nicht mehr unsere Überzeugung.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Vielleicht ist diese Denkweise – nämlich dass durch die Arbeit alles einen Wert annimmt – selber eine Konsequenz der kapitalistischen Zeit?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ja, das stimmt. Das fing, glaube ich, mit Locke an. Die Arbeitswerttheorie stammt von Locke, nämlich dass der Wert zu 99% von der Arbeit und 1% von der Natur kommt. Die Natur hat im Wesentlichen nichts zu sagen. Wir können immer reicher und reicher werden, weil die Natur uns alles freigibt. In unserer ökologisch bewussten Zeit wissen wir, dass das nicht der Fall ist. Das war ein Ausgangspunkt, der von den Kapitalverhältnissen geschaffen wurde. Im Kapitalismus glaubte man bzw. glaubt man wirklich, dass Arbeit

alles macht. Das war auch ethisch so. Das heißt, wenn du arbeitest, warst du überlegen. Das war eine bürgerliche Konzeption. „Die Anderen schaffen nichts, wenn sie nicht arbeiten“. „Wir arbeiten Tag und Nacht zwölf Stunden“, „wir schaffen alle Werte!“. Das war auch das Bewusstsein des Bürgertums gewesen und auch dann das Bewusstsein der Arbeiter: „Wir arbeiten, wir schaffen die Werte!“. Und Marx hat diesen Standpunkt angenommen.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Kann aber – um zur Idee der radikalen Bedürfnisse zurückzukehren – die brisante Erzeugung solcher unerfüllbaren Erwartungen auf Befriedigung von Bedürfnissen gleichzeitig als Anfang und mögliches Ende des Erfolgs des kapitalistischen Systems angesehen werden? Und da möchte ich gern betonen: des Erfolgs und nicht notwendigerweise des Kapitalismus an sich.

*Ágnes Heller:* Das war ein großer Erfolg gewesen. Aber Sie haben schon das Problem der Demokratie erwähnt, auf das ich gern zurückkommen möchte. Der Kapitalismus hat einen Begriff der Gleichheit und der Freiheit erschaffen. „Alle Menschen sind frei geboren“ sagt das Kapital. Wir können nur in ein Geschäftsverhältnis miteinander treten, weil wir alle frei geboren sind. Wir tun das freiwillig. Auch Marx sah diesen Punkt, wenn der Kapitalist und der Arbeiter miteinander einen Kontrakt haben, das ist eine bürgerliche Konzeption. Zwischen dem feudalen Herrn und dem Leibeigenen besteht kein Kontrakt. Es gibt einen Kontrakt bei der Ehe, es gibt einen Arbeitskontrakt, usw. Ich kann in Kontrakt gehen oder nicht, das hängt von mir ab.

Ob ich das deswegen tue, weil ich arm bin, oder eben weil ich ein Geschäft habe und eine Arbeitskraft brauche, das ist natürlich etwas, das Marx auch betont. Aber die Idee der Freiheit, die Idee der Gleichheit – der gleichen Situation –, das ist die Kontraktssituation. Das war eine bürgerliche Vorstellung, nämlich dass Menschen gleich und frei geboren sind, usw. Ohne diese bürgerliche Konzeption konnte es nicht zur Demokratie kommen, denn wenn nicht alle Menschen gleich und frei geboren sind, nicht alle von Gott mit Gewissen und Vernunft ausgestattet werden, dann können sie nicht wählen, dann gibt es keine Kapazität zum Wählen. Und die Tendenz dahingehend, wie sich allgemeine Wahlen entwickelten, bis zum allgemeinen Wahlrecht der Männer und später auch der Frauen, alle waren Staatsbürger, das heißt, es war vorausgesetzt, dass alle an der Regierung des Staates teilnehmen und passive und aktive Staatsbürger sein konnten.

Der Kapitalismus war die Vorbedingung dieser Art der Demokratie. Aber diese Art der Demokratie muss auch liberal sein, und hier meine ich nicht den ökonomischen, sondern den staatsbürgerlichen Liberalismus. Schauen Sie mal, die Demokratie war zuerst in Amerika. Der Liberalismus war zuerst in England – nicht in Großbritannien –, wie Montesquieu gesagt hat, dank der Verteilung der Mächte, der Rechte der Minderheiten, der Rechte der Individuen. Das heißt, als die zwei Sachen (Demokratie und Liberalismus) kombiniert wurden, dann kam es zur modernen Demokratie, die immer liberale Demokratie gewesen war. Jetzt hat sich die Sache verändert. Jetzt sind alle Tyrannen mit Mehrheit gewählt. Das universale Wahlrecht, das sozusagen die Vorbedingung der gleichen Möglichkeit zur Macht ergreifung und zu Machtpositionen gewesen war, ist jetzt nicht mehr die Vorbedingung einer liberalen Demokratie. In beinahe der ganzen Welt sind solche Regierungen jetzt gewählt. Sie sind von der Mehrheit gewählt worden. Die Mehrheit wählt solche Regierungen, die Tyrannen sind und die verkehrte Umverteilung betreiben. Das heißt, die politische und die ökonomische Situation, beide haben sich verändert. Da kann man nicht, wenn man vom Kapitalismus spricht, von der Abstraktion reden, die nicht wahr ist, nämlich, dass die ökonomische Situation die politische Situation bestimmt, das stimmt nicht. Das stimmt sicher nicht.

## 2. Demokratie

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Jetzt, da Sie auch angefangen haben, von Demokratie zu reden, wollte ich dieses Thema bezüglich der Marxschen Theorie problematisieren. Man kann beim jungen Marx eine sichtbare Affinität für Demokratie, und zwar für die parlamentarische Demokratie finden. Im 18. *Brumaire* erklärt Marx, dass das ursprünglich von der Bourgeoisie vorangetriebene und danach gegen sie selbst gerichtete parlamentarische Regime ein Regime der *Unruhe* ist, das „von der Diskussion lebt“ und bei dem „jedes Interesse, jede gesellschaftliche Einrichtung (...) in allgemeine Gedanken verwandelt [wird]“ (Marx, 1960, 155). Das parlamentarische Regime macht die „großen Majoritäten jenseits des Parlaments mobil“ und ermöglicht einen politisch institutionalisierten Kampf, der am Ende die „Gewalt ohne Phrase“ durch die „Gewalt der Phrase“, des Dialogs, der Diskussion, usw. ersetzt (siehe Brunkhorst, 2007, 188ff.). Betrachtet man es zusammen mit der bekannten Marxschen Verteidigung des Allgemeinen Wahlrechts, lohnt es sich zu fragen: Kann aus der Marxschen Theorie – die hier mit *Marxismus* nicht verwechselt werden soll – eine politisch demokratische Theorie herausgefiltert werden?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ich glaube nicht. Warum sollte es? Marx hat diese Theorie Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts formuliert. Wir befinden uns beinahe in der Mitte des 21. Jahrhunderts. Zwei Jahrhunderte sind vergangen und wir haben sehr viele geschichtliche Erfahrungen seitdem gemacht. Wir haben z.B. schon im 20. Jahrhundert erfahren, wie eine Klassengesellschaft zu einer Massengesellschaft wurde. Marx lebte in einer Zeit, in der die Entwicklung von der feudalen zur Klassengesellschaft stattgefunden hat. Das parlamentarische System, das hier ganz interessant beschrieben wird, war aber ein parlamentarisches System noch vor dem zweiten Teil oder zweiten Auftritt des Bonapartismus. Und, natürlich: wo waren die Kriege? Wo war der ethnische Nationalismus? Damals gab es überhaupt keinen ethnischen Nationalismus. Das war ein anderes Zeitalter. Marx war auf eine Art an der politischen Theorie überhaupt nicht so sehr interessiert, denn er glaubte, dass es im Übergangsprozess zum Kommunismus sowieso keine Politik gäbe. Politik ist etwas, das man nach Marx abschaffen soll, das ist ein Überbau der bisherigen Gesellschaft, besonders der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft.

In einem Sinne aber hat Marx doch Recht gehabt, nämlich, dass die parlamentarische Politik zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, zur modernen Gesellschaft gehört. Zur feudalen Gesellschaft gehört sie überhaupt nicht, obwohl das Wort „Parlament“ und die Institution schon damals existierten – wenngleich sie aber andere Funktionen hatten. Jedoch glaube ich nicht, dass man aus diesem Satz eine politische Theorie bauen soll. Ich glaube nicht, dass eine politische Theorie überhaupt aus den Gedanken eines Philosophen entwickelt werden soll. Man kann keine politische Theorie heute, ob aus Aristoteles ebenso wenig wie aus Marx, aufbauen. Politische Theorien baut man auf dem Grund der Erfahrungen, Beobachtungen und Beschreibungen, was man Soziologie oder politische Soziologie nennt: Was passiert jetzt – und was passierte? Von diesem Standpunkt kann man eine politische Theorie entwickeln.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Und wenn man aber versucht, die Marxsche Theorie zu reflektieren, kann man dennoch ein demokratisches Potential darin sehen? Oder glauben Sie, dass wir nicht einmal den Versuch unternehmen sollten, eine solche Interpretation der Marxschen Theorie zu entwickeln?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ich glaube, man bräuchte es nicht so richtig, denn es ging bei Marx um etwas anderes. Er hatte eine Vision der Gesellschaft, wo alle Bedürfnisse befriedigt werden. Und wo alle Bedürfnisse befriedigt sind, braucht man keine politische Institution, da braucht

man auch keine Demokratie – da sie auch eine politische Institution ist. Also ich glaube nicht, dass man Marx von diesem Standpunkt verstehen sollte oder dass es einen speziellen Sinn hat, Marx von dieser Perspektive zu erzählen. Es ist mehr Demokratie in Aristoteles als in Marx. Er war sicher auch in einer ganz anderen Welt. Was passiert heute? Darüber sollte man weiter nachdenken.

### 3. Kapitalismus und Demokratie

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Jetzt möchte ich gern noch zur Beziehung zwischen Kapitalismus und Demokratie kommen. Sieht man die aktuelle Diskussion zu *Kapitalismus und Demokratie*, wird schnell klar, dass es sich dabei um eine oft widersprüchliche Beziehung handelt. Sie selber haben vom Pendel zwischen beiden (bzw. zwischen Markt und Staat) gesprochen (vgl. Heller, 2013). Sind *Kapitalismus und Demokratie* zwei miteinander unvereinbare oder, wenn man es so will, dialektische Begriffe?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ich glaube nicht. Ich habe schon gesagt, dass keine Demokratie ohne Kapitalismus möglich ist, denn Kapitalismus – das hat Marx auch so beschrieben – entsteht über einen Kontrakt, der auf Gleichheit und Freiheit beruht, und politisch ist dieser Kontrakt nur in der Demokratie möglich. Die Demokratie braucht den Kapitalismus, sonst gibt es überhaupt keine Freiheit, keine Gleichheit und keinen Kontrakt mehr. Das heißt nicht, dass der Kapitalismus nur in der Demokratie existiert, er kann auch ohne Demokratie existieren. Mehr noch: Beinahe in der ganzen Welt existiert er ohne Demokratie.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Um es nochmals ausführlicher zu diskutieren: wie sieht aktuell die Balance zwischen beiden aus?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ich würde die Frage nicht so stellen. Es gibt sehr wenige liberale Demokratien heute in der Welt – diese liberale Demokratie von den angelsächsischen Ländern, wie England, die Vereinigten Staaten, Neuseeland und Australien und der europäische Kontinent. Außer diesen Fällen gibt es sehr wenige liberale Demokratien – einige in Südamerika in diesem Moment, einige in Asien, aber in keinem anderen Teil der Welt. Das heißt, wir müssen die Frage so stellen, dass es nicht nur für einen winzigen Teil der Welt relevant ist – eine Welt, wo es Kapitalismus und Demokratie gibt. Und ich wiederhole es: in allen Welten, wo es Demokratie gibt, gibt es auch Kapitalismus – es gibt freie Unternehmen (Kapital), es gibt Marktgesellschaft.

Ob es einen Widerspruch [zwischen Kapitalismus und Demokratie] gibt? Ja, natürlich gibt es ihn. Aber das hängt davon ab, ob man von liberaler Demokratie oder von Demokratie ohne Liberalismus spricht. In Ungarn sprach unserer Ministerpräsident über illiberale Demokratie. Natürlich: In der illiberalen Demokratie entscheidet die Regierung. Und das ist entscheidend für die verkehrte Umverteilung.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Und hat diese populistische Zeit, die wir in Europa und Amerika samt Lateinamerika erleben, mit Orban, Trump, Maduro usw...

*Ágnes Heller:* Erst eine Präzision: Maduro ist ein totalitärer Herrscher, er ist 100% Diktator, das ist eine totalitäre Diktatur. Die anderen Regierungen von der Türkei, von Russland, von Ungarn, usw. sind Tyrannen aber keine totalitären. Das ist eine andere politische Situation.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Und diese autoritäre Zeit, um es doch anders auszudrücken, hat mit dem jetzigen Zustand des Kapitalismus zu tun, oder würden Sie es davon trennen?

*Ágnes Heller:* Natürlich hat es mit dem jetzigen Zustand des Kapitalismus zu tun. Sie manipulieren den jetzigen Zustand der Kapitalverhältnisse. Es gibt keinen absolut freien Handel, keinen freien Markt auf der globalen Welt. Es gibt eine Art freien, sagen wir, freien Markts *zwischen Monopolen*. Karl Mannheim hat von den Intellektuellen als freischwebenden Intellektuellen gesprochen. Es gibt freischwebendes Kapital. Es gibt freischwebende Monopole, die gegeneinander kämpfen. Und es gibt Menschen, die als Tyrannen von der ganzen Bevölkerung oder mindestens von der Mehrheit der Bevölkerung gewählt sind. Das Geld von den Monopolen geht zu diesen Tyrannen. Diese Tyrannen „umverteilen“ es und verstärken ihre eigene Oligarchie damit. Das kann man nicht als Autokratie beschreiben, es ist auch schlecht als Populismus zu verstehen. Die Populisten haben sich auf die unteren Klassen gestützt. Das war typische populistische Politik, dass sie zwar Diktaturen waren, aber dass sie die unteren Klassen, die Arbeiterklassen, beschützten. Aber hier sind nicht solche Arten von Regierungen gemeint. Sie stützen sich auf niemanden. Sie produzieren ihre eigene Oligarchie. Die Oligarchie hängt von ihnen ab und nicht umgekehrt. Deswegen sagte ich, dass die Idee, „die Ökonomie bestimmt die Politik“, nicht mehr der Fall ist.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Wie ist Ihrer Meinung nach diese Situation zu korrigieren? Sie haben an Marx die Kritik geübt, dass man nicht einfach von der Existenz einer kommenden Gesellschaft (einer kommunistischen Gesellschaft) ausgehen kann, bei der die Bedürfnisse aller Menschen (nicht einmal materiell) vollkommen befriedigt werden können. Das wäre eine Metaerzählung unmöglicher Verwirklichung.

*Ágnes Heller:* Ja, eine Metaerzählung, guter Ausdruck, eine Metageschichte.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Genau, eine Metageschichte unmöglicher Verwirklichung. Und dennoch: Kann man dieses Gesellschaftsbild als – im Sinne Kants – „regulative Idee“ bzw. als Orientierung verwenden, um jene Balance besser zu korrigieren?

*Ágnes Heller:* Man kann es sich als eine regulative Idee vorstellen, aber ohne Gewalt und nicht als Modell. Das war ein fürchterliches Modell im 20. Jahrhundert, das, als Überwindung des Kapitals konzipiert, in einen totalitären Staat und eine totalitäre Gesellschaft endete. Die Idee selbst kann man als regulative Vernunftidee sozusagen anerkennen. Schauen Sie mal, es gibt so viele Ideen... Wir haben auch die Idee der Unsterblichkeit der Seele erdacht. Wir wissen, dass die Seele nicht unsterblich ist – aber was für ein wunderbarer Gedanke! Und natürlich ist da etwas Wichtiges. Wenn du glaubst, dass du in einer anderen, zukünftigen Welt glücklich sein wirst, musst du dich ehrlicher benehmen. Und wenn du an eine Welt glaubst, in der diese ganze Situation, die heute existiert, nun überwunden wird, an eine transzendente Welt, dann kannst du dich auch ehrlicher als die anderen Menschen benehmen. Wenn man diese Idee ernst nimmt, kann es auch unsere Verhaltensweise bzw. unsere Taten und unsere Werte beeinflussen. Das heißt, dass es nicht vergebens ist. Und deswegen sage ich, dass, obwohl Marx' ökonomische Theorien jetzt nicht mehr wichtig wirken – obwohl sie alle wahr geworden sind –, seine philosophische Theorie immer bei uns bleibt, denn alle philosophischen Ideen bleiben immer bei uns. Die transzendentalen Ideen kann man nicht falsifizieren. Man kann sie nicht widerlegen, man kann sie nie widerlegen. Deswegen sind sie immer auf eine Weise gültig.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Richard Rorty sprach in *Stolz auf unser Land* von der Notwendigkeit, auf die *Bewegungspolitik*, die sich auf große Metaerzählungen stützt, zu verzichten, um stattdessen sich der *Politik als Kampagne* anzunähern, bei der man sich auf die Lösung bestimmter Probleme (ja, Bedürfnisse) richtet. Kann man aber eine *Politik als Kampagne* ausüben, ohne einen Horizont zu haben?

*Ágnes Heller:* Schauen Sie, die große Erzählung ist tot. Niemand glaubt mehr, wenn man ehrlich ist, an die großen Erzählungen. Diese Erzählungen sind auf der Voraussetzung gebaut, dass die Kumulation des Wissens zur Glückseligkeit und Gerechtigkeit führt. Niemand glaubt mehr daran. Ich glaube nicht, dass wir wegen des Internets glücklicher sein oder eine gerechtere Gesellschaft haben werden. Da war dieser Gedanke: „Internet ist so demokratisch“, „wir sind so demokratisch“ usw. Und trotzdem können wir auch alle Faschisten durch das Internet sein. Beides ist der Fall. Die große Erzählung ist also aus. Niemand glaubt mehr daran. Man braucht sie nicht und man muss sie nicht ersetzen.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Und auch nicht, um kleine Politik zu machen?

*Ágnes Heller:* Schauen Sie sich die Situation in Europa einmal an. Die Situation des Europas ist folgende: die europäische Union ist sehr nah dran, die liberale Demokratie zu verlieren. Wir sind sehr nah dran, dass ethnischer Nationalismus in Europa wieder die führende Macht wird. Und da wiederholen wir das 20. Jahrhundert – mit 100 Millionen Menschen, die in Europa getötet wurden. Das ist kein Spiel, wir brauchen nicht über die wunderbare Zukunft sprechen, wir müssen die fürchterlichen Gefahren ins Auge fassen.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Aber ist liberale Demokratie auch nicht eine Metaerzählung?

*Ágnes Heller:* Nein, ich glaube, das ist überhaupt keine Metaerzählung! Das ist keine „gute politische Einrichtung“ [apostrophiert ironisch] – obwohl es keine gute politische Einrichtung gibt. Die liberale Demokratie ist deswegen gut, weil wir sagen können, was nicht gut ist. Das ist die große Sache. In der liberalen Demokratie können alle sagen, was schlecht, gut oder fürchterlich ist, ohne, dass ihnen etwas passiert. Die liberale Demokratie gibt uns die Möglichkeit, alles was wir glauben, auszudrücken. Das ist keine „gute politische Einrichtung“ [apostrophiert erneut]. Es gibt sowieso keine absolute Freiheit, es gibt mindestens die Freiheiten in Plural, nicht die Freiheit in Singular... die Pressefreiheit, die Koalitionsfreiheit, usw. Das sollte man verteidigen. Das ist das Beste, was wir haben können. Wir können nichts Besseres haben. Und das ist jetzt in Gefahr. Ich glaube, dass wir mehr von den Dystopien als von den Utopien lernen können, denn die Dystopien zeigen uns mindestens, was die Gefahren sind. Wir können Gefahren vermeiden, wenn wir die Gefahren sehen. Es macht überhaupt keinen Sinn, sich eine glücklichere Zukunft vorstellen, wenn die Gegenwart nicht mal gesichert ist.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Damit ist meine letzte Frage quasi beantwortet. Ich wollte Ihnen eine historische Frage stellen...

*Ágnes Heller:* Ja, bitte.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Ungefähr 50 Jahre sind nach dem Prager Frühling und dem Pariser Mai, sowie 46 Jahre nach dem Militärputsch gegen Allendes Regierung in Chile vergangen. Ist nach diesem *Vorspiel zur Postmoderne*, wie Sie mal gesagt haben (vgl. Heller, 1999), auf eine zeitgenössische *Politik als Kampagne*, die sich von Marx auch inspirieren lässt, dennoch zu hoffen?

*Ágnes Heller:* Ganz verschiedene Fragen. '68 war ein wichtiges Jahr gewesen, es war der Sozialismus mit menschlichem Antlitz, es war die europäische Neue Linke, der Frühling und, wie Sie sagen, der Putsch gegen Allende war auch kurz danach in Chile. Und in allen anderen Ländern gab es auch etwas.

´68 war eine internationale Bewegung, bei der die Neue Linke eine wichtige Rolle spielte. Es gab eine Neue Linke in Japan, in China, in Amerika, natürlich in Frankreich und auch, wenn ich mich gut daran erinnere, in Mexiko. Aber in allen Ländern hat sich die Neue Linke an die konkreten politischen Absichten gekoppelt. Wir brauchen konkrete politische Absichten. In Deutschland war es ein Generationskonflikt. Die Jugend sagte dem Vater und der Mutter: „wo seid ihr gewesen“ und „was hat ihr getan“. Das heißt, die Frage war der vorherigen Generation gestellt. Das hat die ganze Atmosphäre in Deutschland verändert. In Frankreich wollten sie de Gaulle loswerden und sie wurden de Gaulle los. In Amerika ging es um den Vietnamkrieg. Das heißt, in allen Ländern ging es um etwas Anderes, aber alles blieb bei einem gemeinschaftlichen Gedanke – auch natürlich beim Kampf gegen die Konsumgesellschaft.

Das war schön ´68, dass es so heterogen gewesen war. Es war nicht zentralisiert, denn alle vorherigen Revolutionen, besonders die totalitären Revolutionen, waren zentralisiert, sie hatten ein zentrales Thema. Und ´68 war so eine freie, ich möchte sagen, *postmoderne Revolution* gewesen... Da ging um konkrete politische Absichten. Und wenn Rorty über solche konkreten politischen Absichten redet, kann man sich dann umso mehr für sie einsetzen. Solche Absichten, die mit mehr Freiheit und Möglichkeiten einhergehen, unsere Meinungen zu äußern. Das heißt, die Freiheit ist keine Abstraktion, es gibt mehr oder weniger. Und es ist immer besser, mehr als weniger Freiheit zu haben.

*Rafael Alvear Moreno:* Frau Heller, vielen Dank für dieses Gespräch.

*Ágnes Heller:* Danke schön.

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