SECOND EDITION

ANNA TRIANDAFYLLIDOU AND RUBY GROPAS

WHAT IS EUROPE?

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This authoritative yet accessible introduction to understanding Europe today moves beyond accounts of European integration to provide a wide-ranging and nuanced study of contemporary Europe and its historical development. This fully updated edition adds material on recent developments, such as Brexit and the migrant and Eurozone crises.

The concept of Europe is instilled with a plethora of social, cultural, economic, and political meanings. Throughout history, and still today, scholars writing on Europe, and politicians involved in national or European politics, often disagree on the geographic limits of this space and the defining elements of Europe. Europe is, therefore, first and foremost a concept that takes different shapes and meanings depending on the realm of life on which it is applied and on the historical period under investigation. At a given point in time, depending on the perspective we adopt and the situation in which we find ourselves, Europe may represent very different things. Thus, we should better talk about 'Europes' in the plural. *What Is Europe?* explores these evolving conceptions of Europe from antiquity to the present. This book is all the more timely as Europe responds to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Britain's departure from the European Union, financial slump, refugee emergencies, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This book offers a fully updated introduction to European studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. It is a crucial companion to any undergraduate or graduate course on Europe and the European Union.

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She writes in her personal capacity and the views do not express the official opinion of the European Commission.

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Second Edition

Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas

From Anna to Bo Strath, Stefano Bartolini, and Tariq Modood.
From Ruby to Loukas Tsoukalis, Thanos Veremis and in memory of
Theodore Couloumbis.

As friends, colleagues, and mentors they have inspired us to hold our
professional and academic ethics high, speak our minds, and keep cool
no matter what.

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PREFACE

This book has a long story. Its origins lie back in 2004 when Helen Wallace and Steven Kennedy, at the time with Palgrave Politics series, launched a series on the New Europe. The first edition was published in 2015, this second edition is being published almost two decades after the invitation came to write a book critically discussing the question of what Europe is.

Over the past two decades, the idea of writing this book has always been incredibly fascinating and challenging, and sometimes even daunting. With Europe incessantly changing, and with euphoria giving place to multiple and often unimaginable crises, trying to tackle the question of what Europe is has been increasingly complex, but also so much more politically meaningful.

Between the first and second editions, Europe changed in many ways. No surprise there really, as Europe has always been characterised by change. But the magnitude and range of dimensions on which changes have occurred during these two decades have made the question of what is Europe all the more intriguing. The idea for this book was framed at a time when we were still riding the Euro-euphoria of the early 2000s. Very quickly this gave way to deep political crisis as EU citizens rejected the European Constitution in 2005, leading many thinkers and intellectuals to do some further soul searching on what Europe is, on what Europe and the EU meant for Europeans, and on what this all meant for democracy in Europe. The celebratory mood of the continent's unification through EU enlargement to include central and eastern European countries and the formal start of accession negotiations with Turkey came to an abrupt end with the London and Madrid bombings of 2004 and 2005. The global financial crisis and the deep Eurozone crisis that followed severely impacted the lives of many EU citizens challenging the very foundations of the EU edifice. The Arab Spring that followed, the war in Syria, the regular tragedies at Europe's borders had already been unfolding when we closed the first edition in late 2014.

And yet the seven years that have followed have been so full of critical events that would have been difficult to imagine, even less predict, in 2014. The magnitude of the 2015/2016 humanitarian and border crisis could perhaps have been anticipated, like the decision of the UK to leave the EU after the 2016 referendum. Nonetheless, the scale and frequency of the tragic terrorist attacks in France, Belgium, and much of northern Europe in 2015 and 2016 and the outbreak of a global pandemic such as COVID-19 were not on many radars. The events of the last seven years certainly made us feel that some additional reflections were necessary to answer the question what Europe is.

While the 2020s started with a disconcerting rise of many '-isms' – Euroscepticism, nationalism, populism, illiberalism, and racism – not all is bleak. We have observed also a rich democratic backlash from citizens (particularly young people) and civil society against these divisive responses, calling for urgent action against climate change, asking for solidarity and respect for difference, fairness, and social justice to be values at the core of Europe. We have also seen Europe pragmatically reassessing its global role vis-à-vis a polarised United States, and China's as well as Russia's increased assertiveness and authoritarianism.

Turning the original idea into a manuscript was fascinating as Europe kept being a moving object, but the task has not been easy. There have been more requests to extend the submission deadline than any one of us can remember. There were always just too many other things going on. The joys and challenges of a mobile academic career, funding proposals, project deliverables, journal articles, and job applications, do not leave much time for authored books. The joys and challenges of young families added to the mix – between 2004 and 2015 each of us had two children (Kimonas born in 2005, Alexandros and Spiros in 2010, and Evelyn in 2013), alongside two more boys, Dionisio (2002) and Iasonas (2004).

During those early years, we had both moved from Athens to Naples (Anna) and Palo Alto (Ruby) but wrote this book when both in Florence at the incredible environment of the EUI's Robert Schuman Centre. The second edition has been a transatlantic one as each of us started a new phase in our careers and lives – Anna in Toronto, Ruby in Brussels. It was perhaps our new professional and personal experiences alongside a changing European context that prompted us towards a new edition. We felt there were several new elements that we wanted to include and new perspectives to share with the readers.

The reason why we did not abandon the writing despite the other trivial and less trivial tasks and demands of professional and family life has been precisely that: Europe has kept changing, has kept being both problematic and inspiring through these years, and has kept us asking questions to each other about our present and future, as Greeks and as Europeans, and about the future of our children, these young Europeans with very mobile lives.

Through this long and uncertain path to this book's completion some people have been our stable reference points, our lighthouses, the people who give

meaning to our lives, beyond jobs and books: Evgenios and Loukas, our hus-
bands, and of course our boys (Dionisio, Iasonas, Kimonas–Dimitris, Alexandros,
and Spiros) and the little queen of the company, Evelyn! Our parents have been
indispensable parts of this journey: Eva, Spyros, Dina, Dimitris (who is no longer
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We would like to take this opportunity to thank Diane Shugart for being so
responsive and meticulous and a copyeditor that is truly enjoyable to work with.
Many thanks also to the anonymous reviewers of Routledge for their construc-
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remain responsible for all errors and omissions.

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Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas
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WHAT IS EUROPE?

An introduction

Why ask the question?

When asked the question 'What is Europe?' each one of us would probably give a different answer, depending on where we are from, where we live, or even our age. Most of us would assume that there is an absolute truth; a definitive answer to be given. We would argue on the criteria or the historical evidence and legacy on which this or that definition of Europe could or should rest. To answer the question, some of us may refer to public opinion surveys that try to measure feelings of belonging and identity. Others may draw on historical works to describe the legacy of Europe or quote the works of famous European think-ers. Others still may privilege a politicised and ideological definition of Europe. More often than not, in such contemporary discussions, most would conflate the term 'Europe' with that of the European Union (EU).

Defining Europe has been a perpetual quest. Throughout the centuries there have been regular and recurring attempts to define what Europe is, where its limits lie, and what it is aiming towards through the much too often repeated question of 'Quo Vadis Europa?' Questioning what Europe is has also reflected a questioning of what late modernity is, and how we orient ourselves towards the future (Bauman 2004; Delanty 2013). In 1987, political scientist Edgar Morin (p. 23) wrote that

> If Europe is law, it is also force; if it is democracy it is also oppression; if it is spirituality, it is also materiality; if it is moderation, it is also hubris and excess; if it is reason, it is also myth, even in the very idea of reason.

So, why is defining Europe an important question still today? Or rather, even more so today?

We consider it is important to define, or rather revisit and explore, our understandings of Europe for three reasons. First, to question the different facets that the concept of Europe has taken on in different contexts in history in order to reveal its internal diversity, not just its diachronic evolution. We wish to engage in a critical reading of the different perspectives on Europe: who decides what Europe is and what have been the competing hegemonic discourses in different points and places in time? Second, to understand why and how 'Europe' has become so present in political narratives and in all aspects of societal, cultural, economic, commercial, and institutional life across all countries of the wider European continent, regardless of their membership of the EU. And third, to better understand the sort of role 'Europe' still plays in the global arena in spite of its shrinking economic and demographic weight. Unpacking what Europe is, and what it has been in different times and for different stakeholders, may help define what it can be in the current dynamic global context, characterised by increased interdependency, but also uncertainty (as the last pandemic has taught us), as well as volatility, as new geopolitical and economic powers are emerging and authoritarian populism appears to increase its appeal globally.

In the chapters that follow, we explore the concept of Europe and its past uses widely. We explore the question of what Europe is from different perspectives so as to shed light on the cleavages between countries, regions, and peoples across Europe as well as on the shared understandings, common legacies, and aspirations. We do not restrict this inquiry to the European integration project, instead we trace the historical character of, and the cultural and political references to, Europe with a view to opening up the horizon. We approach Europe as a geographical space and also as a place. It is a continent that is culturally constructed by a past that is both objectively (based on historical events) and subjectively constructed (the events are given a specific meaning and are put into a wider framework of meaning) as 'European'. It also has a geopolitical power dimension, as even though Europe is contested and often divided, it remains a rather distinct global actor.

We seek to contribute to a debate on who 'we' the Europeans are, where 'we' come from, and where 'we' are heading to, in the current global context. A context which is characterised by the world shyly venturing into a new normal as the COVID-19 pandemic changes gear; with the digital transition changing the way we produce, consume, move, trade, work, build, teach, learn, earn, fight, and think; with climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and no longer posing a future risk but a very clear and present threat; with demographic trends such as ageing, migration, and depopulation increasingly impacting Europe's democratic choices; and, with a new world order taking shape in international relations.

We do not provide definitive answers *tout court* to the book's guiding question of 'What is Europe?' We do aim to give the reader the tools to ask and answer these questions themselves.

Defining Europe

Defining 'Europe' seems to be an ongoing story, an incessant effort to revisit the core existentialist questions of what comprises a definition of Europe. Throughout the course of the continent's history, politicians, political elites, academics, and thinkers have been tackling and returning to these questions in elaborate, critical, as well as in simplistic, populist ways. In this book, we highlight the historical and ambivalent character of the term, and offer alternative views of Europe by putting current developments into perspective. We adopt a critical viewpoint with regard to social and political developments in Europe today and more generally in the post–World War II period. This book is distinctively European in that it looks wider and deeper into the origins, evolution, and future of Europe on a variety of levels and from an interdisciplinary point of view.

We argue that there can be no single definition of Europe. The dynamic nature of what Europe represents is not new, nor is it a trait particular to the more recent phase of European history, namely, the European Union. Therefore, we take the position that Europe is a concept that becomes meaningful in relation to its specific historical context. Stråth Mikael af Malmborg and Bo Stråth (2002, p. 3) have argued that Europe is the invention of nation-states. By this provocative statement they wanted to highlight that there are different national answers to the 'What is Europe?' question, but also that Europe is essentially a constructed notion. Stråth, like Delanty (1995) among other well-known contemporary historians and sociologists, points to the diverse meanings that Europe has assumed in history. They pay, however, less attention to the fact that Europe may have multiple meanings also synchronically. At a given point in time, depending on the perspective we adopt and the situation in which we find ourselves, Europe may represent very different things to different people. Thus, maybe we should speak of many *Europes* rather than of just one.

Not only has the definition of Europe varied across the past centuries and even decades, but its content and meaning also fluctuates in relation to the different realms of social life. Delanty and Rumford (2005) argue that Europe has become a dimension that cannot be ignored at either the societal or the political level. We would rather say that there are different Europes operating in various social realms: there is a Europe in culture or something called 'a European civilisation' (even if its meaning is highly contested); there is a Europe in politics and social policy; there is also a Europe in history, and there are (geopolitical as well as internal, non-territorial) boundaries to Europe that are constantly shifting and changing. From a conceptual viewpoint, there is no need – and it is not possible either – to define a single Europe, drawing together all these meanings and perspectives into a single container. From an ideological viewpoint though, it is possible to provide not only a critical review but also a synthesis of what Europe is – and also of what it could be nowadays.

In this section, therefore, we explore some of the most pertinent dimensions that have defined Europe.

Brand Europe

The issue of the *European-ness* of its people and countries at the geographical or cultural margins of the current European Union project raises the question of *power.* Who has the power to decide what Europe is and who belongs to it? This is a question seldom dealt with in academic and media debates, perhaps because it is judged as self-evident or, by some, as less important. For instance, decisions on who belongs to the European Union are taken by the European Council, consisting of the member states, which consider themselves – and are largely recognised by other countries – as the legitimate owners of the 'brand' name Europe.

Their ownership of the European–Union–slash–Europe as a geopolitical project is not argued on the basis of a crude power rhetoric. The political dimension of Europe's 'ownership' is largely framed into a wider claim of ownership over culture and symbols (Handler 1988, p. 142). The Copenhagen criteria for new countries' accession to the European Union, which established in 1993 the political conditionality principles of EU membership eligibility as well as the official EU negotiations' debate with associated countries like Turkey or other Balkan states, reflect this value dimension. Yet, this value debate presupposes a power dimension: the European Union and the countries that currently belong to it have the power to judge whether other countries, nations, ethnic groups, territories, traditions, and cultural forms or symbols are 'European'. And as Bourdieu (1991, p. 236) has argued, to name something is to bring it into existence. The political and symbolic power to assign the European label as a brand name that belongs to the European Union has gone largely uncontested in recent years. However, this was not always the case and is one aspect of the 'What is Europe?' question that needs to be critically explored with a view to uncovering how this power of naming has been used in the past and what its implications are today for defining Europe. In addition, brand Europe is challenged internally by populist parties, particularly by central-eastern European countries, where the current political formation of the European Union is accused of not sufficiently safeguarding European values. Chapters 2, 4, and 5 on the changing shape of Europe, on cultural Europe, and on Europe and identity, respectively, tackle some of these issues.

Historical trajectories

In scholarly debate, some researchers have proposed theoretical or historical models from which a definition of Europe will emerge somehow 'naturally' and 'objectively' from historical inquiry. Europe has existed in history, albeit in different shapes and with different meanings or modes of organisation. The European Union is a landmark in the historical trajectory of the larger entity called Europe.

Adopting a critical perspective, Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the origins of the term 'Europe' and the different meanings it has acquired over the centuries as well as the different European unification projects that have developed in the last

century. More specifically, Chapter 2 looks at how the term emerged, mainly as a geographical expression demarcating the Christian world, and how it changed in the mid-fifteenth century. In particular, a milestone occurred after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 and the colonial expansion of European powers after 1492, giving way to the notion of European identity as a system of 'civilisational values'. It is argued that after the fall of Constantinople, when the Greek Christian Eastern Empire disappeared and Europe was confined to the Latin West, the idea of Europe began to replace Christendom and eventually became a new cultural frame of reference.

The meaning of Europe is examined during the period of European explorations of other parts of the world, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, when the Christian universal mission was replaced by the 'White man's burden'. Europe as a term is of course also linked to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment philosophers identified with the idea of Europe as the process of modernity and valued the primacy of science and rationality. Europe provided the symbol of the new universal civilisation predicated by the Enlightenment. The different meanings, forms, and shapes that the term 'Europe' has taken in history reveal a non-linear process that has gone back and forth as much as sideways, at times disappeared, and then re-emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The changes in the meaning of Europe during the era of nationalism, notably in relation to both early nation-formation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but also the more recent nationalist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are herewith discussed along with how the term was used within nationalist discourses to signify specific geographical areas, values, or populations.

Value systems and visions of Europe

Chapter 3 investigates the visions that Europe has stirred in recent centuries among thinkers and statesmen. However, to understand these various visions that Europe has evoked, it is necessary to understand the political context within which these have been formulated and the drivers of these narratives. It is also necessary to trace the values and ideas that have been associated with these visions of Europe. In this chapter, we discuss what has inspired attempts at defining Europe and unifying it, and the context within which these narratives coexisted antagonised, impregnated, and succeeded one another. This chapter offers a critical reading of the various projects of a united Europe promoted by different thinkers, intellectuals, and politicians in the inter-war period, during the rise of fascism and Nazism, as well as in the post-war era and during the Cold War. We highlight the different variants of this imagined European unity and discuss its west-Eurocentrism, pointing to how such projects were perceived and conceived in central-eastern Europe. The chapter concludes with a forward-looking reflection on the meaning and relevance of Europe in the near future.

Cultural dimensions

Chapter 4 discusses the cultural dimension of Europe by highlighting the ambivalence of any reference to a European culture or value system. We try to unravel European culture and what it represents, or rather what it has represented at different times and in what ways these representations are relevant at present. By navigating between the ideas of Europe as civilisation, Europe as progress, Europe as modernity, Europe as unity, and Europe as diversity, we explore the key themes that have been dominant in Europe's cultural battleground and their significance today. We also try to pinpoint some of the dissenters and exceptions to this theory.

We highlight some of the complexities and contradictions that make up the way culture is understood as well as the heritages that constitute it and their relevance in contemporary understandings of European culture. We also present some efforts that have been made to attribute meaning and offer definitions of 'European' culture on the part of international and regional interstate organisations whose scope of competence covers issues of culture, education, democracy, and cooperation. We also delve into Europe's relationship with the 'Other' in order to underscore the cleavages, contradictions, and alternative visions that have been put forward as representations of European culture and European values.

Throughout this *parcours culturel*, we seek the dominant, the alternative, and the dissenting definitions of what is included and represented within 'European culture'. Just as importantly, we explore what 'European culture' aspires to. This latter aspirational dimension is probably its most distinctive feature as it has shaped its universalist characteristics. European culture acquires meaning when the commonalities, shared values, and experiences of the past are constructed in a forward-looking manner. In other words, references to a European culture seem to mostly be made when its constituent parts claim their belonging to a shared cultural space to express a political vision of Europe and the ideals it represents – or ought to represent.

Identities

The different meanings and outlooks of Europe through history unavoidably raise the question of whether a European identity exists, or has ever existed, and in what form. Do Europeans feel European? And if they do, how does a feeling of belonging to Europe relate to other important collective and political identities such as national identity or indeed ethnic or minority identity?

This set of questions is unpacked in Chapter 5. First, what kind of identity is or would be a 'European' identity? Should we expect it to be like a national identity? Should it have a similar type of cultural content, notably, a set of customs and traditions, common norms, or a common civic culture that is passed on between generations, links with a historical homeland, a common political system, and an integrated economy? Do we see such an identity taking shape

through EU enlargement and particularly since the reconnection of Europe culturally, politically, economically, and institutionally after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

Or, should European identity be understood as an 'umbrella' type of secondary political identity that brings together a range of national identities that share some similarities, notably, links to a common geographical territory (the European continent) and a certain link with a common European culture and values system (see Chapter 4 on European culture and European values)? This kind of secondary and mediated type of collective identity – mediated, that is, through national belonging – appears to have been a predominant feature of the European identity in the twenty-first century so far.

European identity also raises issues relating to cultural diversity and democratic inclusive politics. Is European identity an 'open' identity that allows for the inclusion of migrants and minorities, or is it a 'closed' one, as national identities were generally presumed to be? Can European identity help us, the 'Europeans', better understand ourselves and clarify our relations with our 'significant others', whether these are minorities and immigrants within Europe or other nations, world regions, cultures, or civilisations? And, how do demographic changes impact this identity?

There are at least two questions that are pertinent. First, *who defines* what kind of diversity 'belongs' to Europe? Is it the EU institutions, is it individual European countries (whether members of the EU or not), or is it the people(s) of Europe? Paradoxically perhaps, certain groups of citizens, though hesitant as regards their attachment to the 'EU', have expressed a common European connection in the way they express commonly shared concerns or 'indignation' and protest in the form of demonstrations, marches, and transnational mobilisation in social movements, whether against austerity and the rising cost of living, or racism, or vaccines in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, *what kind of cultural or religious diversity* is judged to be alien to the European continent and hence is not necessarily included in the 'Unity in Diversity' motto. Islam and Muslims are an obvious case in point here. For some politicians and a segment of the public opinion in European countries, there is no such a thing as European Muslims or European Islam. They see Islamic traditions as alien to most of Europe. They consider such influences as 'un-European', the by-product of Arab expansion or Ottoman conquest in a more distant past, of colonial relations, or of recent migrations. Islam not only has a historical presence of centuries in Spain (800 years) and countries under Ottoman imperial rule (400 years); there is also a new European Islam that is the outcome of the earlier labour migrations of the post-war period.

As we discuss in Chapter 5, the question of whether Europe and Islam can belong together remains unsettled in public and political debates; it is often associated with crises and challenges which values take precedence in how Europe is defined.

Europe through crises

Definitions of Europe become louder, more explicit, and more divisive in times of crisis. A crisis is an extraordinary, abnormal point in time that alters subsequent decisions, modes of governance, power balances, and even world views. Europe's history is fraught with crises; European integration itself has been shaped and defined through multiple political, economic, and institutional crises in the past seven decades – from the oil price crises in the early 1970s to the humanitarian and border crisis of 2015–2016 and from the political and institutional crisis triggered by the Dutch and French rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 to the economic crisis that followed the global financial crisis of 2008. These crises not only form, but also challenge, definitions of Europe.

For example, the Greek sovereign debt crisis in 2009 shook the foundations of the Eurozone and posed a very real, existentialist crisis to the European Union. The end of the core European value of solidarity was proclaimed with public debate falling back into simplistic distinctions between northern and southern Europe, between centre and periphery, between creditors and debtors. Talk of a two- (if not more)-speed Europe multiplied based, in principle, on economic arguments of growth and fiscal stability, but essentially relapsing into cultural and religious stereotypes. In this discourse there exists an implicit (and at times explicit) differentiation of 'Europeans'. Simply put, there is an easy stereotype that is all too easily stirred, that imagines core Europe composed of 'first-class' Europeans who are virtuous savers, law-abiding, well-organised liberals, and a second category of Europeans who consume more than they produce, and are debt-ridden, corrupt, and disorganised.

Returning to the tensions mentioned above in the relationship between Europe and Islam, the 2006 controversy over the depiction of the Prophet Mohammed in cartoons – published originally in the Danish press and later republished in several European dailies – is an interesting example of a crisis that triggered complex debates on European values. Although the controversy started in Denmark, it soon acquired a transnational character to the extent that it attracted the attention of government elites in the Arab world asking for an apology from the Danish editor or government or both. Once the question of apology became a public concern (several months after the cartoons were initially published in the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten*), editors and journalists throughout western Europe mobilised strongly, either upholding or criticising their publication. Concomitantly, the issue was given publicity in the Arab media (Soage 2006); citizens in Arab countries also mobilised, protesting against the cartoons. These protests led in some cities of the Middle East to violent outbursts and the burning of Danish embassies. The crisis was not only international in nature but also specifically European in that it reflected important tensions within core European values and political principles, in this case between the fundamental protection of the freedom of expression and the equally important principle of respect for other religions. How these tensions are accommodated in times of crises define what Europe represents.

Similarly, the rise of international jihadist terrorism in 2015 and the related attacks in Paris, Brussels, and other European cities brought to the fore important debates about European secular values, the place of religion, integration, and the accommodation of religious and ethnic diversity in European societies. The Black Lives Matter movement that began in North America in the summer of 2020 also found significant resonance among European youth demanding a more explicit recognition of the role of European countries in the transatlantic slave trade and seeking to address persistent anti–Black racism today. While such issues resonate differently in countries that were formerly colonial states compared to those that were not directly involved in colonialism, the debate has involved broader questions of European liberal values.

The question of 'What is Europe?' becomes important through contrast to real or imagined threatening 'significant others', notably Muslim countries and Islam in general, or racialised minorities. These challenges and dilemmas cut across Chapters 5 and 6.

The geographical conundrum

There are claims of European–ness by nations and people that are on the fringes of the continent and even beyond it, in Eurasia or in northern Africa. Actually, it often becomes unclear whether people wish to join an area of security and prosperity identified with the European Union or whether they make reference to a cultural, historical, or symbolic notion of Europe that brings with it certain value connotations. The question of the boundaries of Europe is taken up in Chapter 6.

Europe's external borders, or boundaries that trace its periphery and limits, are not the only borders that matter; there are also borders within. Internal borders – whether functional, spatial, national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, ideo–logical, or socio–economic – are just as defining in terms of creating identities and attributing substance to the concept of 'Europe'. These internal borders, in many cases much more than the external ones, have structured both the course of Europe's history and also the perceptions that the rest of the world holds about Europe. Finally, there are borders that are not even situated at the borders at all, at least in the geographico–politico–administrative sense of the term (Balibar 2002, p. 84). In effect, informal, cultural, or ideational borders may exclude or marginalise some socio–economic groups from access to certain policies, privi–leges, or rights.

Understanding Europe's internal and external borders is therefore fundamen–tal to any attempt at defining what Europe is, what it represents, and what it aspires to. We try to tackle the issue of borders and boundaries in Chapter 6 in order to trace and identify some of the constitutive elements that define 'Europe', the changes that have occurred to these elements, and how they have transformed and influenced what Europe represents. William Walters (2009) has argued that

debates about the frontiers of Europe are necessary political interventions that interject elements of fixture into the fluid, diverse, and ambiguous space that constitutes Europe. Thus, Chapter 6 highlights the politics of power behind different configurations of Europe's borders and boundaries, and through this offers some insights on how others perceive Europe.

The political power map and ideological cleavages

The question of power thereby leads to the political dimensions of defining Europe. Chapter 7 tackles the inherent complexity and diversity that characterises Europe's political features. Unavoidably, we have been selective and highly subjective with regard to which political dimensions we have singled out to discuss here.

Europe's political map is composed of a rich range of competing ideologies, from the liberal to the illiberal and from the democratic to the undemocratic, all with universalist aspirations and global resonance. This has been crafted through the coexistence of a long legacy of nation-building, state-building, improving democratic institutions and democratic governance, and tumultuous experiences of different types of authoritarian rule. It has also been shaped by a history of tensions between the civil and the military centres of power, and between the civil and religious centres of power.

The political map of Europe essentially emerged in the late Middle Ages. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Church's hegemony was gradually challenged by powerful rulers and feudalism offered the frame within which Europe's nation-states emerged. The social structures of feudalism lay the groundwork for the political structures that established France, Portugal, Spain, and England. Among the most important structures of this period were the assemblies that are the roots of Europe's parliamentarism and the system of justice (that was separate from the feudal structure) which, with the reintroduction of Roman Law, enabled the systematic and organised record of judgements and administrative decisions. Thus, at the end of the Middle Ages, the emergence of these European nation-states, alongside the Holy Roman Empire replaced the fluid political territorial organisation that had been regionalised and compartmentalised until then.

South-eastern Europe was perhaps the exception to this trend given the political fluidity that continued to characterise the Balkans, Hungary, Moldavia, and Bulgaria and the threatening rise of the Ottoman Empire in the east. Nonetheless, the interstate system that began to emerge in this historical period became characteristic of Europe and was then exported to the rest of the world, forming the basis of the organisation of modern political life in all corners of the world and the building blocks of international relations. Capitalism also emerged in this period, mainly in the urban centres of northern Italy and the Netherlands, and undoubtedly defined the socio-economic cleavages and ideological conflicts in all political systems over the next six centuries.

These legacies have shaped Europe's social market economy; they have defined the contours of Europe's Christian democratic, social democratic, and liberal parties.

Chapter 7, therefore, builds on this political landscape and concentrates on the left-wing/right-wing division in European politics among 'western European' countries. The chapter discusses the main tenets of the left–right cleavage in the 1980s, when the 'Iron Curtain' was still in place and the world was divided into the Capitalist and Communist camps, and corporativist models of mass production were still largely functioning in western European countries. It then examines how the left-wing dimension was reconsidered in the post-1989 context to the extent that some thinkers announced the 'end of ideologies' or even 'the end of history', as Francis Fukuyama (1992) famously put it. In the post-1989 context, the focus has been on how the left-wing/right-wing cleavage was reshaped or intertwined, or both, with the notions of 'western' or 'eastern' Europe into that of a common 'united Europe'.

Peace, freedom, security, equality, and human rights are declared in political debates as core European political values. While important in defining the main common tenets of different political cultures in Europe, these broad political principles are not exclusively European. The way these are codified and conceptualised in contemporary politics and policies is undoubtedly defined by the European experience, history, philosophical heritage, and legal and political systems. Nevertheless, peace, freedom, security, equality, and human rights are values that are part of all cultures and civilisations even though they may be defined, prioritised, or understood in different ways. The European or Western reading of these values as universal is often criticised by cultural relativists underlining that certain societies may prioritise social over political rights, or respect for tradition over certain individual rights, or even nationalism over peace. In this respect, it is worth reconsidering the debate over the European character of these principles, mainly to uncover the 'cultural property' and historical arguments that underlie this debate.

Europe and (in)equality

A social dimension is inherent to the discussion about what Europe is. The social dimension concerns conceptions of equality and inequality, solidarity and community, or indeed responsibility and autonomy. It is also about the rights and obligations of citizens towards the state and of the state towards its citizens. The social dimension is fundamentally about what we consider a 'good' society and lies at the heart of the functioning of democracy and citizenship. Social protection enables all citizens to function as such. It defines the support each individual receives throughout their life-course and how we choose to take care of the most vulnerable and provides for the institutional links between the individual and their family, on one hand, and the state and society, on the other.

Thus, in Chapter 8 we concentrate on the political framework and cultural connotations of concepts such as community, solidarity, and social cohesion. Political discourses around these concepts and welfare systems hugely differ both among European countries and within each country. Any similarity among them must be understood in relative terms: national social models of European countries and their ideological variants differ significantly from one country to the other. They are, nonetheless, more similar to one another than with the social protection models that exist in other countries outside Europe. Indeed, any discussion of the social dimension of Europe today must acknowledge both the different welfare models and value constellations that prevail in each society but also the different historical experiences that, for instance, characterise western and southern European countries from their central-eastern European neighbours.

We argue that the current concept of social solidarity is strongly based on the concept of national citizenship that purports a high level of community cohesion and solidarity among fellow nationals. However, there are numerous related developments that need to be taken into account when discussing the social dimension of Europe. These include: the withering away of the Fordist system of production and its replacement by a post-Fordist world that is much more volatile; the increasing cultural diversity of European societies due to post-war migrations in western Europe; post-1989 migration in southern Europe and the revival of nationalism and ethnicity in the post-1989 period in central and eastern Europe; and, the declining demography of Europe, particularly in terms of its political and democratic implications.

Defining social Europe involves engaging with the post-1989 context and the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant paradigm for socio-economic relations. This temporary disruption of the ideological struggle among different conceptions of social solidarity and justice transformed social justice struggles to technocratic debates about whether one system of welfare payments or entitlements is more effective than another. This has had important implications for the normative and political foundations of European welfare systems and the values and self-conceptions of European societies that led to a massive political cleavage within Europe during the global financial crisis and subsequent Eurozone crisis in the period 2008–2015. Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic served as a turning point challenging the hegemony of neoliberalism. The combined role of the EU, of the state, and of public policy, along with the importance of social protection and social solidarity, became considered anew, albeit in a completely different global context.

The geopolitical context

In defining what Europe is, the geopolitical context of the answer is important. Since the end of World War II, in the former EU15 countries largely in the western, southern, and Nordic parts of the continent, Europe has mainly been synonymous with the European Union. However, in countries such as the UK

or Sweden, for instance, Europe or the EU is something 'out there', across the Channel or further south. To the member states that joined the EU in 2004, 2007, and 2013, and the associated countries, Europe is both geographically and symbolically or historically wider than the European Union. A large share of these countries' citizens consider(ed) themselves European regardless of their membership in the EU. The same is true for Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland, who may define themselves as part of Europe yet wish to maintain a certain autonomy (even if in a parallel, close connection) from the European Union.

From a geopolitical perspective, Europe also entails the Council of Europe (CoE, founded in 1949), an international organisation that today includes 47 countries and 820 million citizens from the westernmost to the easternmost corners of the European continent. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), counting 30 member countries today, was created in 1949 to safe-guard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means, and also brings an added dimension to Europe by tying most European countries to their North American allies across the Atlantic. More than just creating a security community, NATO has defined a significant part of Europe's presence in regional and global affairs on security issues. It has also influenced the ways in which much of Europe has responded to the numerous traditional and emerging security challenges that it faces and has defined how non-NATO member countries view Europe. Since the end of the Cold War, both the CoE and NATO have seen their membership expand significantly to include the former Warsaw Pact countries. Their mission has also evolved during this time. The Council of Europe's mission in promoting the rule of law, democracy, and human rights has been crucial, particularly in the early days of the political transition in central and eastern Europe. NATO, meanwhile, as its prime raison d'être (notably the Cold War context) ceased to exist, reinvented its mission of cooperative security to respond to other geopolitical challenges that have emerged in Europe and beyond.

Chapter 9, therefore, explores Europe's position in the global context and whether there are common elements that bring European countries together in international relations. Is there a distinctive European view on issues of war, peace, security, environment, and generally global politics, or are there both EU and separate national viewpoints? And in global politics, can the idea of Europe be distinguished from the EU or has the EU monopolised the notion of Europe in its geopolitical dimension?

We look back at the Cold War era and the different '*Europes*' that existed dur-ing this timeframe. They included Eastern Europe and the role of the Warsaw Pact as an international political actor under the hegemony of the Soviet Union, and Western Europe as part of the Transatlantic Partnership and the 'West' as well as its development into the European Economic Community. Indeed, we pay particular attention to Europe's relationship with the US as Europe becomes relevant also in the realm of transatlantic relations. As mentioned above, the partnership between North America and Western Europe created a 'security

community' (see Adler and Barnett 1998) that defined the course of the twentieth century in political, military, financial, economic, scientific, and cultural terms, and defined what Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance represented in opposition to the Soviet bloc. With the end of the Cold War, this community started to change and widen through the processes of EU and NATO enlargements. Over the past three decades, this community has been both enhanced and rendered more vulnerable as Europe and the global context have changed. Indeed, these changes have much to do with the changes within Europe itself as a result of the continent's reunification and the different security concerns of different European countries. These security concerns have at times served as a unifying bond and at others as a divisive one. In the case of the Iraq war, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's distinction between 'new' and 'old' Europe accentuated the cleavages within the European Union as well as within the Transatlantic Alliance.

The Transatlantic Alliance and its impact on defining Europe has also been determined with transformations within the US as well, most notably due to 9/11 and the 'war on terror', the impact of globalisation on America's middle class, the role of social media in further polarising the American political landscape, and the geopolitical and economic consequences of China's rise. Paradoxically, perhaps the Trump administration contributed to strengthening a feeling of difference and distance – both symbolic and geopolitical – between the two sides of the Atlantic, furthering a renewed emphasis on European values.

To conclude, we explore the extent to which the EU has attempted to assert itself as an alternative pole within the West, exercising soft power and multilateralism and, increasingly in the past couple of decades, as a global leader in addressing the climate crisis. We also explore how today, as geopolitics are redefined by technology and the digital revolution, Europe is once again trying to define itself as distinct from the US and from China, and how its relations with Russia have been decisive for defining itself.

Concluding remarks

The above reflections suggest that the idea of Europe as a cultural, political, or geographical entity is currently largely subsumed under the notion of the European Union that has become hegemonic in Europe and abroad. Nonetheless, there are important matters and dimensions that are not and cannot be covered by a single discourse on European integration and that become apparent mainly when Europe is contrasted to 'Others' – other nations, cultures, or continents – because they are too close or too distant symbolically or geographically from Europe. In exploring the 'What is Europe?' question, this book also explores how Europe is viewed from these 'Other' continents and nations, notably from the Near or more distant East but also from the West (North America in particular).

Overall, this book is forward-thinking: it looks into the past to better understand the present and to think about the future in innovative ways. It reviews

past scholarly literature and research evidence on Europe with a view to clarifying the power dynamics behind naming Europe and highlighting the diverse Europes that currently exist within and beyond the current European unification project. The book seeks to explore the spectrum of concepts that Europe invokes. It also argues against an excessive Eurocentrism in the public debate and in the scholarly literature obsessed with defining Europe or restricting it to the European Union. Such a debate reveals the uncertainty and fuzziness of a European cultural or political entity and of a European identity. And, such an uncertainty is not, in our view, necessarily a bad thing. Such uncertainty could contribute to a self-critical and reflexive attitude within European countries.

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2

THE CHANGING SHAPE OF EUROPE

History, obviously, is not a simple record of a series of facts. It is an effort at understanding, interpreting, and reinterpreting specific events, or even more so humanity at work. It sits on a fine line between objectivity and subjectivity, between an account of actions and our personal viewpoint of them. Our historical perspective is tainted by ideology, time, and distance. It is essentially a series of arguments that are debated, a selection of events presented by the historian in an effort to understand the why and how. We may actually distinguish between history as the product of critical inquiry into the past and history as 'our story', as a narrative that offers an awareness and understanding of the present, an explanation of the drivers of social change and, implicitly, a way to the future. This distinction between history as an academic endeavour and history as a meaning-making narrative may appear clear-cut in theory, but in practice it can be fuzzy. Even a critical academic inquiry includes some degree of a narrative. Ultimately, the historian does not stand in a historical (or ideological) void; she or he is also historically situated.

Our attempt to examine the different shapes that Europe has taken through the centuries adopts a critical perspective while, however, also recognising the limits of the 'objectivity' of such an account. By reviewing some of the core debates that have defined Europe in history, we try to understand why and how the meaning of Europe has shifted. Undoubtedly, our reading of events is tainted by our individual perspectives and possibly also by our expectations. Why? Because any account of history implicitly carries a promise – a promise of carrying the truth and the most plausible explanation about a series of events in order to inform, educate, and, most importantly, offer the possibility to learn from the past. The truth is, we hardly ever do. Nevertheless, we always hope to learn from history because it is hard to steer clear from the common Western bias that refers to it in order to measure

progress and that hopes to use the past to improve the present, avoid repetition of mistakes, and overcome crises.

In this chapter we first outline the different geographical and cultural shapes that Europe has taken in the centuries, starting from the mythological origins of the word 'Europe' and tracing its evolution through Antiquity, Roman times, the onset and expansion of Christianity, the Age of Empire, the French Revolution, the wars of the nineteenth century, the overall process of industrialisation, and nation-formation in the different parts of Europe, to conclude with the ways in which the two world wars have shaped our contemporary understanding of Europe, and which actually also shaped the origins, or rather the wish, for a united Europe. This is not a chapter on European history, though, or on the history of Europe; it is a chapter on the changing locations and shapes that Europe has taken over history with a view to highlighting the relationship of the term 'Europe' with other influential notions in each historical period such as Classical Greece, the Roman Empire, Christianity, the *mission civilisatrice*, modernity, and so on.

The changing shape of Europe in history

In this section, we explore the different meanings of Europe in time and in different realms of life – that is, from a cultural, religious, political, or economic perspective. Providing a comprehensive history of the idea goes beyond the scope of this book; it is, however, important to note that the term 'Europe' has had different meanings and uses in different historical periods and that these meanings and uses were determined by the cultural and geopolitical frameworks of each historical period and of the political and economic powers emerging within them. This summary of the evolution of the notion of Europe in the past 25 centuries aims less to give a complete account of the definitions and connotations of the term – as this would be impossible in a single chapter and has been eloquently done by others (Perrin 1994; Delanty 1995; Pagden 2002; Perkins 2004; Delanty and Rumford 2005). Our aim is rather to show how the concept of Europe is a product of history and has occasionally acquired its own reality and symbolic power. A discussion of the meaning and uses of the term 'Europe' also gives us important information about what Europe is not and who the other cultural, political, or geographical entities were that were distinguished from Europe.

Hellenic Europe

The name Europe is a transliteration of the Greek work *Ευρώπη* (*Evropi*). The name finds its origins in Greek mythology: *Evropi* is the name of a young woman, daughter of the Phoenician king Agenor (king of the city of Tyre on the coast of Sidon, in present-day Lebanon) that was abducted by Zeus, the supreme ruler of Mount Olympus and of the pantheon of gods who resided

there. Known in Greek mythology for his weakness for beautiful young women, Zeus, disguised as a white bull, seduced and abducted Europe. He brought Europe to Crete to bear their offspring. There, she later married the king of Crete. The place where she arrived was to take her name, Europe, and their offspring would be called Europeans (*Ευρωπαίοι – Evropaioi*), or so the story goes.

This myth has been the subject of various interpretations from ancient times until today. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus argues that the myth reflects the economic and military rivalry between the Cretans and Phoenicians: Europe, a Phoenician princess, was abducted by Cretan merchants who took her to be a bride to their king, Asterius (Pagden 2002, p. 34). The story and the myth are repeated in the case of Troy and the abduction of beautiful Helen, wife of Menelaus, the king of Sparta, supposedly an act of revenge by the Asians towards the Europeans, specifically the Greeks. According to Herodotus, the fact that the Greeks started a war, the famed Trojan War, for the honour of a woman, was something specific to the Europeans because Asians would not take the rape of one of their women as something worth waging a war over (ibid.). Already in this ancient interpretation of the myth we find both a geographical demarcation of Europe and a cultural distinction between Europe and Asia.

Homer referred to Europe as the daughter of Phoenix in line with the above narrative, while in ancient Greek mythology in general, she was frequently mentioned as the sister of Asia and Libya (Africa). The three sisters symbolised the three land masses. It is the very same Herodotus who notes that he could not understand 'why three names, and women's names at that, should have been given to a tract which is in reality one' (Herodotus, *Histories*, VII, 104 cit. in Pagden 2002, p. 36). His argument is occasionally taken up today by scholars who note that Asia and Europe are a single land mass and that it is only our Eurocentric view of the world that makes us define contemporary Europe as a continent separate from Asia and Africa (Pocock 2002).

Regardless of which version of the myth is valid, it is clear from the writings of Greek historians such as Herodotus or first-century cartographer Strabo that Europe was geographically located in the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean basin, quite far from where the geographical and political centre of Europe lies today. Naturally, that was the result of the ancient Greeks' own geographical location and of the limits of their knowledge of the world that surrounded them. Europe was centred on the Aegean Sea and was largely synonymous with Hellas, notably the Greek peninsula and its surrounding islands in the Aegean and Crete. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the maritime character of the Greek civilisation, Europe was centred on the Aegean Sea and more broadly on the Mediterranean Sea. It was less about land, nor was it in any case a continent of any sort; it was rather the shores surrounding the well-known and well-travelled south-eastern part of the Mediterranean where Greeks developed their colonies.

Already in these foundational myths and early conceptions of Europe we can identify some of the core features characterising the idea of Europe today:

notably the belief that Europe is the cradle of democracy and the prototype of man-made civilisation based on the combination of nature and the rule of law.

First of all, the past and present distinctiveness of Europe lies to a large extent on the basic distinction by the ancient Greeks between the 'Hellenes' and the 'barbarians'. While during Classical Greek times Persians came to epitomise 'the barbarians', the term was used in a rather expansive way to refer to all non-Greeks. This opposition was based on a complex set of factors combining climate, natural environment, and race (*ethnos*). To put it simply, those farther east and south in Asia and Libya were seen as intelligent and sensitive people but also lazy, lethargic, and ultimately corrupt. The natural features of their environment were supposedly creating a predisposition for despotic rule and apathy. On the other hand, those living farther north from Europe (the Mediterranean basin, that is) were thought of as brave and hard-working but also 'unthinking,' 'uncultivated' people, who were ultimately 'uncivilised' (Pagden 2002, p. 36).

Greece (and in relation to it, Europe) was considered to lay between the two extremes, thus symbolising 'civilisation'. It was the place where the temperate climate and the landscape combined to form a people and a culture that had the best of both worlds. They were intelligent and peace-loving, they cultivated the land and brought together the force of nature with the power of the law. The Greeks/Europeans were the freer of all peoples because they obeyed the law rather than the will of their master. Anthony Pagden (2002) wonders how and why the ancient Greeks, who were chauvinist in their attitudes, came to include in their conception of civilised people other non-Greeks, notably the other 'Europeans' in the Mediterranean basin. He concludes that this happened because the peoples of the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean were interdependent for their survival and flourished through trade and exchange (ibid., p. 39). In sum, it was this unique combination of climatic and territorial features that were considered to define Europe: that is, the Mediterranean basin and the Greek peninsula and islands as the centre of the known world and the cradle of civilisation. The dividing line with both north and south was their intemperate climate and their 'barbarian' attitude and way of life.

While it is clear that the Greeks were distinguished from the Asians, who were seen as barbarian, it is less clear whether the Greeks were also called Europeans or whether, as Aristotle writes, the Greeks were opposed to both the Asians and Europeans, who were both seen as uncivilised (*The Politics*, 1962, pp. 136 and 269, cit. in Delanty 1995, p. 18). Delanty reviews several ancient Greek thinkers including Plato, Aeschylus, Herodotus, and Isocrates to show that there is uncertainty about whether the term 'Europe' had any geographical or cultural meaning for the ancient Greeks. He questions whether the Europeans were seen as part of the Greek culture and civilisation or whether they were also considered as barbaric, even if to a lesser degree than the peoples of Asia. The conclusion is indeed dubious. Some Classical thinkers identified Greece with Europe, and Persia with Asia; others distinguished between Greeks and non-Greeks,

including in the latter category both Europeans and Asians, while others still completely ignored the term 'Europe'.

Three points are worth considering here. First, that Europe had its origins outside the borders of contemporary Europe and even outside the borders of ancient Greece – indeed the mythical origins of Europe and its cultural and political distinctiveness had more to do with Asia Minor than they had to do with Europe itself. Second, that Europe was born out of its opposition to Asia, much like Hellas contrasted itself with Phoenicia and Persia. Europe was based on the notion of Hellenism that implied an opposition and a dualism between civilisations combined with a strong ethnocentrism. What is today called the oriental 'Other' finds its roots in these proto-conceptions of Europe. Third, the concept of Europe as a cultural community, which is today inextricably linked with that of Classical Greece, was largely unimportant at the time: it gradually emerged as the Classical Greek civilisation came into contact with Christianity (Peckham 2003).

The concept of Europe in Antiquity starts emerging as a distinct geographical and political entity after Alexander the Great. As Alexander appropriated the Greek language and culture, united the Greek peninsula under Macedonia, and through his conquests brought the Greek language and culture much farther east, a broader concept of Europe that referred to the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean, including Asia Minor, started to emerge. However, Alexander arrived much farther than any conception of Europe would reach – he even left Greek settlers in India – but his expansion of the Greek cultural influence eastwards brought about the use of the term 'Europe' for the wider region and emancipated the term from Classical Greek references to the barbaric Europeans. Interestingly, the core of Europe moved eastwards and was centred on the Aegean Sea and Asia Minor, areas that in more recent times are considered only peripherally European (Perrin 1994). These territories were perceived as culturally and politically 'European' for many centuries since they belonged to the Roman and later the Byzantine Empires.

The concept of Europe emerging in the times of Alexander the Great is largely built on the contrast to the oriental 'Other' that included the Persians and beyond Persia, and the other Asiatic civilisations. In other words, even these early conceptions of Europe were subordinated to a concept of the West – except that the western frontier was more to the east than it is today.

Reconsidering the meaning and uses of the term 'Europe' in ancient times suggests that Europe was rather unimportant for the ancient Greeks – and for the Persians for that matter – and that if any sort of reference to Europe existed, it was centred much more to the east than it is today. Much of the connection between ancient Greece and Europe in modern times appears to be the work of modern 'European' intellectuals since the period of the Enlightenment, where the link was reconstructed through references to the ancient Greek civilisation. As Tsoukalas (2002) also argues, the Hellenism of modern Greece was largely imposed on it by western Europeans while modern Greece had culturally and

politically more to do with the Orient. The construction, however, of the link between ancient Greece and Europe has now served as a legitimising myth for the Eurocentric interpretation of the European civilisation as unique and universal in the same way that ancient Greeks believed that their own culture and civilisation was unique and superior to all others.

Roman Europe

With the fall of Macedonia and its defeat by Rome in 197 BC, a new era began not only for the Greek peninsula but for the wider Mediterranean basin. While Rome was the centre of the empire – and indeed the centre of the world – the heart of the empire remained in the eastern Mediterranean. As Pocock (2002) notes, the Roman Empire was not continental, it was Mediterranean. It signified the 'hegemony of a central Italian people over all three of the coastlands – Asian, African, and European – first defined in the ancient Mediterranean and has been carried deep into the hinterlands behind each' (ibid., p. 59). Indeed, the Roman Empire was characterised not only by its maritime routes but also by the roads that the Romans travelled and built into the European continent as far north and west as today's England.

During Roman times, the idea of Europe was of secondary importance. The governors or citizens of the Roman Empire did not think of themselves as European even if they might recognise that Rome was situated in Europe. In the Early Christian era, Christianity was also associated with the Roman Empire: to be a Christian was to be a Roman, not a European, as was later the case (see below). At the same time, those whom we today call 'Europeans' were known as 'Franks' (indeed these terms survive to this day in the languages of Syria and Iran, in Egypt but also in colloquial Greek).

The Roman world introduced a codified legal system and developed a network of cities and written cultures that allowed trade and connections between peoples and places as far apart as contemporary Britain and contemporary Iraq to develop. The Mediterranean basin was a central point of reference and indeed a sea that united people rather than divided them. The contemporary division between east and west was much less pronounced then. By contrast, the division between north and south, both in geographical and cultural terms, was felt more acutely: the Alps were much more of a natural frontier than the sea could be. The Roman Empire integrated important Hellenic and oriental influences rather than any occidental traits. 'Europe had not yet been "westernised"; nor for that matter, had the East been "orientalised"' (Delanty 1995, p. 20).

While the empire depended for its survival on the vast areas of Asia, Africa, and Europe over which it exercised authority, its legal and political character was shaped by Greek philosophy and by the belief in the rule of law. The belief in the importance and power of law was such that, according to Nicolet (1988, p. 28) the Romans thought that 'the political realm of Rome and the human genus had been made one'. In other words, the Roman Empire largely continued the Greek

quasi-mythical belief in the uniqueness of the Mediterranean environment and culture and in the superiority of the Greco-Roman civilisation.

Even after its division into two parts in AD 286, the (western part of the) Roman Empire was pretty much 'eastern'. It was comprised of territories in Africa (the western parts of North Africa) and the Iberian Peninsula. Greece, the Aegean Sea, and Asia Minor remained in the eastern part of the empire, with the Italian peninsula becoming a natural dividing line. When Constantine transferred the capital to Constantinople in AD 330, the city was meant to be the new Rome and its inhabitants called themselves Romans. At the same time, the western and northern parts of the Roman Empire were quickly lost to the 'barbarians' of the north. The political and cultural epicentre of the Roman world and the conception of the Occident thus shifted eastwards (Pocock 2002).

The cultural and political definition of the West and the East and the geographical demarcation of these terms, then and today, differ significantly. When the capital of the Roman Empire was transferred farther east, this did not signify that the empire became 'oriental' (since Greco-Roman civilisation continued to contrast itself to the barbaric 'Orient'). Rather, it meant that the relevant centre of power moved eastwards.

This evolution was gradually subverted by the collapse of the western part of the Roman Empire, the dominance of the Gothic tribes, and the eventual combination of Gothic and Roman law into a new system under the influence of Latin Christianity (Pagden 2002, p. 43). Constantinople acquired an identity of its own that was more eastern and Greek language prevailed over Latin even though the latter remained the dominant *lingua franca* in the western part of the Roman Empire. At the same time, the 'Western' world as we understand it today started emerging and with it the notion of the European Occident which came to be contrasted to Byzantium. In other words, the Orient started to move westwards and Asia Minor ceased to be perceived as 'occidental'.

While the role of the Byzantine Empire declined geopolitically after its failure to recover its western half, its civilisational role has been crucial: through its eastern and western roots and its reference to Rome it provided the continuity necessary for Christianity to emerge as the wider civilisational framework in Europe. However, the claim of Byzantine emperors on the Roman tradition and their self-conception of their rule and of their empire as the natural heirs of Rome and its political and legal culture, indirectly pushed the western part of the empire and the emerging notion of Europe towards Latin Christianity.

The division and gradual collapse of the Roman Empire left two different legacies – an eastern and a western. It is only in the sixth and seventh centuries that the notion of Europe emerges as a geographical entity and, slowly, as a cultural entity that designates the former western Roman Empire and to a large extent what we understand today geographically as Europe. However, the concept of Europe was at the time inextricably connected to, and used interchangeably with, the term 'Christianity'.

Christian Europe

The passage from the proto-concept of Roman Europe to the Christian conception of Europe is important both politically and culturally. Europe finds its first unifying trait in the Greco-Roman legal and political culture, in the Roman legal system, and in the Greco-Roman tradition of cities as political and economic centres. Pagden (2002, p. 40) notes that although the majority of the population of Europe was rural, the cultural outlook of Europe derived from its Greco-Roman past and was conceived as ultimately urban. Indeed, Mediterranean and Roman civilisation was characterised by sophisticated urban societies developed in the Greek, Roman, Arab, and Iranian worlds (Pocock 2002, p. 60). Many of today's words that describe social and political life are etymologically derived from the Greek term *polis* (politics, polity) or from the Latin term *civitas* (civil, civility, civilisation), both of which refer to the urban environment (Pagden 2002, p. 40).

While Early Christianity did not only spread north of the Mediterranean but also in many directions towards North Africa, Arabia, Ethiopia, reaching as far as India, it was the organisation of the Christian church under papal authority that gave Christianity an institutional and political weight. The structuring of the Catholic Church contributed to Latin's spread as a common language in the west, while Greek remained a *lingua franca* in the east. Europe's cultural reference remained tied to the West, to Latin and Catholicism; its connection with Byzantium and the former eastern part of the Roman Empire was much weaker, if existing at all. In fact, in the modern Greek national narrative, Byzantium is considered Greek in its culture and Christian in its religion hence quintessentially both Greek and European, and its oriental influences and links are reinterpreted through the emphasis on its Greco-Roman culture. However, in many parts of what we call Europe today, while the Europeanness of ancient Greece is not only accepted but reinforced, the European character of Byzantium is put into question.

The passage from a Roman to a Christian proto-conception of Europe is mediated by the Jewish tradition. First and foremost, the influence is cultural as Judaism lies at the origin of the Christian tradition. Judaism supersedes the polytheistic nature of the Greco-Roman world and proposes one almighty God depicted in the image of man and who can redeem humans from sin. The Jewish belief in salvation through personal redemption introduces one of the basic cultural elements of Christianity and reinforces the importance of the individual as an autonomous agent (originally found in the ancient Greek political thinking). Brunkhorst (2005) argues that Judaism also inspires the critical spirit of later Europeans through the Jewish rejection of Egyptian rule and the divine power of the Egyptian pharaoh, and their adherence to a higher law regulating their society. While Judaism and Christianity developed in separate directions as religions, their contributions along with that of the Greco-Roman tradition, sowed the seeds of what we call today European civilisation.

The idea of Europe, however, emerged more forcefully as a point of reference together with Christianity in the struggle against Islam. The religious revolution that took place in the seventh century in the so-called fertile crescent of Asia brought about a major change in the geopolitical and cultural map of Europe and Asia. After the death of the Prophet Mohammed in AD 632, his followers spread though Arabia and conquered the Persian Empire of the Sasanids (present-day Iraq, Syria, and Palestine). The Arabs conquered most of North Africa during the seventh and eighth centuries and in 711 defeated the Visigoths in the Iberian Peninsula and conquered the lands south of the Pyrenees. Their empire also spread eastwards and reached India. Under these circumstances the limits of European and Christian civilisation shrank to the Pyrenees and the Bosphorus, and attention shifted to the Islamic, rather than the barbaric, northern, threat.

Indeed, the notion of Europe became deeply entrenched with that of Christendom in this period and acquired meaning by contrasting itself to the Arabs and the Islamic world. The Abbasid Caliphate that replaced the Umayyads lasted between 750 and the mid-thirteenth century. As a result of its non-Arab expansion, the caliphate transformed into an Islamic political system and its centre moved from Damascus to Baghdad, linking the Middle East with the other parts of Asia and North Africa. However, the Arab world absorbed much of the Greco-Roman civilisation that had thrived in these territories and to a large extent became the natural continuation of this civilisation in the sciences and philosophy during the centuries of Arab ascendancy. Arab cultural influences also reached Europe in the period until the sixteenth century when Arab civilisation entered a period of decline. In the ninth century, with the annexation of Crete and Sicily, the Mediterranean basin became dominated by the Arabs and put the European continent on the defensive.

It is in this period that we clearly note the migration of the concept of Europe from its water-based definition around the south-eastern Mediterranean to its continental definition, not only as the land that is separated from Asia by the Bosphorus strait but also as a continental mass. The European continent then embraced Scandinavia, the British Isles, France, the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, the Low countries, Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Croatia but not the territories where the concept was born – notably the southern part of the Balkan peninsula, the Greek archipelago, or Asia Minor (Jordan 2002, p. 75). Christianity became the glue unifying the different peoples and cultures of the former western Roman Empire and its more northern territories in what today we call the European continent. The Barbarian tribes that had conquered the former western empire, among whom the Franks were the most important, converted to Christianity. Hence, they were no longer conceived as a threat to Europe.

The emergence of the concept of Europe is intertwined with the rivalry between Latin/Catholic Christianity and Orthodox/Greek-speaking Christianity. The double legacy (one eastern and one western) of the Roman Empire was further perpetuated and reinforced during Christianity's

ascendancy. The emergence of the northern and western conception of Europe was increasingly detached from its proto-concept linking it to Greco-Roman civilisation. It denied any connection with the Middle East and contrasted itself to the Jews, emphasising its Christian character in opposition to Islam. During the so-called Dark Ages of Arab and Muslim ascendancy (fifth to ninth centuries), Christianity emerged as the special trait that qualified Europe and the Europeans; the idea of Rome as the centre of the western world was abandoned and the cultural and political centre of the 'Occident' moved west and north.

It is this defensive move to the west and north under pressure of attack from the south and the east that created Europe, not only as a geographical but also as a cultural, and to a certain extent, a political entity. Although during these centuries (especially tenth to thirteenth) the feudal system of production prevailed and there was no central political authority in the continent (Jordan 2002), a sense of cultural unity was provided by Christianity, which was suitable for an agrarian world based on the ethics of obedience and hierarchy. Thus, Europe in the Dark Ages emerged to describe a Christian Commonwealth that was opposed both culturally and politically to Islam.

This was when the east–west divide in the Mediterranean became more important than the north–south division. Moreover, the identification of Europe with Christianity and of the Orient with Islam led to the development of 'a moral-religious divide with the Occident signifying civilisation and goodness and the Orient barbarity and evil' (Delanty 1995, p. 26).

During the Middle Ages, the concept of Europe remained dependant on the wider notion of Christendom, notably the Christian world. Dawson (1952) has argued that it was because of Christendom that Europe first became conscious of itself as a society of peoples of common moral values and common spiritual aims. The mobilisation of the medieval kingdoms for the recovery of the Holy Land in the Middle East provided both a legitimising myth for their rulers and a common cultural reference that brought together people with different languages and ethnic traditions. The crusading ideology both prepared and prevented the emergence of a political concept of Europe. The reason was that while, on the one hand, it highlighted what the peoples inhabiting the continent had in common, on the other, it gave them a non-territorial identity. Christianity was a universal identity and indeed a non-territorial one by definition. Moreover, the temporary occupation of Jerusalem by the Crusaders (1099–1187) gave Christianity a meaning and a mission beyond the continent's borders.

The pervasiveness of Christianity in Europe and the use and relevance of the term 'Europe' until the fifteenth century should not, however, be overestimated. Until that time, the Byzantine Empire also provided for a political expression of Christianity which, nonetheless, was increasingly identified as oriental and non-European. Besides, after the defeats in Manzikert by the Ottomans in 1071, the loss of Bari to the Normans in the same year, and the looting of Constantinople by the Crusaders of the fourth crusade, the empire lost much of its power and

glory and entered a phase of decline until its dismantling by the ascending power of the Turks in the mid-fifteenth century.

Given the lack of territorial continuity of Christian lands and taking into account the universal aspirations of the Christian religion, Christianity was not seen as synonymous with Europe but as extending beyond it. It was rather in opposition to the Muslims, on one hand, and the Byzantines or Eastern Christians, on the other, that the notion of Christian Europe emerged.

The High Middle Ages were marked by the opposition between Christian and Muslim powers in the African–Asian–European geographical complex. In the Latin West, the medieval kingdoms and their princes were put on the defensive in what they considered their lands. They eventually failed to capture in any enduring way the Holy Land but also saw their own territories shrinking as the Turks advanced into the Balkans and the Black Sea in the fourteenth century. The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 is taken as an event of epochal significance that marked the start of a new era in Europe and Asia. The dismantling of the Byzantine Empire showed tangibly that Asia Minor had become 'oriental' politically and religiously.

During this period, the only western victory over Islam took place in Spain when the King of León and Castile recaptured Toledo from the Arabs in 1085. However, it was not until 1492, when Ferdinand and Isabela conquered Granada, that the Iberian Peninsula was won over by the Christians, and it was only in the late seventeenth century that the western powers managed to regain control of Hungarian territories in the east from the Ottomans and reverse the trend of Islamic expansion.

References to Europe mostly appeared in public speeches of European princes and the Pope in the context of the Islamic advance and the Ottoman Empire. Yapp (1992, p. 141) notes that Pope Pius II said when he first heard of the fall of Constantinople, 'now we have really been struck in Europe, that is, *at home*' [emphasis added], which shows both that Europe had a geographical meaning by then, as a continent, but also that the Pope considered himself and Christianity as intimately linked with Europe. This is by no means to say that Europe was a popular term or a strong collective identity felt by the people inhabiting the continent. Nevertheless, these scattered references to Europe and the Europeans in the discourses of the political and religious elites of the time mark the emergence of a political and cultural notion of Europe.

Overall, until the late fifteenth century, Christianity was the most important cultural referent in the continent while the term 'Europe' had more of a geographical and less of a political or cultural meaning (see Bartlett 1993; Le Goff 2005). However, the end of the Middle Ages, the continuing struggle against Islamic invasion from the East, and the expansion of European powers to the west to discover new lands brought the concept of Europe to the fore.

Missionary Europe

Europe developed as a cultural notion between the fifteenth century and the seventeenth century by reference to two fronts: the continuing opposition with Islam and the Ottoman Empire to the east and the European expansion to the west. These struggles forged Europe as a geographical and cultural idea gradually emancipating it from Christianity. There were several social processes that took part in the emergence of this new understanding.

The expansion of Western powers overseas to explore and dominate new lands and yet undiscovered resources, and the accompanying missionary zeal of European explorers and their rulers, played an important part in the development of a self-conscious understanding of the princes and kings of Europe as 'Europeans'. While the motor behind expansion was largely economic and political, their 'mission' was legitimated through culture and religion. The European powers embarked on a mission to 'civilise' the 'savages', notably the populations inhabiting southern and central America, the Indian continent, and sub-Saharan Africa. It was in this outward and expansive move that Europe started acquiring a meaning of its own, one that was entrenched in Christianity but also embraced a larger set of civilisational values that were later identified as specifically European (Delanty 1995, p. 30).

During these times, the idea of Europe as a set of values, epitomised by the dominance of man-made civilisation over nature, gradually developed. This idea of Europeans being the only peoples who have brought together crafts (τέχνη in ancient Greek) and nature (φύσις) had already been developed by the ancient Greeks. During the Age of Discovery this view was reappropriated by the European powers and further reinforced with racial connotations. The different phenotypic features of the 'savages', their hitherto unknown mores and traditions, and the need to find a unifying myth for Europe, were all elements that contributed to the formation of a racial ideology of supremacy of the Europeans (aka Whites) over other 'races'. This racial ideology was developed in and through the ideology of the 'White man's burden' to conquer and civilise all other places and peoples (Mudimbe 1988), even if there were individual cases in which people from other continents were absorbed into the indigenous population of Europe.

This racial connotation of Europe developed also through reference to the Turks and Muslims at large, who became 'orientalised'. It might be more properly called a 'racialised' rather than 'racial' connotation in the sense that it was not strictly related to skin colour but rather that it overall linked ethnic descent with culture and religion in a naturalising and racialising argument. This is not to deny that the Ottoman Empire allowed for people of different religious dominations to self-organise and self-govern to some extent (the millet system), but rather it is to emphasise how the notion of Europe acquires a certain meaning through specific historical processes. The flight of Greek intellectuals from the conquered Byzantine cities to the West reinforced the notion of Europe over the

idea of Christianity. Given the internal division of Christianity between Latin West and Orthodox East, Greek writers found the term 'Europe' more appropriate to talk about the continent (Hay 1957, pp. 87–88).

While many among the Greeks and the Turks continued to refer to the 'Europeans' as 'Franks', a discourse on Europe emerged within the continent in relation to German identity and the continuation of the Holy Roman Empire tradition. As early as 962, Pope John XII crowned Otto as Holy Roman Emperor and protector of the papacy. The German Empire came thus to fill the power vacuum that had been created after the dismantling of the Holy Roman Empire in the west. It sought to take advantage of the imperial tradition to unite under German suzerainty the counts and princes of central Europe (Delanty 1995, p. 40). Although the German Empire's territories did not quite cover the entire continent, its spiritual unity with the papacy in Italy and its opposition to Byzantine power and tradition gave it a certain degree of cultural power and unity. It was in this Germanic idea of unity that a cultural notion of Europe was forged in the continent.

These developments suggest, on one hand, the ascending and expanding character of the concept of Europe in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries and, on the other hand, the degree of internal diversity describing it. Unlike Islam, which found a unitary cultural and political expression in the Ottoman Empire and its Islamic law, Europe and Christianity remained fundamentally polyphonic and diversified. As many thinkers have suggested, the socio-cultural characteristic of Europe was not its political uniformity through the mastery of the emerging states, but rather local particularism (Jordan 2002, p. 77). By this we mean the separation of cities from the countryside, the emergence of an urban population, a bewildering variety of local cultures, and, overall, the opposition of society to the state. These features marked an internally differentiated social and political landscape with multiple small centres of power. This is what some have called the revolutionary traditions of Europe (Tilly 1993).

This political pluralism was matched by discord within the Church. Although the Latin Papacy exercised a certain degree of hegemony in western Europe, it failed to transform it into a single bloc. In the late Middle Ages, the Hundred Years' War between England and France prevented the formation of a mega-state in western Europe. Moreover, a tradition of anti-Roman Catholicism developed that culminated in the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, in the very centuries (sixteenth and seventeenth) when the cultural and political concept of Europe started emerging, the continent was more internally diversified and divided than ever before.

Given the internal conflicts and discord that characterised the continent, it comes, to a certain extent, as a surprise why 'Europeans' needed additional internal enemies against whom to consolidate their ethnic and religious identity. It remains difficult to explain why the Jews were also picked as scapegoats since the Muslims were readily available as the number one threat for Europe. Hostility against the Jews went hand in hand with witch-hunting and the hounding of

heretics. Protestantism's establishment in northern and western Europe challenged the power and unity of the Catholic Church, thus rendering minorities important for the forging of a positive in-group identity (Atkin and Tallet 2003). Through the persecution and oppression of minorities such as the Jews, the Roma, the presumed witches (often women), the Church and the 'good' and 'faithful' people could reinforce their identity and power.

Cohn (1993) notes that minority persecution started in Europe in the early twelfth century at the same time as the first victory of the King of León and Castile over the Moors in Spain. The fight against the infidel enemy then acquired an ethnic and racial connotation: the victory had to be complemented by the ruthless expulsion of the Moors and the Jews from Spain. The Spanish kingdom had to be 'purified' from foreign cultural and ethnic elements. Indeed, the denial of the Moorish civilisation in Spain remains relevant to this day (Zapata Barrero 2006).

The early concept of cultural and political Europe was thus forged through the expansion of European powers in the west and the defence of Europe and Christianity in the east, but at the same time through internal processes of building cultural and religious unity in opposition to internal minorities.

Modern Europe

The origins of a modern concept of Europe are mainly to be found in the age of European exploration and colonial expansion to other continents. The shift of attention from the eastern frontier where little success was achieved to the western frontier that allowed for the military and economic expansion of the western powers was decisive in shaping the concept of modern Europe. Even though the roots of a European consciousness among the elites were located in the opposition to Islam, it was the West that created a western secular identity that is largely understood as distinctively European today.

The adventurous discoveries of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal and the empires they built in the Far East and the Americas along with the spread of science and technology innovations in the West (the compass, the printing press, and gunpowder[1]) created the appropriate socio-economic environment for a secular identity to emerge. The ancient legitimising myth of the Greek civilisation's mastery over nature was reappropriated in modern Europe.

The trading colonial empires set up by the western states gave an unprecedented impetus to western Europe, which abandoned the declining agrarian-based economies for the mastery of the seas. The European powers' dominance over the seas was also a way of limiting the power of the Islamic civilisation since the Ottomans never managed to truly dominate in this domain.

The European powers' expansion to the west had important repercussions in the internal balance of the continent. The 'discovery' of the Americas and the

opening up of new routes to India favoured maritime and mercantilist states in western Europe. Central European empires such as the Habsburgs continued to focus their attention eastwards; they developed a feudal system of production in the twelfth century, when feudalism was dying out in western Europe. This led to an uneven, albeit complementary, mode of socio-economic development within Europe. The central eastern European empires, which were poly-ethnic and multicultural, remained largely anchored in the agrarian mode of life and production (providing for the wheat that was indispensable to feed western European populations) even if, for instance, the Austro-Hungarian Empire developed cosmopolitan metropolises and trade centres in Vienna and Budapest. However, overall central and eastern European territories did not develop technologically and politically into sovereign states and their trade remained limited. Dominated by the fear of the Islamic threat, they entered modernisation much later than western Europe. Cahnman (1952) sees the contrasts between the 'Oceanic' Europe of the western states and the 'Continental' Europe of the centre-east and the empires.

It was this westward expansion and flourishing of European powers that brought about an important ambivalence in the term: since the period of colonial expansion, Europe had become synonymous with the West. The West signified also the New World, the new territories, the mastery of the seas, the development of science and trade. European identity emerged as a secular 'western' identity rather than as an overall European one, not least because the central eastern European territories were following a different path of socio-economic and political development. This close link between Europe and the West, until well into the twentieth century, makes it difficult to distinguish the cultural and political idea of Europe from that of the West, which eventually included North America.

The cultural roots of the emergence of modern Europe are to be found in the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance and in its sixteenth-century northern European counterpart. The ideas of humanism blossomed in the Renaissance, offering an integrating world view and advocating civic participation in government that would become the basis for a modern idea of Europe (Nauert 2006). The change that started with the Renaissance was accelerated by the religious wars of the seventeenth century and the Reformation. Indeed, it was a combination of commercial interests, geopolitical antagonisms, religious differences, and power politics that caused the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) that eventually dragged into it all the states, princes, and emperors in Europe. The war started when the Austrian Habsburgs tried to impose Roman Catholicism on their Protestant subjects in Bohemia, so it was initially a religious war. However, it eventually involved France and its rivalry against the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and its Eighty Years' War with the Netherlands (1568–1648), Russia, the German princes, the Swedes, the Danes and the Poles as well as the Swiss. The series of treaties signed in the region of Westphalia (in Munster and Osnabruck) during 1648 marked the end of these bloody conflicts in the continent (even if

France and Spain remained at war for another 11 years), sowing the seeds of an international order where state sovereignty prevails over empire.

The shattered unity of Christendom provided the necessary space for secularism's emergence. The socio-economic changes that took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, culminating in the final crisis of the *Ancien Régime* in 1789 and the French Revolution, brought about a new social and political order in Europe. After the Napoleonic years and the brief restoration of the Old Order by Metternich between 1816 and 1848, nation-states started consolidating as the new forms of government. Civic values and the notion of 'citizen' had been reinforced through the American Revolution in 1776. They became the dominant cultural framework of 'the West', a framework more appropriate for the European states that had transformed into world powers. This cultural framework sought to bring together a Christian humanist ideal with a universal values system based on rationality, science, and progress. In fact, this is the cultural framework of European modernity, even if at times its reality was far less noble than its ideals.

These changes did not completely overthrow the cultural and symbolic power of Christianity. Rather, they led to a new synthesis that brought together the ideas of progress, civilisation, and Christian redemption (in the Protestant sense) along with a sense of unity through exclusion. Europe could not be unified through reference to any common ethnic or cultural traits. It could however be contrasted to common 'Others'. A sense of European identity thus emerged through several forms of racism such as anti-Semitism but also White racism over people of 'colour' (the 'negroes' and the 'indios' among others).

The socio-economic development of Europe, the French Revolution, and the turn to secularism did not reinforce an idea of European unity but rather the existence of separate and sovereign nation-states. Indeed, while a common European cultural framework did emerge through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment (Kröner 2000), that cultural framework was to be carried forward by the political entity of the nation-state. The ideal of Europe was based on the political notion of the nation-state and the 'peoples' of Europe as 'nations'.

It may seem ironic that when the historical context favoured the emergence of a cultural concept of Europe – since the relevance of Christian unity had receded and the Enlightenment had constructed a notion of a common European heritage – the process was hindered by two alternative developments: the contemporary emergence of the concept of 'the West' and the development of the nation-state as the political unit that characterised European modernity.

On one hand, the break with the Orient, the colonial expansion of western powers, and the overall geopolitical division of the wider Euro-Asian region led to the emergence of the concept of 'the West' as a powerful alternative to Europe. The West resonated well with the modern European states because it reflected their links to the New World and the colonies. It also expressed the geopolitical and economic division that had emerged within the continent between the eastern, still primarily agrarian territories, organised into empires

(Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian) and the Western mercantilist and gradually industrialising economies. The West also reflected the division of Christianity between the Latin/Protestant West and the Orthodox East even if it downplayed the intra-European rift between Catholics and Protestants. In short, 'the West' better reflected the geopolitical, economic, and cultural organisation of the continent in modern times. The emerging modern idea of Europe was thus explicitly or implicitly defined as 'western' Europe rather than Europe *tout court*.[2]

On the other hand, the idea of Europe was also contested by the emergence of nation-states. European unity, which in any case had always been a myth, could now only be conceived through the political prism of the nation-state. The nation-state was itself a product of modernity even if it was culturally rooted in premodern times (Smith 1986). It provided the political framework for the capitalist mode of production; it created national markets large enough to sustain industrial growth and promote trade (Hobsbawm 1990). The creation of nation-states also promoted national visions of Europe (Delanty 1995, p. 76; af Malmborg and Stråth 2002; Stråth 2000). National political elites associated the idea of Europe with competing nation-states: Bismarck considered Europe to be centred around France and for this reason opposed the idea of a European unity (Schieder 1962). During the nineteenth century, Britain associated Europe with France and rather centred its political and economic interests on its colonies overseas, while Metternich interpreted Europe from an Austrian imperial perspective (Körner 2000).

Europe emerged then as a regulative idea with the aim of reducing conflict and friction between the nation-states of Europe (Delanty 1995, p. 77). The notion of a common cultural heritage was politically expedient. It provided for a normative framework that would frame international politics. Nonetheless, this was a framework regulating a zero-sum game between the world powers of the time (France, Britain, Austro-Hungary but also Russia, Germany, and Austria). It was a negative unity that was achieved, not a positive one (Pocock 2002). Let us, however, delve a little deeper into this question of a Europe of nations and the wars that tore it apart.

Europe of nations

An understanding of modern Europe cannot be separated from, and can even be distinguished by, a review of the rise of nationalism and the nation-state as the main political entity. While the international system of government based on sovereign states emerged with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the true rise of nationalism as a political ideology in Europe starts in the late eighteenth century with the French Revolution of 1789 (influenced also by the American Revolution in 1776). The French Revolution was European in its consequences as it marked the end of the *Ancien Régime* and the beginning of a period of important societal transformation. This transformation was as much socio-political as

it was economic. It was social and political in that the ideology of nationalism put forward the people as the source of political legitimacy, declared all members of the nation as equal in front of the state, and promoted a strong notion of collective self-determination as the nation had to seek its autonomy where this had been denied.

The economic aspect of this transformation related to the rise and expansion of capitalism as the dominant mode of production. The period between 1850 and 1870 was characterised by an extraordinary economic transformation process. The industrial development and the expansion of exports of countries such as Britain, Germany, and Belgium were unprecedented. Indeed, the potential of capitalist industrialisation that had begun in the first half of the nineteenth century came to its full realisation. Capitalism found expanding markets for its products, and for the first time a single economic world was created bringing together European countries and their colonies in different parts of the planet. While the main technical innovations of the first industrial period had not required advanced scientific knowledge, in this period of capitalist expansion, industry was penetrated by science and the links between the educational system and industrial growth became evident. The 1873 crisis and the depression of the 1870s temporarily slowed this capitalist expansion; however, there had been sufficient fundamental change to alter the shape of European countries and to support the rise of nations and their nation-states. The late nineteenth century was a period of great transformation in Europe that brought together capitalism, nationalism, and a certain opening towards political liberalism and democracy (Hobsbawm 1996, pp. 34, 71).

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked by an incongruous coupling of the particular with the universal as nationalism spread beyond the geographical core of continental Europe. Nationalism was gradually accepted as a universal norm for the organisation of peoples into political communities. Interestingly the big nation-states of Europe were also those with large empires and, perhaps paradoxically, imperialism and nationalism became political allies within the nation-state. Nationalism underpinned imperial colonialism. The nation-state building process was inextricably intertwined with colonialism even if different states pursued different cultural models of imperialism, with France seeking assimilation while Britain opted eventually for indirect rule through enlisting the support and cooperation of local elites.

Europe was also referred to by the short-lived pan-European revolutionary 'Young Europe' movement inspired by Giuseppe Mazzini, a famous Italian liberal nationalist. This movement exemplified the fusion between the emerging and fervent nationalist movements of the nineteenth century and the parallel emergence and usage of the concept of Europe (Bayly and Biagini 2008). The unification of Europe under humanist and republican principles was seen as the natural continuation of the Italian, Polish, and German liberation and unification struggles. In this context, Europe took the form of both unity and difference as it offered a platform for divergent nationalist movements seeking to assert

themselves against the forces of counter-revolutionary conservatism. A vision of a united, democratic Europe was projected against the Holy Alliance of the European countries' monarchs.

Thus, modern Europe as a universal cultural framework was paradoxically formed by two competing universalisms: the universalism of Enlightenment philosophers, on one hand, and the universalism of the particular, that of national ideologies, on the other. These two universalisms were inextricably combined in the ideologies of most European nations. Their cultural roots were invented or rediscovered by reference to Christianity and Europe, and their historical trajectories were connected to a real or mythical European past. Each nation formed its own narrative, but Europe was prominent in most (af Malmborg and Stråth 2002). Greek nationalism held tight connections to the Enlightenment philosophers and the Classical Greek heritage was reinterpreted in the light of modern Europe. Italian nationalism was built on the Renaissance and on ancient Rome, which also held European connotations. German romantic nationalism saw Germany as the cradle of Europe and the heir of Latin civilisation. French nationalism and republicanism also had strong European connotations as the French Revolution was interpreted as a particularly European event.

Europe was thus (re)invented in national ideologies and came into existence through these national narratives. A sense of cultural unity of Europe, however, was intertwined with the particular and unique narrative of each nation. The intellectual reconstruction of the definitions and uses of Europe in the past had little currency for modern 'Europeans' unless such definitions were to be reappropriated in the cause of nationalism. The term 'Europe', even if it had become increasingly common since the mid-nineteenth century, acquired its meaning through the formation of nations. This is indeed the predicament of Europe to this day: how to exist in fusion but also as an entity over and beyond the European nation-state(s).

Total-war Europe

It is the war between European nation-states that has marked the contemporary notion of Europe – and particularly Europe's twentieth century – more than peace or cooperation. Indeed, the nineteenth century was marked by several localised conflicts, not least wars of national independence, particularly in southern and central eastern Europe as the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires were gradually being dismantled by the rise of nations. But there was no large European conflict in the 'long' nineteenth century (notably between 1815 and 1914). Thus, despite the tensions that followed the economic crisis of the 1870s, a European war involving all the main powers of the continent was considered unlikely and relegated to a historical memory or indeed a thing of the past (Hobsbawm 1989, pp. 302–304). By contrast, the 'short' twentieth century, notably between 1914 and 1991 is marked by the invention of total war and by intense antagonism between European countries.

While it goes beyond the scope of this chapter and of this book to explain the origins of either World War I or World War II, it is worth exploring how the notion of Europe has been predominantly shaped by conflict and division rather than by peace and cooperation, and how European conflicts have become world wars in the twentieth century. It was the very processes of industrialisation and nationalisation that carried the seeds of war (Hobsbawm 1996, 1989). Industrial and capitalist development provided the technological means for a new type of war that would be a 'total war', notably a war that would involve the whole of society and would create extraordinary numbers of casualties.

At the same time, colonial expansion into other continents, combined with the development of the capitalist world, also upset the internal power balance within Europe. Thus, while in the early and mid-nineteenth century Britain was the undisputed world power both economically and militarily (controlling the world's maritime routes through a mighty navy that went unrivalled), by the late nineteenth century, Germany, France, and Russia had significantly increased their military capacities. While capitalism required peace to prosper, it was the reshuffling of power relations provoked by economic and industrial development that brought about military antagonism alongside competition in trade. What was probably unexpected, though, was that a military conflict that started in Europe would lead to a world war.

The economic and political achievements of late nineteenth-century Europe – notably the rise of not only nationalism but also of political liberalism and democracy as well as industrialisation and the emergence of a cultural model of European modernity – would be overshadowed by the size of destruction that warfare brought to the continent and the world over. Modern Europe thus became an archetype of division and conflict rather than of cooperation and exchange. European countries were divided into two camps, the 'German' and the 'French', and all states were forced to take sides. This process took more than 20 years from the formation of the 'Triple Alliance' (1882) to the 'Triple Entente' of 1907. The division, however, was then exported and projected in other parts of the world, notably in Asia and Africa, through the colonies and through military antagonism over control of material resources in Asia and Africa. Perhaps more than debating how the specific domestic politics of Germany or Britain or Austria led to World War I, it is interesting to look at how what were, essentially, European antagonisms were exported to the colonies and how conflict at the geographical fringes of Europe (the Balkan wars of liberation against the Ottoman Empire, the Italian conquest of Libya in 1911, the crisis over Morocco in 1911) fired back into its geographical core. This is not to undermine here the role and importance of the United States or Japan in either World War I or World War II but rather to note how conflict within Europe interacted and chain-reacted across the world through a combined economic, political, and military short-circuit.

The political instability that followed World War I and the Great Depression of the late 1920s and 1930s were fertile grounds from which World War II could

emerge. Essentially, the failure of the League of Nations to guarantee peaceful solutions to frictions and tensions between the world powers, the failure of the victorious powers to integrate the losers, particularly Germany, the impossibility of forging alliances with communist Russia (which was supposed to be isolated behind the *cordon sanitaire* of the Baltic states, Poland, and Romania) all brought with them the seeds of a new war. Even though it may be clear that the aggressive stance of Germany and Italy within Europe (and of Japan in Asia) triggered World War II, the whole process that led to it is best understood through looking into the two competing models for the reconstruction of Europe after World War I: the western liberal democratic model and the Marxist-Leninist socialist project. While the ideas of the latter originated in western Europe, they were implemented in Russia after the 1917 Revolution. It was the struggle between these two ideologies and competing socio–economic and political models that created the space for the emergence of fascism, but which also created the power to defeat fascism.

Fascist Europe

The short twentieth century in Europe was heavily marked by the rise (and fall) of fascism and Nazism. As noted earlier, the socio–economic and political developments in nineteenth-century Europe had brought about not only the expansion of industrialisation and capitalism but also liberal democracy as the prevalent mode of government in the continent. The legacy of the Enlightenment had crystallised a distrust of authoritarian and absolutist rule into a commitment to constitutional government and an accepted set of civil liberties for citizens. As the Russian and Ottoman Empires were dismantled in the early twentieth century, the nation-states emerging out of them adopted democratic regimes; despite ideological conflicts (between the capitalist or bourgeois forces and the then dynamically emerging socialist forces), they all agreed on the importance of the values of reason, science, education, and individual freedom for everyone. Within this context, World War I was seen as a brief interlude of bloodshed and barbarism that confirmed the turn of all European countries towards liberal democracy, albeit the reality was quite different. It is in the national politics and internal tensions of European democracies where the seeds of fascism and Nazism lie; it was the decline of European democracies that led to fascism, Nazism, and World War II rather than some accident of history. Mark Mazower's book on the *Dark Continent* (2000) explains systematically how some common themes such as health and welfare, minorities, eugenics, and racism ran through the different countries and led to the political developments of the inter-war period. Both communism and Nazism were closely interrelated and, overall, with the decline of liberal democracy. The inter-war years may be interpreted as part of an ongoing struggle between the 'progressive' and 'reactionary' values and ideas that characterised Europe in that period. Such struggle was both international, in that it involved all the European countries, and

internal, in that it cut across different political and ideological currents within each country.

While such a struggle involved both left-wing and right-wing political and ideological currents, in the inter-war period and in World War II, liberal democracy and constitutional government were threatened from the far right rather than from the far left (contrary to what happened during the Cold War years, see further below). The political right forces of inter-war Europe, particularly fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, put forward an authoritarian, totalitarian, irrational ideology that glorified instinct and given attributes such as race and genealogy against the liberal democratic and modern values that the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the entire socio-economic transformation of the nineteenth century had forged into a 'European cultural model', recognisable as such.

Fascism also had a strong populist element of mobilising the masses from below and creating an organic state where rulers and the ruled were forged into a single organic political community (a *Volksgemeinschaft*). Italian fascism and German National Socialism interpenetrated one another, and fascism adopted anti-Semitism and racism – which was initially absent from the fascist ideology. Interestingly, while fascism and National Socialism may be understood as reactionary forces that would have, if possible, wiped out the developments of the nineteenth century and restored the traditional order, they did not turn to the Church or the King, the old sources of political absolutist power. They rather supplanted those with secular ideologies embodied in self-made men and supported by popular acclaim that were converted to actual cults.

Having said the above, it remains, of course, puzzling why and how the struggle between progressive and reactionary forces could lead to such destruction, race-hatred, mechanised mass murder, and atrocity of the scale perpetrated by Nazism in World War II (Kershaw 2000). Hobsbawm attempts to make sense of the unthinkable in a concise passage in *The Age of Extremes*:

> The optimal conditions for the triumph of the crazy ultra-Right were an old state and its ruling mechanisms which could no longer function, a mass of disenchanted, disoriented and discontented citizens who no longer knew where their loyalties lay; strong socialist movements threatening or appearing to threaten social revolution, but not actually in a position to achieve it; and a move of nationalist resentment against the peace treaties of 1918-20. These were the conditions in which helpless old ruling elites were tempted to have recourse to the ultra-radicals … These were the conditions that turned movements of the radical Right into powerful organized and sometimes uniformed and paramilitary forces (*squadristi*; storm-troopers) or, as in Germany during the Great Slump, into massive electoral armies. However, in neither of the two fascist states did fascism 'conquer power' … In both cases fascism came to power … in a 'constitutional' fashion. … The novelty of fascism was that, once in power, it

refused to play the old political games, and took over completely what it could.

(1994, p. 127)

The dark moment of Europe, the rise of fascism and particularly of Nazism, was a product of its time, an episode in the long struggle between progressive and reactionary forces, but it is still hard to untangle why this should happen in Europe and not elsewhere. There are three possible explanations for this, of which two are historically rooted. The first is that it was in Europe where the cultural model of modernity emerged and hence perhaps the underlying political and ideological struggle between the 'new' and the 'old' was most intense. A second explanation is that the tragedy of World War I and the economic and political uncertainty of the inter-war years made fascism and its promise of an absolute State that controls both the economy and society and guarantees stability and full employment appealing to both elites and masses in many countries, not only Germany. A third has to do with the special role that Germany occupied in this chunk of European history: despite suffering a stark economic and political crisis after World War I, Germany was at the same time a country that by its size, geographical position, and economic and military potential could not but play a major political role in Europe.

Divided and united Europe

Even though the defeat of Nazi Germany swept the danger of totalitarianism away and seemed to reconfirm the Enlightenment ideals as 'our common European values', liberal democracy in the European continent was challenged again, this time from the Left. Indeed, Europe emerged divided from World War II, as not only Russia but also a large part of central eastern Europe (notably all the countries east of the river Elbe to the Adriatic Sea and the Balkans, except Greece and the small European chunk of Turkey) went under the communist bloc. Albania, the Baltic states, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia moved into the socialist zone of influence under the hegemony of the Soviet Union and adopted communist regimes that severely restricted civil liberties and citizens' rights. Spain and Portugal were also under dictatorial rule until the mid-1970s, while Greece started with an imperfect parliamentary democracy only to experience dictatorship in 1967 and eventually fully democratise in 1974.

In the post-war period, Europe was neither united under fascism nor torn apart by it, but it was divided along a Left vs. Right political, ideological, economic, and heavily militarised border that ran through the geographical heart of the continent. Germany itself was divided into two parts, one that belonged to Western Europe and another that belonged to the Warsaw Pact. The term 'Western Europe' had a strong political connotation rather than a geographic one: it demarcated the countries that were liberal democracies and free market economies; 'Eastern Europe' referred to the socialist democracies

that belonged to the communist bloc. This West and East division implemented initially in the heart of Europe was projected to different parts of the world, dividing the whole globe into two zones of influence, as negotiated between the Great Powers (Britain, Russia, United States, France) in 1944–1945. This division remained stable until 1989. During this period, the notion of Europe was tightly linked to the notion of the West, which also encompassed North America. Europe was somehow weakened and submerged to the West; Western Europe was seen as the only Europe that could exist as Central or Eastern Europe was seen to have lost its 'Europeanness' under Soviet influence.

Paradoxically, but not surprisingly, division brings with it the seeds of unity too. The two parts of Europe forged a strong internal unity. The eastern part, notably the Warsaw Pact countries, united under Soviet hegemony into a common political and economic system of existing socialism. The western countries took gradual steps to forge an economic and later socio-political unity. Soon after the end of World War II, in 1949, western European countries came together to form the Council of Europe, an international organisation whose aim has been to promote the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, albeit not through the transfer of sovereignty but rather mainly through international law. While initially the Council of Europe comprised only western European countries, after 1989 it has gradually enlarged and expanded and today includes 47 countries and more than 800 million people. In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed establishing the European Coal and Steel Communities. Indeed, the project that started as the European Economic Communities (EEC) later evolved into what today we call the European Union.

It was not, however, only the Cold War divisions that marked the post-war notion of Europe. More importantly, the self-understanding of (western) Europe as a cultural model to be imitated, as a force of progress, was challenged by the very experience of World War II and particularly by the Shoah, the persecution and extermination of the European Jews. The gradual recognition of what had happened in the war led to a critical reflection on this very European experience by thinkers such as Hannah Arendt (and her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 1963) or Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). Both Adorno and Horkheimer (ibid.) and Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), sought to find the seeds of the Shoah in the instrumental rationality of the European cultural model. They looked at how technological and industrial progress, combined with a fundamental rationalism, can lead to such massive extermination which, as Arendt (1963) argued, is difficult to explain even from an administrative and bureaucratic point of view.

This self-reflection on European modernity and on the earlier presumed linear path towards progress led to a rethinking of nationalism. For the first time perhaps in modern European history, nationalism was brought into question and was no longer seen as a force of progress but rather as a force of destruction. Nonetheless, it would be an overstatement to argue that nationalism lost its political force after the war – quite the contrary, it remained the glue that tied

political communities together. The fear of its destructive forces led to the cre-
ation of an international normative order supported by specific international
institutions – the United Nations founded in 1945, UNESCO also in 1945, and
the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 – in the effort to establish a new type
of criminal act: the crime against humanity. These initiatives signalled a new
phase in the self-understanding of Europe where nationalism retreated to some
extent and became less of a defining feature of the notion of Europe. Rather it
was the desire to rein in nationalism that characterised this phase.

The early decades of the post-war period were marked by two contradic-
tory tendencies. On one hand, the spectre of conflict and particularly of war
between France and Germany continued. At the same time, European powers
were involved in wars outside Europe that were part of the decolonisation pro-
cess (for example, France in Indochina in 1950 and in Algeria in 1962). On the
other hand, the first couple of decades were also marked by collective amnesia
in western European countries. There was little discussion about the role of the
Resistance in different countries and who participated in it (Judt 2005). There
was also only a gradual and hesitant *prise de conscience* of what had happened to the
Jews and the Roma under Nazism. In this sensitive political context, the project
of European unification offered the advantage of being a memory-less project
(Delanty 2013, p. 237) because it was signalling a fresh start aimed at peace and
prosperity and with light historical baggage. It sought to put the war behind,
and it lacked a heavy historical memory. This was initially an advantage, even if
today one may consider that it is a fundamental weakness.

Does Europe make history?

A critical understanding of the meaning of the term 'Europe' today needs to take
into account the evolution of the concept in history. Current political debates
tend to neglect and obscure this historical evolution treating Europe generally as
a geopolitical, geographical, or a cultural concept that has remained immutable
in different periods and in different regions. Media and political discourses tend
to take Europe as a given, as a concept with a clear and stable meaning. However,
what even the most recent social and political devlopments of the past 20 years
show is that Europe is more about fluidity and change than about stability and
clarity. The nature of the concept is historical, as all concepts indeed are, and
to answer the question 'What is Europe?' we need to highlight and discuss the
historical and contextual nature of the concept and investigate the power games
involved in its formation.

School textbooks, just like mass media, tend to project the contemporary
meaning(s) of Europe into the past without paying attention to how the very
meaning of Europe is historically and politically constructed. They thus fail to
highlight and understand the different connotations of the term across historical
periods and in different places; they also fail to suggest that today too the concept
of Europe serves specific political and symbolic purposes.

One question that we need to address before embarking on this brief histori-cal excursus is the following: is Europe constituted in history or does it shape history? Should we consider Europe as a malleable signifier, a name, that can lend itself to different uses and different users that shape it in line with their own beliefs and interests? Or, has the idea of Europe acquired its own reality that is something more than the constructions in our minds? Europe has both a material configuration of land and water (not just an imaginary or cartographic representation of those) and a symbolic and discursive existence through which not only is it shaped by history but it also *makes* history (see also Pocock 2002, pp. 55–56; Roberts 1967).

It is our contention that Europe is shaped *in* history: Europe has been shaped for different purposes at different places and times and it is because of historical contingency that the term has survived to this day and has actually been trans-formed into a powerful symbolic and political factor. The power of Europe as a concept is not intrinsic to the name or to what it signifies. The notion of Europe does not contain some kind of inherent, ahistorical, or univeral value that makes us unable to do without it. It is the product of social historical processes that we shall outline and review critically below.

At the same time, we argue that Europe makes history. That Europe, as a concept, makes history does not mean that Europe fights wars or elects govern-ments. After all, Europe is not an actor, it is neither a person nor a group – it does not exist as a political or symbolic 'thing', but in our minds. Europe can make history to the extent that its meaning acquires a symbolic power that can shape people's views and actions.

The notion of Europe has become a relevant and nearly indispensable feature of contemporary social, cultural, and political life in the European continent and other regions of the world. Here we adopt a social constructivist perspective: we look at Europe as a social reality that is self-constituting. Europe contains a set of discursive frames, worldviews, cultural models, and systems of interpreta-tion. These frames, models, and socio-cognitive systems are both European and constitutive of Europe. They influence the making and interpretation of societal transformation – they are part and parcel of the emergence of new social realities and they shape these realities, while they are also their integral part. Paraphrasing Castoriadis (1993, p. 9), Europe 'is a construction, a constitution, a creation of the world, of its own world'. Thus Europe makes and is made by history.

Europe and power

Making history involves symbolic and political power. Thus, if we argue that Europe shapes and is shaped by historical forces, it is necessary to discuss the power dimensions of the concept of Europe.

In this effort to disentangle the various aspects often bunched under the sin-gle term 'Europe' in common parlance (and in some of the scholarly literature), much thought has been put into distinguishing between the idea of Europe and

a European identity. These are neither identical nor have they been synchronic. The idea of Europe existed long before European identity as a political concept or as a form of cultural or political consciousness came into being, and before people started thinking of themselves as Europeans. Europe is a cultural frame of reference for the formation of identities and geopolitical realities, not an identity in itself (Hay 1957; 1968; Delanty 1995; Mikkeli 1998).

Delanty has eloquently argued that the idea of Europe has become a regulative idea that serves identity-building processes (1995, pp. 4–5). It could be understood as a collective representation (Moscovici 1981): as a reproduction of reality that has at the same time prescriptive and regulative functions. It says something about how reality should be understood and how things should be organised. Thus, the idea of Europe prescribes the formation of a European collective identity.

It is difficult however to see how this happens if we look at the variety and internal diversity of the discourses that framed the term 'Europe' in past centuries or recently, and the unlikelihood, if not to say impossibility, of a European identity project emerging. Perhaps Delanty's emphasis here is on the fact that European identity, to the extent that it is emerging, is based more on opposition to 'Others', and exclusion of the 'Other', than on a positive assertion of a self-identity (1995, p. 5). To put it simply, it is difference from non-Europeans that makes the Europeans distinctive rather than some common features that they truly share.

This point can be misleading as identity is based simultaneously on the process of constructing similarity and difference. The in-group consciousness is based both on the feeling that the members of the group share something in common and on the view that they share more in common than they share with outsiders. This is not only valid for national identity; it is valid for all forms of political identities, and to this extent for European identity (Triandafyllidou 2001).

Delanty (1995) goes even a step further. He suggests that Europe has become an ideology. Adopting Berger and Luckmann's definition (1984, p. 141) of ideology as a particular definition of reality that comes attached to a concrete power interest, Delanty (1995) argues that Europe is an ideology and indeed a nearly hegemonic one. Developments in the post-Cold War period tend to confirm this view. Dominant western definitions of Europe have prevailed during the past 20 years while counter-hegemonic discourses about Europe originating in central and eastern Europe, for instance, or indeed within western or southern Europe have been relatively weak. The symbolic currency of these hegemonic and counter-hegemonic definitions of Europe has largely reflected the actual socio-economic and political power of the actors that (re)produced them. In other words, the political elites of the more affluent, politically stable, and technologically advanced countries of western Europe have generally imposed their own definitions of where Europe starts and ends and who and what constitutes a European over the less affluent, politically and economically in transition, and technologically less developed central eastern European elites and citizens.

The problem with an idea that becomes hegemonic is that it cannot be easily chosen or rejected because it, itself, structures the choices and the epistemological framework within which these choices are made. Delanty (1995, p.7) rightly argues that 'thinking, reading and writing about Europe are the intellectual modalities of power through which Europe is constituted as a strategic reality and a subject of knowledge'. The hegemonic character of Europe becomes evident not only in the power of some political and cultural elites to impose their definitions as universally valid but also in the impossibility to avoid talking about Europe and characterising peoples, cultures, or territories as European (Pocock 2002). Rejecting one's Europeanness is also a way of confirming the symbolic power of the idea of Europe.

Concluding remarks

The Enlightenment philosophers identified the process of modernity and the primacy of science and rationality with the idea of Europe. Europe offered the necessary 'space' for accepting confessional diversity within Christianity. It also provided the symbol of the new universal civilisation predicated by the Enlightenment. A European identity became self-conscious only in the late seventeenth century and acquired its social and cultural content through the Age of Discovery. The Christian universal mission was thus replaced by the 'White man's burden'. The opposition between West–Christendom–Europe, on the one hand, and East–Islam, on the other, was replaced by the notion of a western European cultural identity that was defined as an outward movement through conquest of the New World and in contrast to internal (minorities, the Jews in particular) and external (the myth of the 'savage') 'Others'.

The development of the notion of a European identity or culture was marked also by two inspiring 'Others': Classical Greece and the Roman Empire. Ancient Greece, with its polythetic tradition and tension between gnosticism and agnosticism, was seen as the precursor of the Enlightenment project. Furthermore, the Roman Empire with its complex and changing relations with Judaism and, later, Islam were also part of the European past. To put it simply, the notion of a European heritage by definition bore within it the seed of plurality and contradiction:

> If there is a heritage that can be described as particular to Europe, it is rather the tension between polytheist/pluralist and monotheist/fundamentalist tendencies, between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, in a constant movement from critique to crisis.
>
> *(af Malmborg and Stråth 2002)*

In other words, the idea of Europe as a cultural and geographical space developed in opposition to specific inspiring or threatening 'Others' that became salient in different historical periods as well as by contrast to its internal diversity, excluding minorities and reinterpreting itself through the national lens.

What we learn from this brief review of the evolution of the concept of Europe in different periods and realms of life is that it is non-linearity, fluidity, historicity, and the need to adopt a critical self-reflective mode that should guide us in thinking about Europe. We also learn that Europe was historically much less important than many would consider today. It was never a driving force in history, and it was never united by a positive point of reference but rather through the effort either to defend itself from threatening 'Others' or to tame internal conflicts. Stråth, in particular, emphasises that the distinctive feature of Europe, or of what we understand as European culture and history, is a self-reflective spirit. This is nonetheless questionable if we consider contemporary discourses on Europe and European unity (see also Pocock 2002). In the next chapter we discuss the visions of Europe of those who believed in (the construction of) European unity and in a sort of European culture as unitary.

Notes

1 Interestingly these three important technological developments originated in China but were adopted in Europe in the thirteenth century. The printing press, for instance, was invented in China in the 1040s but it was the German engineer Johannes Gutenberg in 1450 who invented the movable-type mechanical printing press, which contributed to the dramatic expansion of printed text in Europe. Similarly, the compass was also invented in China as early as the second century BC and had been used for navigation since the eleventh century (1040s onwards). The first record of using a compass for navigation in Europe dates to 150 years later than that. Gunpowder was again invented in China in the ninth century but spread to Europe through the Mongols in the thirteenth century.
2 The distinction and division of western and eastern Europe is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 with reference to the boundaries of Europe as well as in Chapter 7 with regard to the political division of Europe between East and West for a good part of the twentieth century.

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3

VISIONS OF A UNITED EUROPE

What visions has Europe stirred?

Throughout history, Europe has been an elusive concept. 'Europe has never existed … We must genuinely create Europe, it must become manifest to itself … and it must have confidence in its own future', wrote Jean Monnet (1950) over 70 years ago. Perceptions of what Europe is have been inextricably entangled with aspirations, often contradictory ones, of what Europe ought to be. Grand power politics, religion, nationalism, and ideology have framed perceptions of Europe and inspired very different visions of what Europe is meant to represent. Europe has often served as a narrative, told and retold by different actors, in different contexts and at different times, for different purposes and to very different audiences.

To understand the visions that Europe has stirred in recent centuries among thinkers and statespersons it is useful to explore the historical processes through which specific values and cultural traditions such as Roman law, Greek philosophy, Hebraic ethics, Christian theology, scientific rationality, pluralism, and democracy became affirmed, thereby defining what European culture and civilisation has generally stood for both within the continent and beyond. It is also necessary to identify the multiple political and ideological constructions and reconstructions of Europe as a concept since the eighteenth century. As we have already argued, understanding the various visions that Europe has inspired in the minds of thinkers and statespersons requires understanding the political context within which these have been formulated and what the drivers of these narratives were. In this chapter we discuss what has inspired attempts at defining, and specifically at unifying, Europe and the context within which these narratives coexisted and antagonised, impregnated, and succeeded one another. Drawing from British historian Peter Burke's suggestion that Europe 'is not so much a place as an idea'

(1980, p. 21), we argue here that Europe has in fact been an intricate mosaic of visions. This mosaic has been characterised by a continuously shifting centre of gravity distinguishing and differentiating between those who represent the 'meaning' of Europe from the 'Others' and the 'foes'.

The concept of Europe has been associated with the accomplishment of a supreme state of peace and security. It has also been associated with a series of strategic alliances and unification projects. And yet, throughout the continent's history, references to 'Europe' have been fraught with dissent, division, and 'otherness'. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'Europe' has been synonymous with both a divided continent and a reunited one. It has represented a virtuous link between security, reconstruction, and economic prosperity just as much as it has stood for vicious circles of nationalistic resentments and the decline of the West. Europe has embodied a continent of hostile nations just as it has stood for a continent characterised by a unique political union of like-minded States. Europe has been the 'dark continent' of division, rivalry, warfare, and extremism within which antagonistic ideologies have clashed in vile ways. Yet it has also been the 'old continent', wisely representing democracy, liberalism, pluralism, and unity, as well as universalist aspirations for peace, cooperation, good governance, and social justice. Europe has been used as a reference for modernity, the Enlightenment, reason, and science as well as revolutions and cosmopolitanism. It has also, however, taken the form of reactionary conservatism, despotic traditionalism, and defensive introvert nationalism. It has been synonymous with Christianity and Christendom as well as with secularism and *laïcité*. These multiple sides of Europe have always coincided and have fed into one another leading to ambiguous, complex, and contradictory visions of what 'Europe' is or, even more challengingly, what it ought to be.

Throughout history, the notion of 'Europe' has been instrumentalised by statespersons, politicians, and intellectuals in pursuit of their political objectives. References to 'Europe' have been invoked to create a sense of unity and to nurture perceptions among the wider population of belonging to a broader community. Thus, depending on the context, specific shared affinities have been emphasised in some cases, while cultural and historical differences have been stressed in others. In the sections that follow, we discuss some of the most influential references to Europe that have been formulated by European intellectuals, statespersons, and politicians. We try to situate these references in their historical context in order to understand what motivated these visions. We also try to show how the centre of gravity of the 'meaning' of Europe has shifted, repeatedly.

Why unify Europe?

What has inspired attempts at unifying Europe? A simple response to this question would be that the unification of Europe has been driven by a two-fold belief. First, that a set of common, shared (generally perceived as rather superior) values exist. And second, that pooling available resources may be advantageous

and beneficial. Naturally, assuming that a set of values commonly perceived as quintessentially 'European' exists – though this, too, has been many times contested – the questions that unavoidably follow are: *How* have these European values been defined? By *whom* have these values been defined? And what *mode of governance* is considered best suited to pool together these resources and manage, or rather, govern Europe? These three questions are, of course, inextricably linked.

As we have outlined in the previous chapter, from the eighth to the seventeenth centuries, European values were largely defined in the form of Christianity. The Christian religion served as the unifying element of 'Europe' and Europe was imagined as a Christian commonwealth that differentiated itself from the Orient (see Hay 1968; Davies 1996; Perrson and Stråth 2007). This differentiation was relevant vis-à-vis the Muslims who were seen as infidels, as it was vis-à-vis the more 'Eastern' Christians of Byzantium and Russia. References to Europe's Christian core remain very vivid in contemporary understandings of Europe, as does a knee-jerk, even patronising, differentiation from all that lies to the east.

Even though Christianity was claimed as a unifying factor, in practice it led to major divisions and rivalries between European empires, each attempting to expand and impose its own authority in the name of Christendom. The European empires that shared the European geographic space rivalled each other in the way they referred to the concept of Europe. The Hapsburg Monarchy's Catholicism, for instance, was heavily contested by France, which attempted to equate European culture with French culture while opposing the dominance of the Holy Roman Empire. At the same time, the Hapsburgs' reign over Europe was also contested by Russia, which proposed an Orthodox and Slavic definition of Europe and an alternative path to modernity during the Romanov period from the seventeenth but especially during the eighteenth century (Boon and Delanty 2007; Neumann 1999).

From the perspective of the Scandinavian peninsula, for a long period Europe was the rest of the continent and it was practically represented as the 'Other' and associated with a rather negative connotation. Europe here stood for conservatism and Roman Catholicism, whereas Scandinavia's Protestantism stood for progress and freedom (af Malmborg and Stråth 2002, p. 15). This continued to be reflected well into the twentieth century and even today, becoming particularly prevalent in the scepticism expressed across Scandinavian countries towards the European Union. This scepticism was framed by a strong attachment to 'Scandinavian exceptionalism' and a self-image of being distinctively progressive societies founded on social democracy and a universal application of welfare rights (Lawler 1997). Or, as Ole Wæver distinctly and simply puts it: 'Nordic identity is about being *better* than Europe' (1992, p. 77, emphasis in the original).

Höfele and van Koppenfels have described Europe in the early modern period as a 'patchwork stirred by centrifugal and centripetal forces' (2005, p. 7). In effect, this period of European history was one of pluralisation, where the old perceived homogeneity of *Christianitas* offered by the Catholic Church was challenged

by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. During this same time, Latin along with the doctrinal system of Scholasticism were losing their hold as the Renaissance unfolded. Indeed, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the unifying role of Christianity was gradually replaced by the emerging Enlightenment, ambitious to pursue a universal civilisation project. The Enlightenment discourse had Europe at its core and absolute point of reference. Europe was presented as embodying scientific reason, progress, and *libre examen*,[1] while further elaborating a counter-image of an authoritarian, repressive, traditionalist, and mystical East (af Malmborg and Stråth 2002, p. 2). During this period, the concept of Europe gained currency and was given a map-based frame of reference. The relationship between geography and perceptions of one's own values and of their difference with the values of the 'Other' became even more tightly intertwined. Geography became further politicised along east–west axes. The schism between Latin Christianity and the Eastern Orthodox Church was magnified during the Enlightenment, where Western Europe essentially 'invented' Eastern Europe as its complementary 'Other'. As Larry Wolff (1994) has described, the intellectual centres in Western Europe 'cultivated and appropriated … the notion of "civilisation," an eighteenth-century neologism, and civilisation discovered its complement, within the same continent, in shadowed lands of backwardness, even barbarism'. This mental map of Europe distinguishing the capitalist core that lay in the western parts of the continent from the eastern parts that were considered 'backward' in socio-economic development terms persisted as a very vivid reality during the twentieth century's Cold War. In fact, it seems to have survived well into the early twenty-first century even after three decades of post-communist transition.

As the Enlightenment brought with it an outburst of political, financial, technological, and industrial innovation, the centres of culture, finance, and political power shifted from Rome, Venice, and Florence to London, Paris, and Amsterdam. Gradually, the east–west mental divide of Europe came to override the north–south one that had dominated during the Italian Renaissance. Where exactly western Europe became eastern Europe and where eastern Europe met Asia is rather ambiguous. Though eastern Europe was considered an integral part of the continent, it was also constructed as rather distinct from the more western parts based on a two-fold functionality that still rings very true today. Eastern Europe served as a space that would buffer Russia's outreach and as a space within which to mediate with the 'Orient' (Wolff 1994, p. 7). In the words of Iver B. Neumann: 'There are many "Easts" in the world, and none of them is without signification' (1999, p. 15). In effect, visions of Europe have been constructed around persistent efforts to 'purify' the concept of Europe by setting the boundaries between itself and the 'Other' and by adopting a civilisationally superior, Eurocentric attitude towards 'Others' in spite of extensive 'borrowing' and cross-fertilisation of knowledge, goods, and ideas that characterise all interactions between civilisations. There has been a tendency for a cultural imaginary that sees the world in terms of 'Otherness', most notably in the form of the

'Oriental Other'. This process of othering has also taken place with parts of itself with the 'Eastern European Other' or the 'Southern European Other', distinctly distinguished by the 'core' throughout the centuries and up until the present.

Christianity and the Enlightenment have been two of the core pillars that have framed visions of why and how to unify Europe. They have left very heavy imprints on how Europe and its unification are understood even today. Nationalism and revolution have been just as influential in defining Europe as have visions of its unification.

Starting with the mother of all revolutions, the French Revolution has deeply impacted both the definition of European values and visions of Europe. It has done so in at least three ways. First, it inspired people to transfer their allegiance from absolute monarchs to the nation-state. By underlining that the power of the nation resides with the people of the nation, the French Revolution spread the ideas that all men are created equal; that citizens have inalienable rights to liberty, security, property, and resistance to oppression; and that governments exist to protect these rights. These ideas have since been considered to be at the heart of what defines (or at least ought to define) Europe.

Second, it ignited the Age of Nationalism, changing Europe not only ideologically but also in geopolitical terms. The political geography of the continent deeply changed through the erection of national borders that sliced territories away from empires by trying to gather within these borders peoples who belonged to the same 'nation'. This paved the way for the creation of a Europe of Nations and it came at a cost – and a rather high one, as all national projects have been fraught with deep, angry, and often violent frustrations of incompleteness and insecurities with regard to threats from within and from without.

Finally, the French Revolution linked the idea of civilisation to a specific model of development. In essence, the western Europeans perceived themselves as being the most enlightened, free, and unprejudiced peoples, personifying 'civilisation' and thereby inspiring the model of development that was to be achieved by other, less developed peoples on the continent and beyond (Wolff 1994). We explore these perceptions further in Chapter 4, but what we suggest here is that nationalism basically brought national tints to the idea of Europe. Thus, 'Europe' was 'France' for French intellectuals just as it meant 'Germany' for Germans. For Voltaire, Europe was regarded as the most humane and free place in the world and France as the most European of all nation-states. For Hegel, Europe represented the dynamic of progress and the supreme achievement of the idea of the world-spirit; the German world, and specifically Prussia, constituted its embodiment. This line of thought has consistently defined the way in which western Europe, and more recently the EU, has interacted not only with 'Others' further afield, but also with the 'Other', more 'Eastern' parts of the continent.

Russia, the most 'Eastern' of Europeans – also infused with its own internal 'Oriental Others' such as the Turkic-speaking populations near the Volga or the Siberian Far East – has objected to this western appropriation of the concept of Europe as representing progress and has alternated between an inherent

understanding of belonging to Europe and a rejection of it. The sense of belonging to Europe has been well summed up by Fyodor Dostoyevsky quite simply as follows: 'Europe, as Russia, is our mother, our second mother. We have taken much from her, we shall take again, and we shall not wish to be ungrateful to her' (reference to Dostoyevsky 1973, p. 1048, in Browning and Lehti 2010, p. 41). Yet at the same time, the discourse coming out of western Europe was critically denounced as an essentially imperialistic Romano-Germanic chauvinism under the cloak of cosmopolitanism (Perkins and Liebscher 2006). Russian nationalism, later followed by pan-Slavism, also treated 'Europe' as the 'Other', rejecting its individualism and materialism and proposing alternative models of civilisation. These oppositions materialised in the tugs of war between Slavophiles and later communist revolutionaries vs. Westernisers across most of central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe. With Russian nationalism essentialised as ethnic, collectivist, authoritarian, and infused by anti-Westernism, it in turn laid the foundations of anti-Western political thought challenging Eurocentric historical models and cultural canons.

Returning to the questions outlined at the start of this section on how what we commonly refer to as European values have been defined and who has defined them, no discussion can be complete without reference to Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon attempted to unite Europe politically, administratively, economically, and culturally (1804–1815). He conquered most of the continent but failed to unify it through the use of arms. His vision for a unified Europe lay the foundations for much that is declared as being associated with European unity today, and specifically with the European Union. He envisaged a vast federative European system within which borders would be dismantled to establish a single, wider area where the same laws would be applicable and where travellers would feel 'at home' wherever they went (Tsoubarian 1994). Napoleon wished for a confederal system ruled by an Emperor (himself, of course) with a unified army, a unified monetary system, and a common system of legislation that would unify all peoples. These peoples were mainly French, Italians, and Germans who geographically belonged to the same nation but who had been separated for political reasons. In this administration, the French language would provide the necessary cultural unity. Napoleon's efforts at creating a European Empire were met with passionate hostility by Europe's other monarchs (Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, and the Russian Tsar) who wanted to 'save Europe from Napoleon' (Franceschi and Weider 2007, p. 65) and keep their power as well. His aspirations also clashed with Britain's core foreign policy principle of ensuring a 'European balance', which essentially meant preventing the excessive domination of any single European power over the continent. It is fascinating how such concerns resonate strongly in European politics still today.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars saw the Restoration of conservatism and an effort to return to the *status quo ante*, or in other words, the way it was before the French Revolution. During this period (1814–1848), usually described as the Age of Metternich because of the Austrian Chancellor's influence over the

continent, Europe was ruled by the Concert of Powers. This period of peace and stability between the Great Powers defined another facet of Europe and the values it represented. 'Europe' became tantamount to reactionary conservatism in society and political repression. This was personified in the Holy Alliance between Prussia, the Austrian Empire, and the Russian Tsar, the so-called 'Northern Courts'. Europe came to be defined as a balance of power held together at the seams through treaties while reactionary, despotic monarchs used force to crush the new ideas that had sprung out of the French Revolution. Yet while this is the dominant narrative of what Europe represented during the Age of the Concert of Powers, it is not of course the whole story. Britain became increasingly estranged from the 'Northern Courts', their reactionary conservatism and absolutism. Together with France, Britain stood out as the liberal power during this era of conservatism (though King William IV was disturbed by Lord Palmerston's policy of alliance with 'revolutionary' France).

In addition, during this same time, revolutionary zeal, nationalism, and the ideas of the Enlightenment were in full momentum in the south-eastern part of the continent. During the war for Greek independence that led to the modern Greek State in 1829, references to Europe were framed in terms of liberalism and nationalist aspirations, yet also of Christianity (as they were opposing the Muslim Ottoman Empire).

The Spring of Nations in France, Germany, Austria, and Italy that followed soon thereafter marked yet another important phase in the evolution of the visions that Europe has stimulated. While each revolution was clearly national in its aims and rather particularistic in its causes, there were certain common 'European' traits. The revolutionary banner of '*liberté, égalité, fraternité*' echoed well beyond the borders of France. Across the continent, the 1848 'semi-Revolutions' as described by Karl Marx sought to democratise the political order and address the 'Social Question' posed by the existence of intense forms of structural poverty as a result of the Industrial Revolution (Dowe et al. 2001). Democratisation, parliamentarisation, the expansion of franchise, the multiplication of women's association, as well as an unprecedented degree of access to printed news changed political, civic, and social life in European societies, particularly in urban centres, while feudal domination came to an end in rural areas. The demands for free and independent nation-states created wars of liberation, separation, and unification but no nation-state arose as a winner from these wars as the social forces were too weak and disorganised to overcome foreign and domestic resistance (ibid., p. 19).

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the continued coexistence of two parallel processes on the continent: disintegration and unification. The eastern and south-eastern geographic periphery was on a path of fragmentation, particularly after the Crimean War (1853–1856) and the increasingly frail Ottoman Empire vis-à-vis its millets' nationalist aspirations. Meanwhile, Germany's unification in 1871, its growing economic prosperity, and Kaiser Wilhelm II's international ambitions fundamentally altered the European geopolitical landscape

and defined the meaning of Europe as well as all the connotations attached to the concept, in both benign and malign ways, in the century that followed.

Thus, the close of the nineteenth century saw the end of an era aimed at maintaining stability and power and averting change. In 1888, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* that: 'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies' (1998, p. 8). This quote is a fine description of what Europe represented at the end of the nineteenth century. Europe embodied a balance of powers between supreme monarchs. It symbolised a union of traditionalists and conservatives, an alliance between the Church and dynasts, a coalition between those representing the political and economic establishment that benefited from the exploitation of a working class living in dire poverty and alienation. As the nineteenth century passed the baton to the twentieth century, Europe was the battleground between competing visions of aggressive nationalisms, ideologies, and political projects on how to achieve freedom, justice, security, power, and peace. We explore these further in Chapter 7 on Europe's political dimensions.

Twentieth-century Europe: war and peace

Visions for a Europe of peace through alliances between the Great Powers were replaced with visions for a Europe of peace through democracy in the twentieth century. The magnitude of Europe's destruction and division after World War I, the demise of the Great Empires, and the triumph of the Bolsheviks in the 1917 Russian Revolution led to a profound re-examination of the causes of war and gave a dynamic impetus to the idea of a united, democratic Europe as the only way to guarantee peace.

In this context, Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi founded the Pan-Europe movement (1924) that aimed at Europe's political unification. He considered unification in the form of a democratic federation of states as the way to guarantee a viable and lasting world peace. Unification was meant to protect European civilisation from the 'non-Occidental culture of Bolshevism', while from an economic perspective it was the way to prevent American domination of world trade (Orluc 2007, p. 96). French politician and diplomat Aristide Briand took up Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas and suggested the creation of a regional union, a 'European Federation' with competencies in the field of economics. He proposed establishing a set of representative bodies within the League of Nations with the aim of creating a common market to raise the level of well-being of the peoples of the European community. Coudenhove-Kalergi's dream of a pacifist Europe, combined with the French proposal in the 1920s at the League of Nations for a united Europe that would ensure peace and economic prosperity, tend to be considered as the origins of what a couple of decades later inspired European integration. These aspirations however were

short-lived as they were approached with cynicism and scepticism on the part of Germany, Italy, and Britain, as cloaked attempts at French domination. At the same time, they were confronted with the rise of nationalism, fascism, National Socialism, authoritarian forms of government, and the remilitarisation of the entire continent.

In the decade that followed, the unification project was hijacked by National Socialism and fascism. No longer a pacifist project, a united Europe represented the quest for *Lebensraum* (i.e., the vital living space for the Germanic people) and an affirmation of power through armed means as compensation for Germany's insulted ego. The ways in which winners and losers were treated in the Versailles Peace Treaty (1918) had far-reaching consequences for Europe both as a concept and as a geographical region. Needless to say, it also had repercussions for the world far beyond the European continent.

The unification of Europe by the Third Reich was pursued in the 1930s and 1940s as a vision of a racially reordered Europe, an Aryan-racist-imperialist proposition that aimed at strengthening ethnic Germandom. Nazism's and fascism's ideas of *Mitteleuropa* were driven by economic considerations certainly, but also by a deep racist ideology that wished for a Europe unified under an authoritarian nationalism built on traditional Christian values while rejecting, persecuting, and ultimately attempting to exterminate all forms of pluralism and diversity (Lipgens 1982). This required the ethnic cleansing of eastern Europe and western Russia and eventually the final solution for the Jewish, Roma, and Sinti populations of the continent (Morgan 2003). The outbreak of fascist ideology and the consolidation of fascist regimes were the result of the backlash of ultra-nationalism and a counterculture to the cultural and societal changes that had occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. Fascism also drew from the experience of colonialism. As Hannah Arendt (1963) has argued, the violence and racism characterising imperialist expansion cannot be separated from the home societies and was easily transferable within European countries and nurtured by 'scientific' justifications provided by 'social Darwinism' that had permeated mainstream European culture (Woodley 2010; Morgan 2003).

The Allied powers opposed Adolf Hitler's effort to establish this version of Europe during World War II. But within the Allied camp, there were two different visions of the sort of Europe they envisaged in opposition to a fascist or Nazi Europe. And in each case, the unifying elements that would bind Europe together drew from a very different pool of ideas. One envisaged freedom and independence through a Europe of democracy, economic liberalism, pluralism, and human rights. The other envisaged freedom and independence through class struggle, equality, social justice, and the unifying banner of communism. The Allied victory catalysed the resurgence of the ideal of a pacifist Europe. The federal model that had been proposed before the war continued to inspire hopes for unification. Jean Monnet's practical functionalism and Altiero Spinelli's federalism indeed set the foundations for what was to eventually develop into the European Economic Community and later the European Union.

The Europe evoked and represented by the European Union in the latter decades of the twentieth century was the result of mergers between a number of geopolitical definitions of 'Europe' that have represented divergent and largely opposing world views in the latter half of the twentieth century.

For one, there is Western Europe, which together with the United States, presented itself as the 'free' world, the 'First' world – in short, the 'West'. The transatlantic community that the countries of north-western Europe (mainly Britain, France, the Benelux countries, and the Federal Republic of Germany) forged with the United States came to stand for political and economic liberalism, democracy, and first-generation human rights as well as a collective security community. Western Europe also represented the containment of a future renascent threat of a Germanic Europe, as in principle it cemented Franco-German reconciliation and interdependence between the economies of Western Europe. For this Europe, the 'Other' was identified either as the communist threat and the Red Army from the East, or as a nascent Arab nationalism from the South, or eventually a few decades later, as a fast-rising economic rivalry from Asia.

Then, there is Nordic Europe, representing what could almost be described as the most sophisticated version of modern Europe. Transparency, accountability, participatory democracy, civic citizenship, and a strong attachment to individual political freedoms, independence, and neutrality were coupled with a much-envied effective, inclusive, and protective welfare state and a combative environmentalism. Among the Nordic countries, Finland stands apart with its 'special relationship' with Russia and later the Soviet Union, and its rather late industrialisation that led to a more liberal, non-interventionist economic mode of governance. Finland's particular concern to protect its territorial security while seeming unthreatening to the Soviet Union made it emphasise its neutrality consistently, presenting itself as a Nordic country with a statist, politically impartial, Western culture.

In the southern part of the continent, and moving from west to east, it seems almost paradoxical that in the post-war period of liberal democracy in western Europe, the two Iberian dictatorships of Franco and Salazar were able to survive – and for so many decades. Yet they did, and Spain and Portugal were able to tie themselves with the European and Atlantic organisations that were gradually institutionalised after World War II. The repressive regimes of Franco and Salazar were tolerated by western European countries and the United States due to the Cold War imperatives, as was Greece's rather dysfunctional liberal democracy that was established after the end of the country's civil war (1945–1949), its NATO accession, and its subsequent consolidation in the Western bloc. Southern Europe was stereotyped as being more strongly attached to tradition, constrained by a more intrusive role of the Church (given the role of Opus Dei particularly during the Franco regime, the strong presence of the Orthodox Church in Greece, and the influence of the Vatican in Italian politics), economically underdeveloped with an all-pervading, bureaucratically cumbersome and rather corrupt and clientelistic States. After the fall of the Greek colonels' junta and the Iberian

dictatorships, focus shifted to the democratisation and the 'Europeanisation' of the southern periphery. Their 'Europeanisation' was essentially a modernisation project, and more specifically one aimed at adaptation to west European norms and practices (Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995; Featherstone and Kazamias 2001). Further east, in the far south-eastern peninsula of Europe, the Balkans personified the most pre-modern part of Europe, a tumultuous, explosive, and divisive historical legacy of a region rich with linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Kouki 2013; Sotiropoulos and Veremis 2002). Southeast Europe was probably one of the most geopolitically sensitive areas of the continent as it was also split between the two superpower blocs and engaged in three different political projects: part of it participated in the regional integration project of the ECSC/EEC, another part participated in the federation project of the Slavs of South-Yugoslavia, and yet another participated in the socialist Soviet project.

Finally, eastern Europe. Tightly paired with the Soviet Union for the second half of the twentieth century and referred to as the 'Eastern bloc', the eastern periphery represented a different vision of Europe. Representing in principle equality and social justice, the right to employment, and free access for all to public health and education, class struggle, and a preference towards collective rather than individual rights, what lay on the eastern side of the Cold War divide also represented authoritarian rule. For this Europe, the imperialistic, colonial, and later neo-colonial transatlantic, western capitalist community driven by profit-seeking multinational corporations and human exploitation constituted the 'Other'.

Just as the western side of the Iron Curtain pursued various forms of economic and military cooperation to advance its vision of a Europe of peace, security, and prosperity, so too, on the eastern side, integration was pursued through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform). The COMECON, formed in 1949 at the height of East–West confrontation and Cold War division of the continent, was complemented by the Inter-Party Communist Information Bureau and the Warsaw Pact and provided the basis for Europe's unique non-capitalist attempt at integration in its entire history (Bideleux and Taylor 1996, p. 174). COMECON's objective to intensify the economic integration of its members through an International Socialist Division of Labour was in principle aimed at the harmonious and comprehensive development of all socialist countries. It also had as its declared objective the reinforcement of their unity. In practice, it did more to strengthen the radial trade links with Moscow and to realise Moscow's own security and power objectives than offer an alternative vision for European unity (Jones 1980). Inspired by central planning and socialist principles, these institutions and their regional dimensions were more relevant to the USSR than European consonance, thus the admission of Mongolia, Cuba, and Vietnam. Moreover, the decision-making process across all sectors and on all subjects – from the arts to science and the economy – was centralised and located in

Moscow, and even more specifically in the Politburo, rather than shared between Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest, and Budapest. Finally, unity around a common ideology (Marxism–Leninism) and suspicion about the 'capitalist West' overrode any substantial reference or vision of a unified Europe. It was only in the late 1980s with the development of a vision of a 'common European home' orchestrated by Mikhail Gorbachev that things changed.

Europe: institutions and integration

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Western Europe positioned itself as the core of Europe, as its hegemonic definition. The institutions set up by Western European countries largely dominated the meaning of 'Europe' and projected it beyond the continent's geographic confines. These include the Council of Europe that was founded in 1949 and the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights established in 1959. On the economic front, the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) set the ground for the European Economic Community in 1957 (and a few decades later the European Union). Meanwhile, the countries that could not envisage joining the EEC for political reasons established the European Free Trade Association in 1960. The drive to promote economic, social, and cultural cooperation and collective self-defence as East–West tension mounted – while taking precautions against the potential resurgence of any threat from Germany – also triggered institutions and cooperation in the security realm, notably through the 1948 Treaty of Brussels. It is interesting that just a few years later, in 1954, it is the Brussels Treaty, renamed the Western European Union (WEU), that provided the way through which the Federal Republic of Germany was integrated into the Western security system. Although a European defence identity hardly had any substance before the 1980s and 1990s, Western Europe's unprecedented and unique experience at regional integration came to represent a novel approach to international relations as it established institutions charged with finding supranational solutions to international problems.

One of the core architects of this approach was of course the influential French businessman and civil servant Jean Monnet, who sought to establish shared interests through technocratic solutions in areas that had the potential to re-spark conflict. He argued that peace could only be ensured and entrenched through building institutions that would formulate common solutions to shared problems. The EEC, followed by the EU, became a unique experiment of regional integration based on cooperation between member states, interdependence, institutional innovation, and above all, voluntarily pooled sovereignty. Monnet's technocratic and functionalist approach to European integration was shaped by the following assumptions: the obsolescence of the state, the danger of nationalism, the imperative to change the context of problems, the need for new institutions with which to anchor common interests through incremental technocratic processes, and the fundamental notion of 'crisis' which would be the force that

would drive Europe's political elites to embrace change and seek common solutions (Burgess 2000, p. 49).

One of the other founding fathers of the EU, the Italian Altiero Spinelli, for his part envisaged a federal Europe that would enable social reform. His version was tainted with a greater sense of urgency and while he agreed that strong independent institutions were necessary for European solutions to prevail over national solutions to common problems, he held that it did not suffice to rely on economic considerations to push unification forward (ibid., p. 36). Spinelli viewed European unity on a federal basis as the most important political aim for the continent's future. He drew his inspiration from the ideas of the Italian liberal Luigi Einaudi who had proposed a federal solution for Europe's problem of nationalism. Einaudi had criticised the League of Nations for failing to limit the sovereignty of its member states and had argued that only when the sovereignty of each European state was surrendered to a supranational organism would lasting peace be ensured. (Burgess 1995; Hewitson and D'Auria 2012).

The challenge of rearming West Germany via NATO in the early 1950s (accepted by France only after London and Washington committed that they would continue deploying troops on the European continent) created the wider environment within which federalists (including Paul-Henri Spaak, Fernand Dehousse, Alcide De Gaspari, and André Philip) and those who believed in the value of the community method for Western Europe were able to move European integration forward. European Political Cooperation (EPC) was launched and lay the foundations for the EU's defence and foreign policy cooperation, which we examine in Chapter 9. The need for a peace and security project for Europe was perceived as more pressing than ever to keep the Germans 'down', the Russians 'out', and the Americans 'in' as NATO's first Secretary General Lord Ismay famously declared. French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir framed it slightly differently in *La force des choses* (1963), claiming that 'Europe' was a myth used by the United States to restore German power as a counterweight to that of the USSR (Hewitson and D'Auria 2012, pp. 11). What is certain is that the destruction of World War II offered a 'ground zero' from which ideas of Europe could prosper.

Although the aims of Jean Monnet's and Robert Schuman's European integration focused on reconciliation, economic reconstruction, and peace-building through the creation of new institutions, policy-making instruments, international treaties, and law (Drake 2000), in the words of Burgess, Europe in the form of a European Economic Community/European Union has remained a 'conceptual enigma' (2000, p. 254). Although the EEC/EU has clearly rendered the idea of Europe more tangible, ironically, the process of European integration has probably led to greater contestation over the meaning of Europe (Delanty 2006). This has been particularly the case when debates and discourses have rolled into discussions on identity, as we discuss in Chapter 5.

Nonetheless, since the 1970s, western European countries declared a 'European' community of values on the basis of liberal democracy, human rights, and rule

of law that was expressed in a very constrained manner through the launch of European Political Cooperation. The EEC positioned itself as the stronghold of European political values and culture with rather little contestation from the non-EEC European states. At the Copenhagen summit in December 1973, the nine EC Heads of State and Government officially declared the existence of a 'European identity' (Passerini 1998, pp. 4–5), although talk of a European identity continues to raise more questions than answers and remains a contentious, if not irrelevant, topic in many member states almost half a century later. Nevertheless, by the late 1970s, the idea of Europe had taken the shape of much more than its initial function of post-war reconciliation and much more than an economic alliance. In his 1978 Jean Monnet Lecture at the European University Institute, the President of the European Parliament Emilio Colombo spoke on the importance of enlarging the EEC to include Greece, Spain, and Portugal. He underlined that:

> There is no doubt that the permanent absence of Spain, Greece and Portugal would in the long-term damage the very identity of the Community ideal. The contribution to European civilisation which these countries have made throughout their long history – a no less valid contribution than that made by the existing members of the Community – is such that if they did not join the ranks of those contributing to the ideals and culture of the Community, it would automatically be lowering its sights and be destined to become a mere regional trading area. Without the contribution of the Mediterranean area, Europe – and thus the Community – would be incomplete.
>
> *(Colombo 1978, p. 19)*

The following year, the Jean Monnet Lecture at the European University Institute was given by Lord Ralf Dahrendorf. He argued that having moved from the 'first Europe', which essentially consisted of an extended interpretation of a customs union between the member states, to the 'second Europe' of the 1970s, which consisted of political success but also of institutional failures, it was time to move towards a 'third Europe'. Critical of the European institutions' cumbersome bureaucratic nature and the lack of democracy, he defined his vision of a 'third Europe' in the following terms:

> The meaning of the Third Europe … is neither primarily one of the end of civil war, nor even that of the nitty-gritty of prosperity by creating a wider common market. It is emphatically not the desire of some of the founding fathers to create another superpower either; to have as much decentralization as possible and only as much centralization as necessary, is a prescription for a humane society to which many, including myself, would subscribe today. Europe is not simply an ideal either, a dream to live for; despite the strong sense of linkage which goes with the experience of

belonging, there is nothing wrong, indeed there is everything right about
building political progress on interest rather than dream. The meaning of
the Third Europe, as it corresponds to the experience of a new generation
of Europeans, is rather in two things: one is the irrelevance of borders for
solving problems, and the other is the need for common decisions where
there are genuine common interests. Thus there must be no limits to coop–
eration across this great Continent of ours, and there must be a framework
for taking decisions in areas in which no local community, region or nation
is the appropriate political space … [Europe] is, to be sure, a strange kind of
reality. 'Now you see it, now you don't', one is tempted to say with a sigh.

(Dahrendorf 1979, pp. 7–9)

In the decade that followed, and under the Jacques Delors Presidency of the
European Commission, Europe began to take tangible shape largely through
its 'relaunch' with the Single European Act (SEA 1987). Following the
'Eurosclerosis' and 'Europessimism' that had characterised the 1970s, the mid–
1980s witnessed a period of optimism and institutional momentum that led to the
Single Market and the expression of member states' determination to transform
their relations with a view to creating a European Union. As Andrew Moravcsik
(1991) described, the SEA linked a comprehensive liberalisation of trade and
services in the European market with procedural reforms aimed at streamlining
decision-making in the EC governing body. Although the pursuit of monetary
union and a common defence were preferred objectives for Jacques Delors, he
recognised that only the Single Market was politically feasible. Adhering to the
Monnet step-by-step functionalist approach, he thus focused on precisely that.
Delors and the Internal Market Commissioner Lord Arthur Cockfield were able
to bridge together business interest groups and national interests to push forward
institutional reform. Jacques Delors's federalist vision for Europe included plans
for a Social Charter that would create pan-European workers' rights to match
the liberalisation of the markets. In the late 1980s, this social dimension – along
with his push for a European Union with a single currency and an emerging
'common foreign and security policy' – was at the opposite end to Margaret
Thatcher's political vision. For her, Europe made sense so long as it consisted
of economic cooperation among independent, sovereign states. Her preference
was for a 'wider', 'looser' European community that would include the 'great
European cities' of Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest (see reference to Thatcher's
1988 Bruges speech in Evans 2004). When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Thatcher
recognised the collapse of the communist bloc as an opportunity to reshape
'Europe' (meaning the EEC) by enlarging it into a politically looser free-market-
based community where the Franco-German influence would be reduced and
the organic link with the United States would be preserved (Evans 2004, p. 109).

In spite of Britain's resistance, the majority of the political elites in the other
EEC member states at the end of the 1980s saw a geostrategic interest and benefit
in giving more substance and political weight to the concept of Europe. The

end of the Cold War and German reunification made the EEC the most suited forum within which 'Europe' could be reunified. The dominant narrative that developed post-1989 was that the countries of central and eastern Europe were 'returning to Europe'. And this narrative did not come from Brussels only. It came from Paris, Bonn, and later Berlin; it came from Rome and Madrid; it came from Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw; and it actually even came from Moscow. It thus came along with the resurfacing of the geopolitical concept of Central Europe: the continent's heartland had been dismantled as a concept after World War II, splintered by the Wall into two competing blocs until 1989. In his essay, 'The Tragedy of Central Europe', Milan Kundera (1984) passionately argued that predominantly Roman Catholic Poland, Hungary, what was Czechoslovakia at the time, Slovenia, and Croatia had long been part of the 'West' and were arguably more 'European' than their Eastern Orthodox neighbours. The emergence of a debate on a Central European identity came to be considered as an important political process, offering a way out of the Soviet-type homogenisation that had taken place during the Cold War. This avenue emphasised the 'European qualities' of the local cultures, in particular pluralism and democracy, hence 're-Europeanising' the region while offering individuals an additional level of identity that would avoid 'the threat of reductionism encapsulated in political nationalism' (Schopflin and Wood 1989; Neumann 1999, p. 164). At the same time, Mikhail Gorbachev (1988) spoke of a '*common European home*' that idealistically seemed to revive the goal of creating a united Europe. The democratic euphoria that dominated international relations at the beginning of the 1990s provided the context within which to explore Russia's coming together with the Euro-Atlantic community. This relaunched yet again countless ambitious debates about whether 'a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals' was indeed possible. While in 1962, this famous statement by Charles de Gaulle had enraged Nikita Khrushchev (who saw it as yet another imperialist attempt to break up the Soviet Union), in the 1990s it became the slogan for Euro-enthusiasts on both western and eastern parts of the continent, and even more so across the Channel.

Enlarging the club – how far?

Yet was such a broad vision of Europe indeed feasible in the 1990s? Or was it even desired? Officially and publicly, the rhetoric was certainly there. But were the national governments of the EEC member states as supportive of such an enlarged EEC? Would the benefits associated with 'too much' widening outweigh the costs, or even the risks?

Ralf Dahrendorf was among those who were not convinced. In his book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, he argued that a 'common European home' indisputably ended where the Soviet Union or whatever succeeded it began for three reasons:

> One is that there is something deeply suspicious about yesterday's hegemonic power wishing to set up house with those whom it occupied and held

under its tutelage for so long; it is probably better to keep the grizzly bear outside. The second reason is that the Soviet Union, with all its European history, is a vast developing country which has a much longer way to go than others in its European orbit before it becomes a full part of the modern world. The third and most important point is that Europe is not just a geographical or even cultural concept, but one of acute political significance. This arises at least in part from the fact that small and medium sized countries try to determine their destiny together.

(2005, p. 120)

While there was significant concern and deliberation about the sort of symbiotic relationship that was feasible or desirable between 'Europe' and what had been its most fearful existential threat in its eastern periphery, there was even more concern and deliberation about the sort of relationship that 'Europe' was to have with Germany, still perceived by many as 'Europe's' most important existential threat within. Treaty revisions, major redistribution policies through the EU's social cohesion and regional development funds, and impressive public diplomacy efforts on behalf of Bonn/Berlin were undertaken to calm fears among the smaller and more medium-sized EEC/EU member states about the forever recurring risk and threat of a 'German Europe' while ensuring the consolidation of a 'European Germany'. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl heavily invested in the Franco-German alliance as the core anchor of any vision of Europe, clarifying that German reunification was to be done within a politically united Europe, through the implementation of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and the Social Charter. The reunification of Germany thus provided the catalyst for the most sophisticated attempt thus far for the continent's regional integration. Through the European Union, the founding member states largely defined what Europe was meant to represent in the twenty-first century. They defined both the form and the means through which it would be achieved. Through the EU institutions and processes, the countries of western Europe articulated the political, legal, administrative, judiciary, societal, and economic conditions that represented both the ideal that had to be attained as well as the path that had to be pursued to achieve it by the newly independent states of central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe. Western European governments set the pace, conditions, and processes that had to be followed, and abided by (participation in the Euro-Atlantic security community first, association and eventually adherence to the Copenhagen and the Maastricht criteria), and provided the means, resources, technical assistance, and narrative for the newly independent states to transition from communism, single-party rule, and state-planned economies to becoming 'Europeanised' again.

Europe became synonymous with an innovative modernisation project. It became synonymous with democratic consolidation on a liberal agenda through the establishment of multi-party electoral systems, judicial reforms, support for freedom of the media, and civil-society-building. Market liberalisation,

privatisation, and deregulation seemed to be the way through which to become European in a globalised world. Although NATO accession was a political priority for all, EU accession took a wider meaning beyond the security dimension and was essentially framed as a modernisation project and a 'return to Europe' narrative. This narrative has been perceived by many as a form of paternalistic Eurocentrism that finds its origins in the eighteenth-century idea of Western imperialism as a '*mission civilisatrice*' (Lawson et al. 2010, p. 28). This same 'return to Europe' narrative had been used with the southern EEC enlargements a few years earlier. On the occasion of Spain's EU accession ceremony in 1986, Madrid's Mayor Tierno Galvan had declared that 'we are more European today than we have ever been' (Eder and Spohn 2005). King Juan Carlos I and Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez had made similar declarations depicting Spain's EU accession as its 'triumphant passage to modernity and democracy'. The Nation had thus become 'European' and thereby 'modern' (ibid., p. 118).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the vision for Europe that was put forward through the EEC/EU was one of unity that celebrated diversity. The 'unity in diversity' motto from 2000 reflects the national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences that define Europe. More specifically, it represents the paradigm shift that the European Union has attempted to achieve through its approach to integration. Diversity is thus not conceived in terms of a negative 'Other' or a marker of separation, but as something positive that can function as a bridge of peace and prosperity. Respect for diversity not only applies at the societal level; in fact, the EU has also, in principle, rendered this relevant for interstate relations. The representation of small states and the principle of parity between all member states regardless of size and power – though often more challenging and challenged than is politically acceptable to acknowledge – has been crafted into all the EU institutions. Decision-making processes have been structured to require 'package deals' and coalitions to be built between smaller and larger countries for important decisions to be taken. The President of Estonia, Lennart Meri, spoke of the importance of this dimension of Europe's diversity as inherent to its nature and basically what distinguishes the concept of Europe that the EU represents from the reality that Europe, particularly the central and eastern parts, experienced in the twentieth century when the larger powers annexed or dominated the smaller ones:

> Small states are the lubricating oil of Europe and the mortar of Europe. The survival and development of small nations is the key issue of the future of Europe. Europe needs small nations as much as we need Europe. Because the strength of the European Union does not lie in its size – the strength of Europe comes from its diversity.
>
> *(Lennart Meri, President of Estonia, The Role of*
> *Small Nation in the European Union speech at the*
> *University of Turku, Finland, 25 May 2000, quoted*
> *in Lehti and Smith 2005, p. 1)*

In spite of such ambitious and grand-scale aspirations and declarations about Europe and the forms it should take in the twenty-first century, the question of what Europe actually is and what it meant in the minds of both those already members of the Union and of aspiring members remained full of contradictions and at the root of much discord and disappointment.

Much of this disappointment rightly stems from the Union's failure to avert a return to ethnic violence and aggressive nationalism at the heart of the continent. There was a tragic failure to respond in an effective, united, and timely manner to the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia. The EU failed to enact and secure the ideal that it had argued it represented throughout the second half of the twentieth century: a European democratic peace. It was unable to protect human rights and peace within its south-eastern core, thereby affecting once again the notion and definition of Europe in its peoples' minds. 'Europe' was seen as still vulnerable to extremism and war, and the EU became associated with political weakness, disarray, and a lack of unity. References to Europe as a 'political dwarf' dependent on America's military might deeply dented its aspirations to global power status. In addition, it led to two opposite realities and meanings of Europe that existed synchronously. On the one hand was the idea that had been nurtured through the EU that war was impossible between its member states, while on the other, war *was* being waged in Europe. The extreme contrast between the two realities that were juxtaposed next to each other in the same space and at the same time led people to associate Europe with peaceful prosperity yet at the same time feel very unsafe and at risk. Paraphrasing Raymond Aron's famous description about the Cold War dialectic relationship between the eastern and western blocs as 'impossible peace, improbable war', Zaki Laidi wrote about Europe in the post-Cold War period as a relationship between 'imperfect peace and unobtainable security' (1998, p. 98).

From 'how to unify Europe' to 'what kind of Europe' and 'how much Europe' do we want

Eurocentrism has been unavoidably embedded in the historical trajectory outlined in this chapter. It is hard to think of a definition of the idea of Europe or of a project aimed at European unification that is not imbued with Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism has been criticised for attributing to Europe the unique source of meaning, the world's centre of gravity and to the 'West' a 'providential sense of historical destiny' (Shohat and Stam 2014, p. 2). It is a pervasive mind frame that divides all aspects of culture, history, science, politics, power, and society into a binary 'us/ours' and 'them/theirs' manner, bifurcating the world into the 'West and the Rest' and providing the ideological backing to colonialist practices and imperialist discourse. It underpins – implicitly or explicitly – all readings of world or European history.

As Shohat and Stam (2014) have insightfully noted, Eurocentric discourse projects a linear historical trajectory of a sequence of empires from Classical Greece to Pax Romana, Pax Britannica, and so on, attributing to the 'West' an inherent progress towards democracy while representing its oppressive practices

(colonialism, slave-trading, and so on) and dark periods in a 'sanitised form' of exceptional aberrations (ibid., pp. 2–3). Thus, Eurocentrism has been criticised as presenting itself in racist or paternalistic discourse towards other societies, cultures, or nations. Certainly, the ideas of Europe and the ways in which Europe has been envisaged have a strong Eurocentric foundation. They equally have a strong self-critical and self-depreciating basis. This coexistence is tightly knit and has enriched attempts to define what defines Europe and why.

As we have traced above, 'Europe' has essentially always been a political project. As such, there exist competing visions of what Europe means and to what it ought to aspire (Jacobs and Meier 1998). During the latter half of the twentieth century, the European Communities/European Union gradually positioned itself as representing the realisation of centuries-long aspirations (both declared and underlying) for European unity.

The EU came to represent Europe, thereby steering the bulk of the debate towards the questions of 'What sort of Europe do we wish for?' and 'How is Europe framed at present?' As the project of European integration has evolved and consolidated itself through institutions, policies, treaty revisions, and consecutive enlargements, how does it stand in our minds today?

The EC/EU has been considered the product of economically derived national self-interests and a way through which to renew the legitimacy of the European nation-states (Milward 1992). It has also been positioned as the most appropriate means through which to assert Europe's relevance in international relations and its ability to promote its strategic interests through political and military means and exercise influence beyond its borders. Europe has also been framed as a normative power in global affairs and as embodying a distinctive social model founded on human rights, democracy, solidarity, and the fight against inequality, intolerance, repression, and discrimination – both in Europe and internationally. In all these visions, there exists a degree of influence of the legacy of Europe's empires, a belief in the universal nature of European values, and, implicitly, in a modernised and politically correct version of its older *mission civilisatrice*.

The dissenting view has sought to protect and re-strengthen the nation-state by restricting the role and powers of 'Europe', aka 'Brussels' these days. Expressed through different forms of Euroscepticism on behalf of populist parties from the far left and right or no-votes in European referenda, this perspective is important because of the questions it raises regarding legitimacy at the EU level and the challenging impacts that market integration and globalisation have on national democracies (Leconte 2010, p. 13).

Naturally, these perceptions of Europe are not the only two ideal types. European statespersons, politicians, academics, and intellectuals do not neatly fall into one or the other of the two positions outlined above. Views of Europe are not binary and span a wide spectrum of approaches. As a system of governance, for some, the EU is the most suited to the greater challenges posed by modernisation, interdependence, and globalisation. Jan Zielonka (2006) described the EU as a neo-medieval empire, a 'meta-governor', mediating between a complex

web of interlocking levels of governance, territorial units, and democratic polities that allowed for the 'two Europes' to come together following the end of the Cold War. Then there are those who are concerned that the EU may have 'overstretched' itself. They essentially admit that much of Europe's diversity cannot be integrated within a single governance project and raise the issue that perhaps there are limits to how much diversity can be feasibly managed. Finally, there are others who may be more concerned with the legitimacy deficit that the Union faces than with the membership challenge; or, that a European reform agenda is long overdue (Emmanouilidis and Tsoukalis 2011).

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, 'Europe' entered national political debates as a dimension of national identity and as a dimension of power. And as it gained momentum, it appears that the concept of Europe raised more questions than ever before. Attempts to understand and reassess what Europe meant in a globalised world led to debates in each member state (actual and prospective) on how national identities relate with understandings and visions of Europe, as well as the existence of one or many European identities. Increasingly however, as the political, institutional, and economic crises magnified after the mid-2000s, the questioning shifted from understanding the obstacles and impacts of Europeanisation to whether the limits of how much diversity 'Europe' – meaning the EU – can digest had been reached. More importantly, as the economic crisis settled in after 2008, substantially constraining the EU's ability to procure and promise prosperity, 'Europe' became an ideological battleground. Perceived as a neoliberal project threatening the heart of social justice, welfare, and employment rights across the continent, for Europe's left political forces, the EU – simply referred to as Europe in all casual talk – has come to symbolise the dominance of global financial centres of power over democracy. At the very same time, for those wanting to open markets and to liberalise even further, 'Europe' (the EU) epitomises the continent's tradition of protectionist bureaucracies where vested interests stifle competition, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

The second decade of the century presented further challenges for Europe whose significance has eclipsed the economic and financial crisis of the early 2010s. During the second half of the decade, Europe has been faced with three significant crises that were both European and international. First, in 2015 and 2016 the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Paris, Nice, Berlin, and Stockholm and the continuing rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East led to a significant debate about the type and level of cultural and religious diversity that the continent can and should accommodate and under what principles.

During the same period, Europe was faced with a significant refugee emergency. As the conflict in Syria protracted, Syrians displaced in neighbouring countries (notably Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan) started making their way, at first hesitantly, through Italy (in 2013–2014) and then in large numbers mostly through Turkey and Greece (in 2015–2016), leading to an influx of over one million persons through the so-called Balkan route between the summer of 2015 and March 2016. While initially welcomed both in southern European

countries and Austria, Germany, and beyond, the welcome soon turned sour as the flow continued. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's famous statement '*Wir schaffen das*' (we can do this, meaning we can offer protection to the refugees) became anathema for many European governments, and borders closed.

While analysing the Mediterranean refugee emergency goes beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that the crisis involved not only EU member states but also other European countries such as Serbia or Bosnia, pointing to both geopolitical borders within the continent (countries with and without border controls with each other) and to historical and geopolitical connections (countries considered in Europe but not of the EU and those neither in Europe nor in the EU). The crisis – which is persisting in less massive but still acute ways to this day (in 2022) through occasional standoffs at the Greek-Turkish or most recently (in late 2021) the Polish-Belarussian border – has become an identity and a value crisis too. It has questioned whether Europe is a community of values where the right to asylum is respected and protected, or whether it is a club of affluent countries seeking to keep 'the huddled masses' outside its borders at all costs. The fact that most refugees and migrants that have moved along the Eastern Mediterranean route (via Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans or eastern Europe) originate from Muslim majority countries has also been fervently discussed, as populist parties have argued that accepting those migrants and refugees would lead to the demographic and cultural transformation of the continent (Krzyzanowski et al 2018; Triandafyllidou 2018).

The third crisis that Europe faced as a tumultuous decade drew to a close was that of the global pandemic of COVID-19, which erupted in early 2020. Continuing until the time of writing (2022), the pandemic emergency made European unity palpable among EU member states as vaccines and solidarity funds were negotiated and disbursed by the European Commission, while those countries at the fringes of the continent were again relegated to outsiders (e.g., the western Balkans). Protests against the vaccines or the lockdowns were also European in nature as anti-vaxxers, like *indignados* movements in the early 2010s, borrowed slogans from one another and accused not only their national governments but also 'Brussels' of what they argued was a violation of their civil liberties and a global elite conspiracy.

Concluding remarks

The coexistence of conflicting visions and perceptions of Europe is thus nothing new: it simply marks another phase of the history of the idea of Europe that has inspired aspirations of grandeur just as much as it has inspired contempt.

Having traced some of the most meaningful and influential visions that have been formed about Europe, as Bo Stråth has argued, the question of what Europe *is* has no unequivocal answer (2000, p. 420).

Europe has been in a continuous discourse on unification. The idea of unity – either through hegemony or through consensus and cooperation – which is at

the core of Europe suggests that essentially as a political project Europe has taken various meanings synchronically and diachronically, yet it seems that the idea of Europe has effectively taken three core approaches.

The first is fundamentally one of the regeneration of Europe. This vision has looked to the past, often recreating or reinterpreting it, emphasising the common roots of Europe's culture and identity or its distinctive characteristics whose integrity had to be maintained. The second is one of preservation in the face of contemporary challenges from within and from the global arena. Finally, the third involves the generation of a new, different future (Hewitson and D'Auria 2012). Europe frames a condition to aspire to, a political goal to be accomplished in order to break from the past or from conditions of degeneration, decline, and weakness.

In all the forms that the idea of Europe has taken, Europe has been the 'self' and the 'Other' bound into one. Although each of its constituent parts (countries and peoples) considers itself European and rightfully claims shared ownership of Europe's history, values, and civilisation, this identity is simultaneously an elusive one because the centre of power is often seen, with a certain anxiety, as being 'elsewhere'. In short, Europe has often been 'so near and yet so far' – a constantly shifting mosaic of ideas. The idea of Europe has been politically inspiring even though it provokes eternal dissatisfaction, perpetual frustration, and an unsettling concern pregnant with ambitious plans and grand desires of what it could be or what it ought to be.

Note

1 The principle of *libre examen* is based on the freedom of judgement and encourages the questioning of authoritative statements.

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4

CULTURAL EUROPE

'It's culture, not war that cements European identity', wrote Umberto Eco in 2012. But what do we mean when we connect the words 'Europe' and 'culture'?

In this chapter we unravel the connections between the two and explore the ways in which European culture has been defined at different times in history, the heritages that constitute it, and their relevance in its contemporary understandings. We present some efforts that have been made to attribute meaning and offer definitions of 'European' culture on the part of international and regional interstate organisations whose scope of competence covers issues of culture, education, democracy, and cooperation. We also discuss the extent to which it is different from, or similar to 'Western' culture. We then delve into Europe's relationship with the 'Other' – the 'Other' from without and the 'Other' from within – in order to underscore the cleavages, contradictions, and alternative visions that have been put forward as representations of European culture and European values.

Throughout this cultural parkour, we seek the dominant, the alternative, and the dissenting definitions of what is included and represented within 'European culture'. Just as importantly, we explore what 'European culture' aspires to. This latter dimension is probably its most distinctive feature as it has morphed into the universalist and forward-looking dimensions that are characteristic of 'European culture' and of the cultures of Europe. European culture acquires meaning when the commonalities, shared values, and experiences of the past are constructed in a forward-looking manner. In other words, references to a common European cultural space are made to express a political vision of Europe and the ideals it represents – or ought to represent.

We also explore the more recent cultural tensions tied with the idea of Europe. The dawn of the twenty-first century saw the reunification of the continent within the European Union. This was accompanied by the emergence

of a post-Western cultural understanding of Europe, and the plurality of its cultural underpinnings have been recognised to a far wider extent than ever before. Indeed, EU policies and narratives have increasingly associated culture with a more inclusive democracy, an opportunity for a broader representation and recognition of demographic diversity, an important tool for diplomacy, and a resource through which to strengthen resilience and well-being as well as support the societal transformations required to tackle climate change.

Yet during this same time, cultural conflicts seem to have become much sharper. Trust in institutions that were meant to maintain societal cohesion has been declining, inequalities have widened, and technology that enables and even encourages people to cluster in like-minded groups has intensified cleavages within societies (Algan et al. 2017; de Vries and Hoffmann 2016; Stoetzer et al. 2021; Alonso-Muñoz and Casero-Ripollés 2020). These cleavages have been increasingly represented in cultural terms by populists who tightly connect them with ideological narratives about Europe and nurture anxieties, either along Eurosceptic framing or 'in defence' of Europe's traditional values to polarise and accentuate 'us vs. them' differences.

Defining culture

We must start with definitions. Defining culture is a Sisyphean task as the term tends to be used loosely. The most quoted definitions of culture offer simple common-sense definitions with references to the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement. More complex definitions refer to values and ideals and aim at explaining individual and societal behaviours, or at changing them, or both. Anthropologists, in particular, have long insisted on the importance of understanding and scientifically defining culture because of its tremendous influence on humans and their behaviours in society. The Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies adopted by UNESCO in 1982 defined culture as the entire complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. This includes the arts and letters, as well as the modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

In 1952, in their classic *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn classified definitions of culture under six headings: descriptive definitions that attempt to enumerate the content of culture; historical definitions that emphasise an aggregate collection of joint social heritage or tradition; normative definitions that concentrate on rules and ways of behaving; genetic characterisations in terms of products, ideas, or symbols; structural descriptions that define culture; and psychological definitions that explore cognition, meaning, and its impact on the human psyche. Clyde Kluckhohn (1949) offered a multifaceted and diffuse approach to the concept of culture by referring to it as a way of life, the social legacy that the individual acquires from the group as well as a way of thinking, feeling,

and behaving. In this sense, culture is not only a learned behaviour; it also becomes a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour. It is a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to others. Clifford Geertz (1973), on the contrary, approached culture in a more precise manner focusing on semiotics. He contended that culture is a context within which social events, behaviours, processes, and institutions can be intelligibly, or as he argues, thickly, described.

Drawing from Max Weber's vivid depiction that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun', Geertz has added that culture is precisely these webs (ibid., p. 5). The analysis of culture thereby becomes an interpretative science in search of meaning.

Culture is of course also connected with the art of intellectual refinement or the pursuit of perfection, and is thereby linked to notions of progress, development, modernity, and the essence of humanity (see also Baldwin et al. 2006). Thus, it often becomes linked with the term 'civilisation' – another overstretched term that has provoked much criticism for its Eurocentrism, but which has also opened the scope for fascinating work on civilisational pluralism (see Hann 2011; Bettiza 2014).

Culture is the heritage of the past and an inspiration for the future. Culture is perceived by some as the soul of society and by others a product to be packaged, branded, and traded and, as such, as a contributor to economic growth. It may be regarded as an elitist affair or it may take the form of popular culture, which involves mainstreaming cultural products.

Culture is certainly about politics and power. In her last collection of essays, *Philosophy: Who Needs It?* Ayn Rand (1982) defined culture as a complex battleground of dominant ideas and influences – accepted in whole or in part – that allows for the existence of dissenters and exceptions. Framings of 'culture' have created patterns of superordination, subordination, and control, explicitly expressing the superiority of one culture over others. At the same time, culture has served as a means through which to contest dominant groups, the dominant class, or a dominant global (super)power; 'sub-cultures' have developed as ways to contest authority or the dominant cultural mainstream.

Culture has served as a foreign policy instrument through which to promote dialogue and understanding and consolidate strategic alliances. And, it has been used to expand national influence globally and has, therefore, been reproached as a facet of imperialism.

Culture has been understood as a process of making sense of life and the world, and, unavoidably, such a framing has ideological underpinnings. From a policy perspective, positive or negative socio-economic outcomes are often attributed to culture (as opposed to 'nature') to explain human behaviours. This leads to some social groups and cultures being 'valorised' over others, often justifying the formulation of policies aimed at the 'adjustment' or the 'development' of these others. On the European continent, the focus has been on historical minorities, immigrant populations, and the Roma and Sinti people. Globally,

the focus has been on what were referred to as Third World countries or developing countries in twentieth-century international relations, and the Global South more recently.

So, to recap, culture is defined in both structural and functional terms; it is about artefacts, objects, and processes; but essentially, it fosters a sense of belonging, thereby constructing or maintaining a group's identity. It integrates people just as much as it segregates them. It is about identity, representation, and signification. It is also about power and ideology, thereby linking culture to influence or even hegemony and to projects of political contestation and struggle. These dimensions of culture are particularly insightful in the effort we have embarked on in this book. In this chapter, we try to unpack and disentangle some of the layers, interpretations, and expectations that 'Europe' as a culture has evoked, inspired, and defined so as to contribute to understanding Europe.

The building blocks of European culture

Definitions of culture become sensitive minefields when they relate to Europe. Does a European culture exist, and is it shared or common? Under what conditions does it express itself, and how is it represented? What values are associated with it? Who defines it and what does it mean to them? And, what sort of power relations does it imply? These questions are relevant not just for Europe, but for the rest of the world too, given how influential Europe and its (national) cultures have been across history and across continents.

Geert Hofstede (2001) suggested that values refer to the desired or to the desirable, whereas culture is a collective programming of the mind that manifests itself as values. Europe has always presented itself as being all about culture and all about values. As we have discussed in the previous chapters, Europe and culture raise associations connected with the Enlightenment, belief in progress, freedom of thought and of expression, and tolerance. References to Europe and culture have become interlinked with the concept of democracy, human rights, the notion of rationality, and free will. Europe and culture are also associated with education, as any reference to culture immediately ties our understanding of Europe with universities, science academies, libraries, museums, and a rich humanistic cultural heritage in landscape, religion, the arts, music, literature, and film.

The Council of Europe has tried to codify these dimensions into definitions, understandings, and norms for all countries across the continent to establish common behaviours and further enhance common values. Its initiatives and actions have aimed at recognising the major role performed by culture in the progress of social knowledge, understanding others, and respecting cultural diversity, while furthering common values. Together with democracy and human rights, the Council of Europe has positioned culture as a precondition for a satisfying life and a source of fulfilment. On 19 December 1954, the Council of Europe adopted the Cultural Convention (Council of Europe 1954) as the foundation

for European cooperation in the fields of culture, education, youth, and sport. Its aim was to encourage cultural cooperation in all its manifold forms, to foster understanding and knowledge between European countries, and to preserve their cultural heritage and treat it as an integral part of a broader 'European' heritage. It has tried to emphasise this 'broader European heritage' in order to unpack culture from its national affiliations and to strengthen an understanding of a shared regional cultural identity.

UNESCO has also worked in this direction. By focusing on the continent's subregions, such as south-east Europe (having a UNESCO office in Venice, for instance) or the Iberian Peninsula or eastern Europe, it has strived to encourage wider understandings of a common cultural heritage that transcends and cuts across national geographic borders bridging peoples, practices, traditions, and values at a regional or subregional level. Initiatives such as the proclamation of the route of Santiago de Compostela as the first European Cultural Itinerary by the Council of Europe in 1987, and inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list, approach culture as a shared European good rather than an exclusively national possession of Spain and France. This route played a fundamental role in encouraging cultural exchanges between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe during the Middle Ages and remains a testimony to the power of the Christian faith among people of all social classes and from all over Europe (UNESCO World Cultural Heritage website).

But what does the 'European' descriptor refer to? Is there a transversal, shared dimension that cuts across national cultures? In short, are there enough similarities between national cultures to suggest that a European culture, distinct from the more general Western one, exists? Or is it an elitist construct always in the making and never quite autonomously defined?

European cultural history weaves together the Greek, Latin, and Germanic heritages of European civilisation. Pagan and Christian traditions are layered together with the history of the Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews and the Jewish Diaspora, as well as with the Muslim heritage that ranges from the Moors in Spain to the Muslim minorities that are part of the Ottoman Empire's legacy across south-eastern Europe. Narratives of European cultural history tend to commence with the Classical Greco-Roman period and then trace the imprint of the Romanesque and Gothic architectures across western Europe. The Renaissance and its humanisms, the Reformation, the English Revolution, the Age of Reason, or the Enlightenment, and eventually the French Revolution, all constitute the classical points of reference.

Byzantium is more complex. While it is often perceived as a body of religious, political, and philosophical ideas contrary to those of the West, it preserved Greek and Roman culture for nearly a thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire in the west of Europe until it was taken up during the Renaissance. It shaped the regions of Europe at the crossroads of traditions, such as the Balkans and the Carpathians and the Eastern Orthodox Church, acting as a buffer between western Europe and the conquering armies from

Asia, thereby largely contributing to shaping European culture and European perceptions of Islam.

More recent studies have woven into the narrative the ways in which the idea of Europe and its traditions have been influenced by 'the near Others' and how these have contributed to European civilisation's distinctive nature. The Ottomans, the Moors, and the Levant have been the most defining 'Others'.

Studies in Europe's cultural history also explore the big ideas that transformed Europe and, by extension, the rest of the world. Alongside narratives that linger on the trajectory of culture in the arts and religion – and particularly a Christian theocentric view of the world – we also encounter narratives of intellectual history and of the achievements of science and rationality. This historiography traces the rise of Enlightenment thinking and secularity to the big '-isms', from the birth of German Romanticism and Idealism to Liberalism and Marxism. The rise of modern culture expressed in the Surrealist and Dada movements and in the Bauhaus school, the totalitarianisms of fascism and National Socialism and the phenomenon of mass, popular culture, and the bridge between Impressionism and Soviet-inspired socialist realism all the way to pop art and culture have made the twentieth century the fastest-paced, most controversial, and most multifaceted and radical period of European culture thus far.

Yet, these narratives essentially zoom in and out of the national levels. They present a fascinating mosaic of cultures, trajectories, and stories that took place concomitantly or in sequence across the European continent. They focus on particular nations and move from one local setting to another to show the same-time interconnections, the dialectical relations, or the differences.

We could almost say – if there is such a thing – that what comes naturally to most historians, sociologists, and political scientists is to deal with the continent's history, culture, societies, institutions, and interactions at either the national or city level. What is more challenging is to explore and narrate these from a 'European' perspective. In such case, what would this 'European' perspective be? Would it be from a higher, eagle-eye perspective or would it be from a point of view of synthesis? Or, would it be motivated by the calculated objective to derive support for a particular political project? European integration as defined through the EEC/EU's unification has certainly been the most galvanising political project across the continent in this direction. It has triggered interest in rethinking, framing, and debating European history as more than the sum of national histories and European culture as more than the sum of national cultures.

'First among equals': Europe and the 'Others'

As we have repeatedly laid out in the previous chapters, the crudest reply to the question of 'What is Europe?' would probably be: 'Well, quite simply, Europe is not the "Other"'. It would, of course, also be illustrative of the Eurocentrism that has characterised the idea of Europe.

All the way back to Antiquity and Ancient Greece, representations of the 'Other', collectively defined as Barbarians, have been used to distinguish between the 'in' and 'out' groups; the us and them. Herodotus's account of the Persian Wars between the Greeks and the Persians is the quintessential personification of the clash of Europe's values with the 'Other'. His account presents this war as Europe's defensive fight for freedom, law, virtue, courage, and piety against Asia's aggressive despotism, lasciviousness, and arrogance (Burgess 1997). It is also the battle that largely frames Europe's self-understanding and the roots of its conflicts with its surrounding worlds. References to the 'Others' or the Barbarians are thus associated with two distinct emotions throughout the continent's history and cultural development: anxiety and superiority.

Anxiety of change that may be provoked through interaction with the 'Other', whether foreign or from within, seems to be a rather common knee-jerk reaction for any culture. It certainly seems to have a constant, well-defined, and ever-recurring place throughout European cultures. When these 'Others' neither speak our language nor share our cultural and political values there is an apprehension of whether they may be undermining our culture and challenging our core values. Anxiety may take two forms. It may arise out of concern of the potential impact that the 'Other' may have on our society's values, way of life, and cultural identity. This fear of change is the underbelly of negative stereotyping and prejudicial attitudes that lead to discrimination and the expression of phobias in the public sphere such as anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. Alternatively, this anxiety may be associated with survival, such as economic concerns (for instance, competition for access to scarce resources or to jobs), or even actual physical safety or survival of the 'in-group' (Brown 2010).

The twentieth-century poet Constantine Cavafy captures the effects of these fears while indicating that they are intricately linked with an absolute existential need for the 'Other'. In his 1904 poem 'Waiting for the Barbarians', he describes a country where all public life is at a standstill in anticipation of the Barbarians' arrival. In Cavafy's poem, citizens wait in the assembly anticipating the arrival of the Barbarians; the emperor and his consuls are dressed to impress, laws are suspended, and parliamentary debates cancelled awaiting the arrival of the Barbarian danger. And then, nothing. The feared 'Others' never actually arrive, leaving a gaping hole at the heart of the country's life, suggesting quite simply that without the 'Other' there is no reason for 'Us', nothing tying us together, or motivating us, or defining who we are:

> Because night has fallen and the barbarians haven't come.
> And some of our men just in from the border say
> there are no barbarians any longer.
> Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
> Those people were a kind of solution.

> *(Cavafy 1904/1975)*

Superiority, though certainly not an exclusively European trait, has been the other constant in Europe's cultural framing of the world. It has probably been most famously explained and criticised by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). He describes the way in which Europe defined its contacts with different societies and cultures as colonisation, which expanded the continent's influence and its interaction with all corners of the world. Said has argued that the study of the exotic – either to understand the 'Other' or to define the self in relation to the 'Other' – essentially led to the construction of an artificial boundary between the west and the east, the Occident and the Orient, or the civilised and the uncivilised. Thus, 'Europe' became tightly packed together with the 'West', '*l'Occident*', and 'Civilisation', leading to facile conclusions as regards the superiority of cultures and race. These conclusions served the European empires' political projects of colonisation well. A cultural hierarchy frame thereby progressively exoticised, disdained, and demonised non-Europeans as a means to legitimise the expansion of their imperial authority in what was being discovered as an increasingly diverse and very unflat world. The construction of stereotypes based on notions of cultural hierarchy – quickly transformed into colour and racial hierarchies – infiltrated science, literature, popular perceptions, and public speech. Regardless of whether it took the form of a duty-driven *mission civilisatrice* or a romanticised fascination of the exotic, it defined 'Others' as lesser, backward, and in dire need of being 'civilised' or 'Europeanised'.

So, does this neatly summarise the gist of Europe's relation with the 'Others' and essentially respond to the question of how to define the existence of a European civilisation? Obviously not. This would assume a reductionist approach towards European culture, at the risk of caricaturing it as a proud, narcissistic imperial culture confident of its sophistication and ecumenical value and fearful of degeneration due to foreign influence. Although 'Europe' has expressed itself as the embodiment of civilisation through its cultural accomplishments, particularly in the arts and sciences, nonetheless, Europe's relation with the 'Other' has also included a very rich experience of exchanges and a strong admiration often expressed for other 'older' civilisations. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, a wide scholarly interest and a spiritual enchantment developed towards China and Confucianism, towards Japan, and towards India and the sacred Sanskrit writings of the Vedas in particular (Reitbergen 2014). It is also during this time that Europe's fascination with Egyptology developed, along with an impressive growth in the translation and publication of Arabic and Persian classic texts.

Lumping together all the cultures of the Old Continent under a blanket reference to 'European civilisation' poses a further risk. It would involve ignoring and dismissing the cultural and value hierarchies that have, whether implicitly or explicitly, defined relations and perceptions of one another between European peoples throughout history. Cultural racism, or any form of racism, is never directed only towards the very 'foreign' Other; rather the contrary: it is often most passionate towards the 'Other' that is in its closest vicinity.

There are cultures that throughout history have been consistently poorly understood or dismissed. These have had to constantly make the case of their European credentials; they have had to be vigilant to avoid persecution, discrimination, and accusations of being the threat from within, or that have quite simply been consistently excluded. The Orthodox communities of eastern and south-eastern Europe, Europe's Jews, the Muslims of south-eastern Europe, and the newer Muslim communities in western Europe's urban centres, and nomadic communities, particularly the Roma, are and have always been on the margins of all European societies. These peoples are constituent and autochthonous elements of Europe's civilisation yet they have constantly been considered as elements of the 'Other', of the Orient. Mainstream discourses that speak either in the public or private spheres of the need for tolerance and dialogue with these cultures tend to oscillate between a conservative paternalistic orientalism and a democratic commitment to respect for diversity.

Regardless of approach, the issues at stake are consistent. These cultures are regularly considered as representing the 'Other' within Europe, thereby evoking emotions of curiosity and anxiety that translate into phobias in the public sphere at times of crises and into exotic stereotyping of the 'ethnic' during times of social peace and prosperity. Still today, they are regarded as having experienced alternative pathways and historical trajectories to Europe and, therefore, as representing values and traditions that bring vestiges from the past directly into contemporary daily life, thus often raising tensions and challenging modernity. Their commonalities with peoples and countries beyond Europe are also regularly noted, thereby conditioning interactions. For instance, they may be approached as 'agents' of foreign powers who instrumentalise them in order to intervene in European matters (a perception often associated with Russia's influence in south-eastern Europe through Pan-Slavism and the role of the Patriarchate of Moscow); or, they may be practically objectified as exemplifying Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' predicament (particularly Europe's Muslims). Alternatively, they may be seen as representing a rich cultural capital that can serve as bridges and cultural mediators with other non-European cultures and countries with which they may have common linguistic, ethnic, or religious traits.

Throughout history, members of minority populations within European societies have been exoticised, demonised, stereotyped, or even treated as 'backward'. Across all European societies they have been subject to centuries-long processes of stigmatisation, forced modernisation, assimilation, and exclusion. The need to intervene and redress 'backwardness' may be considered a defining feature of European civilisation. Bancroft has described it as a moral imperative, a 'White-man's burden' (2005, p. 25) to rid the world of backwardness. And, much of this is related to the understanding of progress and evolution that is associated with modernity and has its roots in Europe. The Enlightenment, along with the French and also the American revolutions, promoted values of universal humanism and emancipation through which all men – regardless of

class, religion, colour, or nationality – shared the same essential fundamental rights.

The belief was in human progress where all, including the more 'primitive' peoples, would eventually receive the benefits of civilisation (and Christianity). By the mid-nineteenth century, however, a modern form of racism began to spread, with 'race science' becoming the dominant epistemology that explained human history as well as the contemporary social and political order (Macmaster 2001). Modernity's objective to revolutionise societies and their relation with space and time in a never-ending quest for progress imposed a notion of backwardness in two directions. It has been directed towards non-European societies that were contemporary with European modernity (expressed essentially in anti-Black colonial racism) and it has been directed towards the alien groups within that are perceived as defying the nation's moral order and generally all that was associated with the dominant understanding of European civilisation. Description of how these tensions played out against Europe's Jews in the context of the Enlightenment is illustrative in this respect. The Enlightenment's promise was a secular and rational order in which anti-Jewish prejudice would be overcome and Jewish civil disabilities would be abolished. The reality was that the more Jews became like everyone else, the more irrational and absolute became the prejudice against them: they were capitalists, they were communists; they were too provincial and parochial; they were too rootless and cosmopolitan; they kept to themselves, they got everywhere; they were disloyal, they were suspiciously over-loyal. The more they integrated, the more anti-Semitism grew (Berger 1999, p. 54).

Similarly, nomadic minorities such as the Roma, Gypsies, 'Tinkers', and 'Travellers' have been racialised and discriminated against across Europe. In the case of Ireland, as MacLaughlin (1999) has described, the defamation of 'Travellers' was coupled with the development of a rural fundamentalist nationalism that fused with Social Darwinism. This led 'Travellers' to be treated as social anachronisms, located outside the moral and political structures of the Irish state and placed at the 'hostile' end of a continuum running from tradition to modernity. In central and eastern Europe, Roma have been reviled as 'social un-adaptables' as this 'backward' segment of society here, too, conflicted with the universalising principles of modernity (Bancroft 2005).

Sociologists and political theorists such as Hannah Arendt or Zygmunt Bauman have explicitly linked modern racism with modernity. The institutionalisation of nationalism in the modern European nation-state and the need for the populations of these territorial units to be defined vis-à-vis external 'Others' and minorities who live in their midst rendered race-thinking politically relevant and, indeed, expedient.

Culture has thus been tightly intermingled with race and the desire for hierarchy, order, modernity, and the perceived comfort of generalised categorisations within Europe. As north-western Europe grew in military strength, in economic terms, and in political capital – and long before the White–Black hierarchy consolidated itself during the period of slavery – the juxtaposition of geographic and

religious cleavages, paired with imperial boundaries, led to cultural hierarchies and explosive confrontations across Europe. According to Levine (1990), 'whiteness' or 'pallor' rather than the 'olive' Mediterranean skin portrayed purity and the aesthetic ideal, just as the high-brow more common among the northern and western Europeans was associated with 'high intellect' or 'aesthetic refinement'.

Europe's most distinctive cultural cleavages

Race, ideology, and religion have served as the most distinctive cultural markers in Europe.

The horrors of the two World Wars and the Holocaust led to the intellectual victory of cultural relativism, the deepest discredit of racism, and the belief in the cultural superiority of one European nation over the others. UNESCO is an international institution exemplifying this effort and took a leading role in replacing 'race' as a theory of human difference with 'culture', which was seen as a non-hierarchical and thus more suitable means of conceptualising diversity and encouraging cross-border regional cooperation. UNESCO's work in the 1950s, expressed largely through the writings of French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, framed the basis of the anti-racist policy adopted by the post-war international institutions and most western European governments.

And yet, despite decades of intense anti-racism policies pursued by European governments both nationally and globally, notably through the UN system, since the 1990s there has been a resurgent political Far Right in Europe, steadily engaged in a rhetoric of exclusion of non-EU immigrants from Asia or Africa and the Middle East. Migrants have been increasingly construed as posing a threat to the national unity and security of the host nation due to their cultural difference (Stolcke 1995). This rhetoric of exclusion is based on a 'radical opposition between nationals and immigrants as foreigners informed by a reified notion of bounded and distinct, localised national-cultural identity and heritage that is employed to rationalise the call for restrictive immigration policies' (ibid., p. 1). This racism draws from the unresolved tension in modern nation-states between the organic/determinist (where group belonging is determined at birth) and the voluntarist (where attachment to the nation is the result of free association and is based on a social contract) ideas of belonging and underlines the incapacity of different cultures to communicate with each other.

While the turn of the twenty-first century was accompanied with an intensification of the processes of globalisation, it was also characterised by a shift in the rhetoric of exclusion and a discourse emphasising the challenges encountered by liberal democratic approaches to governing migration-related cultural diversity. For many, the return to identity politics and cultural fears that followed the historiographic marker of 9/11 'ought not' to be happening in Europe precisely because of World War II. The fact that the return to cultural, religious, or ethnic racism was considered both within and beyond Europe as unthinkable is telling in itself. It is undoubtedly a normative conclusion based on the subconscious or implicit belief or expectation that European civilisation is defined by progress and a historical dialectic evolution towards betterment, improvement, and

Enlightenment. At the same time, the 'return' of anxiety towards the 'Other' has been taking place across the continent in parallel to the construction of a unique experiment in human political history: European unification.

So, while European integration has advanced through inspiring and nurturing a sense of European belonging grounded in a culture of civic principles, rights, and duties, and of the rule of law and pooled sovereignty, the importance of boundaries, seen and unseen, has regained momentum against all efforts to the contrary. Although the process of European integration has aimed at cultural exchange and cooperation across borders, the traditional function of borders has not been obliterated as regards both internal cleavages and external borders. New debates have been triggered about who really can and should belong to 'Us' and who essentially will always be the 'Other' and never quite 'European', regardless of whether he or she is born and raised within European societies. The infamous reference to the term 'Fortress Europe' – which has its origins in the military context of World War II – resurfaced in the late 1980s. It was initially used by States outside the Single Market in relation to economic and trade concerns, but was adopted widely in the EU migration and security field since the 1990s. This has rendered extra-communitarian immigrants, in particular, targets of rising populist fears and xenophobic speech. This rhetoric initially came from the extreme right, but it has been increasingly mainstreamed into the more populist centre, expressing a growing concern over threats that cultural (and religious) diversity may pose to the cultural integrity of the nation (Stolcke 1995; Institute of Race Relations 2008, p. 2). The revival of anti-Semitism, the growth of Islamophobia, and anti-immigration discourses indicate the persisting challenges associated with managing diversity in increasingly diverse European societies, as also discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to European identity/identities.

Cleavages and divisions that run across cultures are not all structured along ethnic, religious, or racial markers. Ideology is just as relevant and, in fact, fulfils two separate functions: it is an analytical tool to describe a particular society or state of affairs and it offers a visionary dimension of the sort of society it ultimately wishes to construct. Ideologies have defined the socio-political and economic challenges that each society faces while also enriching our understandings and definitions of what we conceive European culture to be. They have claimed absolute possession of political truths in doctrinaire ways and have aimed at (re)ordering social and cultural life in the image of proclaimed ideals. We are really spoiled for choice, considering the plethora of examples that separate Europe into a number of ideological cultures that transcend and cut across class, socio-economic situation, ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation, and gender or age difference.

As we discuss further in Chapter 7 when examining the main cleavages that have defined modern European politics, each ideological framework essentially offers a clear proposition of what 'Europe' is and what it is not, of what needs to be fought for, limited, and obstructed, as well as what is to be achieved. Thus, we have 'enlightened' and 'counter-enlightenment' cultures cutting within and

across European societies. The former are inspired by the Enlightenment and promote rationalisation in society and politics along the lines of liberalism, secularism and anticlericalism, democracy, and free-market economics. They contest authority and tradition in pursuit of social utility and progress and also privilege the exercise of power through modern political parties. Note that here too we speak of 'enlightened' cultures in the plural, as the Enlightenment was not a unique, consistent, and continuous pan-European movement, but rather a series of interconnected multiple, national Enlightenments.

These 'enlightened' cultures are contrasted to the reactionary political cultures identified by Sir Isaiah Berlin as 'Counter-Enlightenment' (McMahon 2001; Mali and Wokler 2003), which are relativist, historicist, vitalist, and irrational as exemplified in the writings of the German philosophers J.G.A. Hamman, Friedrich Jacobi, and J.G. Herder or the Italian Giovanni Battista Vico. The Counter-Enlightenment has united critics from the right and the left. From the conservative right, the Enlightenment has been depicted as the '*ur*-source of modern totalitarianism, the godless font of the Terror, the Gulag, and other atrocities committed in the name of reason' (MacMahon 2001, p. 12). From the left, Enlightenment is responsible for hegemonic reason, totalising discourse, racism, misogyny, and, ultimately, the Holocaust and modernity's shortcomings. Overall, these political cultures are pre-democratic, nationalist, defensive, and rather ambivalent towards capitalism and its market forces, favouring clientelistic networks of power. While in western Europe they were spearheaded by the Catholic Church, in the continent's south-east periphery they have been described as the 'underdog culture', bearing a strong imprint of the Orthodox Church (Diamandouros 1993).

Alongside these cultural cleavages we also have the classic left–right ideological dualism that has carved out two very contradictory yet totally parallel representations and understandings of what European culture represents, signifies, and inspires. Thus, European culture evokes references to liberalism, competition, individuality, and the pursuit of freedom for the ideologies on the political right. In its most recent form, it is defined in EU parlance as 'market democracies' and 'liberal democracies', underlining a defining relationship between economic matters and the quality of democracy and the importance of the separation of powers. With the same breath, 'Europe' evokes references to solidarity, community rights, social justice, cohesion, and the existence of a protective and redistributive welfare state. A strong social dimension, sensitive to the more vulnerable groups is considered core to European culture and what distinguishes Europe from other Western economies and their unfettered capitalism.

Lastly, debates on the existence and substance of a European culture encounter yet another dualism: religion versus secularism. On the one hand, Europe is associated with a culture of religiosity and, more specifically, with Christianity. Depending on regional geography this religiosity is defined by Protestantism, which has permeated social relations and aspects of the work ethos, or by Catholic or Orthodox social conservatism. On the other, Europe is tantamount

to the principles of *laïcité*, the fight against religious dogmatism and the development of modern thought. This constitutes probably one of the most fascinating features of European culture as until recently, Europe's patterns of secularisation – from separating the public sphere from religion to opening the path to religious pluralism and to the questionability of truth – were deemed the standard development of modernisation (for more on secularisation, see Taylor 2007). In the twentieth century, sociological studies suggested that modernisation (the process of industrialisation, urbanisation, and rising levels of education and wealth) was weakening the influence of religious institutions in affluent societies, bringing lower rates of attendance at religious services and making religion subjectively less important in people's lives. Progressive religious decline, which was consistent across the continent since the 1950s, was considered the norm and, as José Casanova has noted, the United States' persistence on religion was studied as the exception. More recently, the argument has been turned on its head with scholars attempting to explain European 'exceptionalism' and the drastic secularisation of European societies (see Berger 1999; Casanova 2009). At the same time, radical secularisation was also taking place in the parts of Europe that were under Soviet rule; here, however, it was forcibly pursued as part of state doctrine.

The secularisation thesis was challenged at the end of the twentieth century. The collapse of the Soviet Union was followed by a dynamic resurgence of Orthodoxy and Catholicism in central and eastern Europe (see Pew Research Center 2018). On the rest of the continent, although the decline of religiosity in some communities has been continuing, multiculturalism has been posing unprecedented cultural, political, and legal challenges as we witness the growing assertion of 'religious- communal', especially Muslim, identities in countries whose governments and majority populations perceive themselves as largely secular.

The ways in which identity is framed and the extent to which it is tolerant of various forms of difference within are also expressed through culture. In their ideal archetypes, the existence of an ethno-cultural national identity tends to be opposed to the construction of a civic culture that is open to multiculturalism (see also Chapter 5 for further discussion). The former exults the heritage and identity of the nation, deemed as homogenous, that needs to be protected from all things foreign and from internal dissent to keep it 'pure', united, and strong. The latter praises cultural differences, seeks to protect and emancipate minority identities, and promotes coexistence, tolerance, and open societies. It seeks to extend equality from uniformity of treatment to include respect for difference, thereby providing the intellectual basis for the public recognition and institutional accommodation of minorities, the reversal of marginalisation, and a remaking of national citizenship so that all can have a sense of belonging to it (Modood 2020). These concepts are not new or typical of 'modern' super-diverse multicultural societies and trace their roots to the origins of European civilisation, although they find their limits tested even more today.

These contradictory ideological pairs outlined above are cross-cutting, often untidily mixed and matched. Their combinations have constructed what Europe and European culture has meant for different groups at different times as each one of these sets synthesises the core values and ideals that form the building blocks of our perceptions and expectations of Europe.

When an aspirational vision of Europe became a dominant cultural narrative

One of the most interesting facets of the cultural dimensions of Europe is in its 'alternative' visions. What is common among these is their normative ambition – a normative ambition to attain the values that are perceived as representing the ideal of Europe and an ambition to establish a different sort of Europe from the one that appears to be the dominant, or hegemonic, one at a respective moment in time. In other words, an ambition to strengthen the 'other' vision of Europe, to replace the values that are in the mainstream with those considered to be more 'alternative' yet more 'authentic'.

Visions about new political and cultural alternatives tend to generate enthusiastic responses mostly during critical junctures. In other words, at times of crisis, existing ideas about political order (and its ensuing socio-economic balances and values) are collectively challenged, sometimes delegitimised, and certainly contested. Europe has had many such critical junctures, some of which we examine in Chapter 7 on Political Europe. During these critical junctures, political visions of Europe tend to be (re)defined through cultural framings and modes of expression.

As we have already argued in the previous chapters, over the course of the past seven decades, the dominant form of 'Europe' has been the European Union. Although the European Union has become the point of reference for European values, its origins lie in precisely this logic of creating 'another' kind of Europe; specifically, of replacing divisiveness and competition with cooperation and integration, of replacing protectionism with free movement, of replacing aggressive nationalisms with voluntarily pooled sovereignty, consensus, and wealth redistribution, of replacing autarchy with interdependence – all under the cultural and political banner of 'Unity in Diversity'.

In spite of its limitations and unmet expectations, the achievements of the process of European integration could suggest that the most successful attempt at representing Europe thus far has sprung from an avant-garde minority that grabbed the political opportunities presenting themselves in a series of critical junctures in the second half of the twentieth century. Despite deep-rooted traditions that are resistant to change, the crisis of World War II led to a strong enough consensus among political and economic elites across Europe that the nation-state had to be separated from the excess of nationalism and that interdependence rather than autarchy would contribute to a durable peace, economic regrowth, and security.

Forty years later, in 1989, the massive socio–political changes that took place provoked major transformations of collective identities and political culture; 1989 offered another major cultural break that opened the door wide to this ambitious vision of Europe based on pooled sovereignty and multi-level governance. The unpredictable revolutions of 1989–1990 led to the emergence of a narrative of a 'post-Western Europe' that recognised the cultural plurality and pluri-civilisational background of Europe (Delanty 2013). The demise of the Cold War and the process of EU enlargement meant the end of a formal East–West identity marker that had defined both sides of the Iron Curtain for half a century. It brought to the fore a variety of historical traditions that challenged a strictly Western reading of European culture. There was a political need to strengthen more distinctly European notions of European identity and culture (as different from the Western – increasingly US-dominated – or West European) in order to support the eastern enlargement of the EU integration project and to reconcile the traditions of Western modernity with Slavic culture, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the legacies of state socialism.

The 'alternative' Europe that the pan-European idealists had envisaged in the early twentieth century was presented as the most rational approach, the one that made economic and security sense, and the one that corresponded to Europe's civilisational aspirations after the destruction of the two World Wars. This transition from an aspiration to the 'mainstream' was achieved incrementally, functionally, and in an inclusive manner, incorporating the member states' cultural diversity and encouraging its representation and dissemination. It eventually came to dominate definitions of Europe, largely rendering most other propositions (that may have taken either the form of (Euro)sceptical opposition or alternative institutional arrangements such as EFTA) peripheral, insular, complementary, or reactionary.

The EU institutions, and particularly the European Commission and the European Parliament, took an active role in constructing and developing the 'cultural glue' of this political project.

'A Community of Cultures' is one of the referents the EU has used to present its vision of Europe and the role of culture. In a 2002 publication, the European Commission articulated the relationship between values and culture and how these constitute the foundations for European citizenship:

> This idea of European citizenship reflects the fundamental values that people throughout Europe share and on which European integration is based. Its strength lies in Europe's immense cultural heritage. Transcending all manner of geographical, religious and political divides, artistic, scientific and philosophical currents have influenced and enriched one another over the centuries, laying down a common heritage for the many cultures of today's European Union. Different as they are, the peoples of Europe share a history which gives Europe its place in the world and which makes it so

> special. The aims of the EU's cultural policy are to bring out the common aspects of Europe's heritage, enhance the feeling of belonging to one and the same community, while recognising and respecting cultural, national and regional diversity, and helping cultures to develop and become more widely known.
>
> *(European Commission 2002, p. 3)*

Several points need to be emphasised here. First, the acknowledgement of the national: the expression of respect for the national cultures evokes a sense of participation and representation in order to avoid any potential sense of threat emanating from the European culture. Second, the accent placed on diversity, which constitutes Europe's common heritage, protected where necessary, encouraged to thrive and be confidently expressed in the public sphere. Third, the desire to have impact on everyday life, on emotions of attachment and belonging, and impact at the global level. Combining its mercantile vocation with market-inspired principles, culture became defined as an 'important sector' qualifying for all kinds of funding in order to support public broadcasting, regional television stations, independent cinematography, theatre festivals, music schools, museums and cultural associations, and linguistic and cultural heritage conservation projects – each having as an underlying thread the pluralisation of democracy and cultural expression, knit together by references of common identity.

The most tangible examples of this approach are the European Capital of Culture programme since the 1980s and the European Heritage Label (EHL), a flagship heritage action of the European Commission launched in 2011. In effect, a local, tangible sense of European belonging has been encouraged by the EU institutions through the intersection of cultural and regional policies. Europe has effectively shifted from being an industrial and primarily rural continent to one that is urban and metropolitan in nature, with an increasingly high concentration of economic activity. As cities and urban centres have grown demographically (today, over 70 per cent of the EU's population lives in cities and urban areas) and gained in economic salience in the past seven decades, so has their cultural relevance. Spurred by regeneration projects and the growth of the creative economy, Europe's cities and urban centres have been assertively defining their distinctive identity. This dynamic cultural policy has been facilitated by the European Capital of Culture programme and the larger trend towards administrative decentralisation along the principles of subsidiarity as well as economic motivations. Reinhard Johler (2002), an Austrian cultural anthropologist, has described this as a process through which the 'European' has been localised while at the same time the local has been 'Europeanised'. Cities have been encouraged to present themselves and their culture as part of the common European culture – to present the local as European, thereby emphasising individuals' local or regional attachments while also permitting non-nationals to also feel attachment and cultural belonging.

As regards the European Heritage Label, which identifies sites that have played an important role in European history, it has aimed to bring to life a European narrative of identity and belonging upon which people could build their European identity. By 2022, 48 sites across Europe had been designated with the EHL. These include the heart of Ancient Athens, the Peace Palace in The Hague, and the Abbey of Cluny in France. But just as importantly, they include the historic Gdańsk Shipyard in Poland in recognition of the fundamental influence of the events organised by the *Solidarność* movement in the 1980s as well as the Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park in Sopron, Hungary, as references to the collapse of the Soviet bloc that led to the 'reunification' of Europe. The EHL's broad range of sites form a system of meanings about what comprises 'European' heritage and simultaneously designate the term 'Europe' as synonymous with the EU, notably by including the home of Robert Schuman, one of the founding figures of the Coal and Steel Community that ultimately led to the EU; the village of Schengen in Luxembourg which became the eponym of free movement; and Maastricht, where the treaty establishing the European Union and paved the way for the euro and widened community competences was signed.

The European Union has in effect constructed the most concrete and tangible effort of a European cultural model represented by both common heritage and diversity in its selection of landscapes, memories, practices, and traditions. According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the EU is called to 'contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore'. The EU's adherence to pluralism is outlined again in Article 3 of the same treaty, stressing respect for the EU's 'rich cultural and linguistic diversity'. These rights and values form the backbone of the EU's legal order, guiding its internal and external action in accordance with its motto 'Unity in diversity'.

Gerard Delanty has drawn from the works of Alain Touraine (1977), Jurgen Habermas (1984, 1987), and Cornelius Castoriadis (1987) to argue that the emergence of a European cultural model in which Europe becomes a frame of reference that exists alongside national frames is the result of a communicative, more fluid conception of culture. The notion of a European cultural model, which he distinguishes from a shared collective identity, is marked by contradictions, ambivalences, and paradoxes that have contributed to the emergence of a highly pluralised post-national culture (Delanty 2013, pp. 257–258). This cultural model includes normative orientations and self-understandings; it offers ways to conceive of public culture as non-essentialist and avoids the dualism of thin versus thick conceptions of culture (which are generally associated with post-national narratives of culture); and, it provides the context within which European cultural heritage can be framed.

In the cultural sphere, as in other domains, the European Union gave Europe a new political meaning and a more tangible geopolitical frame. In order to

support the process of European integration, both in deepening institutionally and in widening through its successive rounds of enlargement, EU politicians and policymakers 'tapped into' references to a common European civilisation and have emphasised the shared nature of Europe's history and values. Democracy, peace, rule of law, human rights, equality, solidarity, and respect for diversity are the backbone values of this discourse, while cultural initiatives that contribute to pluralising public debates, the public sphere, and national identities are considered core to the quality of democracy in Europe's diverse societies. Basically, the past is used to valorise the present; to have 'Europe', it is necessary to have 'Europeans'. Hence the EU institutions' emphasis on European citizenship and efforts to construct a European belonging since the 1970s (Dell'Olio 2005), an issue that we explore in the next chapter. And hence the recurrent descriptions of the countries of central and eastern Europe as 'being' European throughout their EU accession process through metaphors such as 'a return to Europe' and 'family reunion' (Kaasik-Krogerus 2021).

In cultural terms, during this accession process, the CEE countries were simultaneously 'being' and 'becoming' European. 'Being' European indicated a rather static Europe of which the CEE countries were a part, at least to a certain extent, through references to a common past heritage that was ruptured during the communist rule. In 'becoming' European, the EU was an 'end goal' and the candidate countries were expected to 'transform' to achieve this goal (ibid.). These two perspectives bring with them different roles, as 'being' European means being able to also take part in the construction process, whereas 'becoming' indicates a (temporary or continuous) outsider/observer position and a 'catching-up' mindset.

Concluding remarks

Although the idea of Europe has its roots in antiquity, it emerged as a cultural model after the seventeenth century. It is the result of the modern age. Its meanings and relevance have been transformed throughout the different phases of its history, and the narratives it has inspired have emphasised specific dimensions of Europe's legacies and heritages depending on the political project that was being pursued. The idea of Europe became particularly relevant after World War II to overcome the continent's legacy of fascism and totalitarianism, although this was not essentially achieved before the 1990s and the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

For some, the idea of Europe has been most meaningful as a socially constructed discourse, a historically variable construction (Delanty 1995). Others have postulated that there is no single conception of Europe (nor 'a' European culture) akin to the West, thereby emphasising the multiplicity of Europe(s). This multiplicity or plurality can be observed in three related ways. First, as we discussed in this chapter, Europe can be conceived as an 'intra-civilisational constellation' composed of a number of civilisations from the Greco-Roman to the Judeo-Christian, from the Byzantine to the Slavic and Orthodox traditions,

and from the Jewish diasporic civilisation to the Ottoman Empire and contemporary European Islam. Second, it may be defined to include a wider transcontinental dimension of inter-civilisational encounters. This approach highlights the influence of the non-European world on the construction of Europe and its cultural capital. From trade to violent exchanges, colonisation, imperialism, and travel, there has been a deep mixing with significant mutual exchange and learning between European and Asian civilisations. Third, the high plurality of Europe's constitutive civilisations is acknowledged and underlined (Delanty 2013, p. 41). The policy relevance of this latter dimension is particularly strong in terms of being able to propose a pluralised identity that is inclusive of the cultural specificities of Europe's historical minorities and newer populations that have resulted from decades of immigration. The concept of the 'Other' is so integral to 'Europe' and to its culture(s) that it becomes pointless to keep on emphasising its distinctiveness; rather, it should be fully embraced as part of European culture, and not as an ethnic flair or a daunting public policy challenge.

In recent decades, globalisation and hyperconnectivity have impacted societies at multiple levels. Perceptions about culture and cultural identities have been shifting. The intense, continuous, and immediate communication of cultural ideas and products that is facilitated through media – and especially social media and the internet – are leading to greater socio-cultural convergence yet also to greater socio-economic fragmentation across Europe. New patterns of interaction and mobility pathways have triggered new complexities and created new kinds of diversities. As Kevin Robins (2006, p. 256) has argued, the European cultural space consists of new cultural encounters, juxtapositions, and mixings that are transnational and transcultural in nature. These interactions are provoking challenges and needs that have had a dualistic impact on European culture. They have been both a cultural opportunity and a cultural threat. For some, particularly from the perspective of the EU level of governance, these challenges offer an opportunity to revitalise culture and its importance for democracy, cooperation, and human well-being through transnational approaches and projects (as for example defined in the strategic priorities of the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (2019)). For others, especially at the national levels of governance, these challenges constitute existential threats and require a reassertion of national culture (see *inter alia* Zielonka and Rupnik 2020; Gotev 2021). The nativist-populist 'Brexit crisis' is representative of this backlash against globalisation and regional integration – and ultimately diversity – by advocating a return to (ethnically based) nationalism (see *inter alia* the analyses of Goodwin and Milazzo 2015; Gordon 2018; Rodrigues-Pose 2017; Inglehart and Norris 2016).

The dimensions of culture that we have outlined in this chapter are of course just a snapshot of the rather dominant perceptions of culture in particular phases of the European continent's course. Perceptions carry with them vestiges of the past and common aspirations for the future; they are impregnated with notions of 'other' yet have associated diversity with the very definition of Europe itself.

European culture is defined in terms of values, norms, and institutionalised customs: it is about belonging. It is also about choices involving individual and group empowerment and using creativity and expression as a bridge for exchange, mutual understanding, and resilience. It is about critically questioning and revisiting the real and imagined divides that define us.

At the time of writing of this chapter, Europe is emerging from two years of an unprecedented pandemic that accelerated digitisation in societies and in the economy and changed the way people socialised, worked, communicated, studied, produced, and consumed culture. At the time of writing, Europe is in what has been described as a state of permacrisis and war has returned to Europe (Zuleeg et al. 2021). As always in its history, times of crisis have seen a clash between opposing understandings of what European values and European cultures represent. Once again, what Europe is in the decades ahead will come down to choices between values and aspirational visions of what unites and what divides.

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5
EUROPEAN IDENTITY – EUROPEAN IDENTITIES

One of the most difficult aspects in understanding Europe in the present but also in the past has had to do with the question of European identity. Does a European identity exist? Do Europeans feel European? And if they do, how does a feeling of belonging to Europe relate to other important collective and political identities such as national identity or indeed ethnic or minority identity?

This set of questions needs to be further examined and taken apart. First of all, we need to discuss what kind of identity is, or would be, a 'European' identity. Should we expect it to be like national identity? Should it have a similar type of cultural content, notably a language, a set of customs and traditions, a common civic culture, links with a historical homeland and a current political territory, a single economy, and a wish to be politically autonomous if not outright political independent? And if it is to be such a kind of primary political identity, do we see such a European identity taking shape given that Europe has been culturally and politically reconnected since the implosion of the communist regimes in central eastern Europe in 1989?

Or should European identity be understood as an 'umbrella' type of secondary political identity that brings together a range of national identities that have some similarities in common, notably links to a common geographical territory (the European continent), and a certain link with a common European culture (see also the previous chapter on European culture and European values)? This kind of secondary and mediated type of collective identity – mediated, that is, through national belonging – appears to have been a predominant feature of European identity during recent times.

Nonetheless, we should not perhaps exclude an understanding of European identity as a 'civilisational' idea – a vague reference to a set of values, a cultural content, that distinguishes 'Europeans' from 'Others' but that remains cultural in character and scope without any political predicaments. In this case, it would

be an elective identity, among other identities available to people in Europe. Indeed, such a 'light' version of European identity appears to be more consonant with the post-industrial societies of Europe where there is increasing cultural diversity (related to both international immigration and the assertion of rights of native minorities) but also increasing flexibility in the set of identities that each individual may embrace.

A second range of questions that is of concern regarding European identity is the relationship between European identity, cultural diversity, and democratic inclusive politics. Is European identity an 'open' identity that allows for the inclusion of migrants and minorities or is it a 'closed' one, as national identities often have been? Can European identity help 'us', the 'Europeans', understand ourselves better and clarify our relations with our 'significant others', irrespective of whether these are minorities and immigrants within Europe or other nations, world regions, cultures, and civilisations.

In order to discuss the above sets of questions, this chapter starts with some ontological and epistemological remarks on what identity is and how we can certify (or not) its existence, with a view to casting light on our inquiry into European identity. It then continues by looking at the different theoretical perspectives that have been developed with regard to the nature of European identity and its relationship with national identity. Third, this chapter focuses on the 'colour' or 'whiteness' of European identity and whether 'Europeanness' is defined in an inclusive way to embrace migrants and minorities. In this part of the chapter, we concentrate on how minorities and migrants, particularly Muslims and Roma people, challenge the understanding of both national and European identities and bring to the fore the 'limits' of European identity. In the concluding section, we consider whether we should still be preoccupied today with the question of whether European identity exists and how to construct or maintain it.

What is identity?

Identity is fundamentally about sameness and about difference or distinctiveness. Identity signals a certain level of internal coherence and similarity, a boundedness of the individual or of the group. But it also needs difference to become visible. A person needs to make sense of themselves in relation to others. The 'Other' is fundamental in our awareness of ourselves (Jenkins 1996). Similarly, the members of a group make sense of their common identity by distinguishing themselves from the non-members or from the members of other groups (Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2003).

Identity has become a buzzword in the Social Sciences and even in the media or public discourse in the past 50 years in Europe. Identity is clearly a modern concept, a concept that has arisen in the last 200 years, at the same time that a self-reflexive understanding of the individual and their community emerged in Europe. In the past, identity was not a matter of negotiation but rather of

ascription: one was born into a certain class, ethnicity, or religion. Compared to modern times, mobility was limited, both geographically and socio-economically. While promotion to become a Knight in medieval times or to become a Senator in ancient Rome was possible, it was rare. Even in Classical Greece or in ancient Rome, with their sophisticated political philosophical thought, identity was not problematised but rather taken for granted.

Identity has become important after the Enlightenment and with the making of modern Europe. As people woke up to being members of a nation and citizens, they began thinking of their identity. While identity started being questioned from the eighteenth century onwards concomitantly with the industrialisation process, the emancipation of science and politics from religion, and the questioning of the socio-political order, there was little scientific study on what identity was, beyond philosophy. Or rather great philosophers or sociologists like Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, or Karl Marx discussed issues related to identity in various ways – for instance, the notion of status as proposed by Max Weber or the Durkheimian concept of culture as a moral totality. But they were not concerned about identity as such. They did not even use the term.

Interesting examples of the conspicuous absence of identity as a concept is the distinction introduced by Karl Marx on 'a class in itself' and 'a class for itself'. Marx noted that a class 'in itself' is a class because of its objective features (its relationship with the means of production), yet its members are not aware of their belonging to that class nor of their common socio-economic predicament. By contrast, a class 'for itself' is a class that becomes aware of its position in the system of production and starts fighting for its rights. Similarly, Anthony Smith (1991) later distinguished between an *'ethnie'* and a nation: an *'ethnie'* or ethnic group is a group that shares some common cultural or historical features but is not fully self-conscious of its constituting a distinct social group nor does it request political autonomy. By contrast, a nation not only shares some common cultural characteristics, but its members are aware of their belonging to a distinct national group and demand for their self-determination as a function of this.

While identity is a quintessential feature of human existence and has attracted the interest of philosophers and political thinkers (the answer to the question: who am I, or who are we, humans?), it has become a prominent subject of research in its own right in the post-war period. As western European countries and western countries more generally grew more affluent in the 1950s and 1960s overcoming the destruction of World War II, identity became a matter of concern as people, freed by the anxiety of physical and physiological survival, had the luxury of soul-searching.

Despite becoming a stock technical term in Sociology and Social Psychology in the past 60 years, there is no agreement or clear understanding of identity's various meanings. In an early article, Snow and Anderson (1987) have analysed how disadvantaged populations like the homeless construct a positive self-identity through what Snow and Anderson called 'identity work'. Most importantly, what the two authors illustrated is that identity-related concerns are as important

as physiological survival requisites. Contrary to Maslow's (1962) well-known hierarchy of needs that holds that the satisfaction of physiological and safety needs is a necessary condition for the emergence and gratification of higher-level needs such as the need for self-esteem and for a positive personal identity, Snow and Anderson (alongside other sociologists such as Goffman (1961) in his seminal work on mentally ill people) show that a sense of meaning and self-worth, a positive sense of self, is an integral part of our humanity and as critical to survival as food or water.

From a social psychological or sociological perspective identity relates to social roles that the individual is ascribed to or internalises to form their sense of self. In his *Birth and Death of Meaning*, Ernest Becker (1971) argues that our sense of self-worth depends in part on the social roles available to us. It is thus difficult to distinguish ontologically between a personal identity that is distinct from collective identity. All personal identities are social in their anchoring to specific social roles or reference groups, or in their distancing from such roles or groups. They are also social in that they have social consequences in our making sense of ourselves and of our social positioning.

Collective identity is different from personal or individual identity even if it is also socially constructed, in the sense that it too is based on social interactions and the meaning we attribute to them. Collective identity is not the mere sum of individual or personal identities. It involves the idea that a group of people recognise themselves as such: they believe they are similar to one another and feel solidarity among themselves (Thernborn 1995).

It is worth noting that the individual identity of each person includes multiple collective identities. Such identities are not of equal importance for the construction of the personal identity nor are they equally salient in any given context. Thus, I may be a Greek, a European citizen, a woman, a teacher, a mother, and a fan of rock music. I may belong to related cultural or social associations like the teacher trade unions, a mothers' group, a fan club of the Rolling Stones, and support through a donation the fight for women's rights. These various 'identities' are not all equally important to me but still are a part of what makes me who I am. Being, for instance, a Greek citizen or an EU citizen determines many issues in my social, political, and economic life – far more than being a fan of the Rolling Stones. Being a member of a trade union can be an important identity and determine my civic and political behaviour so it may be more important than being a fan of rock music but less important than being a citizen of Greece and of the EU, and so on. Collective identities come in varying combinations and are of different salience depending on their 'primacy' in a person's life. This primacy is determined by both objective elements (how important this identity is for one's social, political, and economic life) and by subjective issues (how important a person feels this identity to be for them).

Collective identity can be distinguished in three types: it can be social, cultural, or political in character depending on the type of features it refers to and on the type of groups to which it is ascribed. A fundamental social identity

feature that we all have is our gender and our understanding of our gender iden-
tity. Naturally, gender is not one's only social identity feature; family situation
or profession is another. Being a supporter of a given sports club is also a social
identity. There is a range of identities that we call cultural that refer to specific
cultural features or attributes that we share such as speaking a certain language
(that makes one a member of a specific linguistic community), or following a set
of traditions or customs (of one's village, or region of origin, or of a given ethnic
group), believing in a specific faith, or even having a specific way of dressing
that may find its origins in one's specific culture. Last but not least, our collec-
tive identities include political identities, notably identities that have to do with
the relationship between the individual and the State, the exercise of power,
and the governance of public life. Our most fundamental political identity is
that of being a citizen of a given State. But other political identities may also be
important such as being a supporter of a given political party. Overall, collective
identities that refer to gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, or social class form
the main basis of a person's identity and are central to an individual's life.

It follows also from the above that any type of collective identity is historically
situated. Identity cannot be understood in a social or political vacuum. Identity
refers to a specific society and in relation to the material and social conditions of
that society. In addition, identities are always in flux. They are living organisms
as they refer to living organisms. They adapt to changing circumstances and con-
ditions to maintain their function, notably that of helping humans make sense of
the world and of their position within it. Even the same kind of social identity,
being a man or being a woman, has different attributes and different meanings in
different societies and in different historical periods. All collective identities *are*
historically constructed and situated.

It is important to distinguish between collective identity and the process of
identification. Identification describes the social psychological process by which
a person associates themself to a given social or political group. The notion of
identity speaks of the set of attributes or features itself rather than the process.

Before turning to consider European identity, a last point that needs to be
made is that identity cannot be studied as such. It cannot be observed. We study
identity mostly through people's discourse – through the ways in which people
make sense of the world that surrounds them, how they orient themselves in the
world, how they talk about themselves. Indeed, this is what Snow and Anderson
(1987) have called 'identity work'.

Social or political identities must always be approached through the individual
level. A researcher cannot conduct an interview or fill a questionnaire with a col-
lectivity – they can only ask the individuals who are members of that collectiv-
ity, of that group, of their views, opinions, feelings, the ways in which they see
themselves as part of a group.

What is it that we learn from the above ontological and epistemological
observations though regarding European identity? Indeed, what we learn is that
European identity, like all types of collective identity, including the national

identity, can only be studied through discourses, uttered by citizens or lay people, produced in public speeches of leaders or elites, or reproduced in the media. Identity can also be observed through the actions of the individuals, albeit we can only infer whether these actions are an expression of a certain identity. We can only, for instance, extrapolate that a specific demonstration of angry European citizens in Brussels protesting against austerity policies is an expression of their national or European identity. This can be assessed through indirect indices such as the slogans they shouted, the way they were dressed, the stakeholders that organised the protest march, and so on.

Second, we learn that 'European' can only be one of many collective identities that people have, and that it is constantly in flux. There is no essence of a European identity that has always existed and that remains immutable. Indeed, taking into account the different meanings of Europe outlined in Chapter 2 as well as the different visions of Europe supported in the past couple of centuries (see Chapter 3), it becomes clear that European identity is a multi-faceted and ever-mutating concept.

Third, European identity is part of a multiple set of identity features that may form part of an individual's identity. Its importance though may vary among individuals but may also vary within the same individual's perception of their identity depending on the context and situation.

Fourth, European identity, like any type of collective identity, must be more than the sum of the individual identities. It needs to have a group reality: a group of people that define themselves as Europeans and are ready to behave in specific ways in function of their 'Europeanness' and within an institutional framework that supports this identity.

Fifth, European identity has emerged as a subject of study in itself in the last 40 to 50 years as part of the overall emergence of identity and Identity Studies as a subject matter in Sociology, Political Science, Social Psychology, or also Contemporary History. Actually, the inquiry on European identity has been slow to emerge because more attention was given to what is Europe, who belongs to Europe, and on the differences and conflicts characterising Europe rather than to the commonalities that bring Europeans together. The discussion over European identity has emerged forcefully in the public and political debate after the 1973 declaration of the then-nine member states of the European Economic Communities about a European identity. Indeed, any discussion on European identity today is necessarily partly intertwined with the discussion over the process of European integration.

European identity and national identity

One of the most well-known theorists of nationalism today, Anthony D. Smith, wrote in 1995 that a European identity could not possibly emerge as it is national identity that dominates people's primary loyalties (Smith 1995). Smith could not imagine, and perhaps quite rightly, that any European citizen would be willing

to sacrifice their life in fighting for Europe in the way in which people had gone to war to defend their nation. For him, this was an ultimate test that European identity would fail. Smith thus appears to assume that a European identity would be of the same kind as a national identity.

This assumption points to an underlying problem in the conventional study of European identity: there is an implicit assumption that European identity is about political loyalty. This assumption has skewed the conceptualisation of European identity and, as a result, the area of investigation has been largely restricted to the political dimension. In other words, the accumulation of research into European identity so far is now signalling a fundamental problem: the under-conceptualisation of European identity and the lack of diversification when definitions of European identity are provided (Duchesne 2008).

European identity vs. national identity

Indeed, a first question to be asked in our view here is whether European identity is or *can be* like national identity. In order to provide an answer to this question we need to imagine what European identity should or could involve in order to be like a national identity.

National identities can be ethnic in their orientation based on a belief in common ethnic descent, a common culture, and set of myths and symbols or, they can be civic, based on a common civic and political culture, a common set of values, a single economic and political system, a common territory. Usually, most national identities involve a combination of ethnic and civic elements but are characterised by a stronger presence of one set of elements over the other.

Taking the blueprint of the nation then as a prototype for studying European identity, we would envisage that there could be a cultural form of European identity. In other words, a European identity would have a cultural 'baggage' similar to that of national identity. Hence, links to a common cultural heritage, a common language, myths, symbols, and emotional bonds with a territory imagined as the motherland. Such an identity could emerge through a long historical process of the 'classical' nation-building type as happened in many nation-states in the nineteenth century.

There could however also be a national-type view of European identity that would emphasise civic elements like a set of civic and political values enshrined in a constitution (Weiler 1999). It could also include the construction of a civic European identity through the gradual emergence of a European public sphere (Risse 2010) and of a common communicative space where Europeans meet (virtually) and exchange their views. This last view draws from a perspective of Europe becoming, through the European integration process, a state-like entity (perhaps a federal state), and from the Habermas (2006) view of constitutional patriotism as the possible 'glue' that can hold a nation or indeed Europe together, beyond and in the absence of a common set of cultural traditions and ethnic bonds.

Habermas has questioned whether we should consider this kind of civic identity as identity at all and whether it should be better conceptualised as transnational civic solidarity among Europeans. Such a civic conception, however, of a European 'non-identity', Habermas recognised (ibid., pp. 80–81), 'cannot be produced solely through the strong negative duties of a universalistic morality of justice' but through 'a self-propelling process of shared political opinion and will-formation on European issues' that develops above the national level. Thus, national cultural differences can become of secondary relevance, and a different order of European collective identity can emerge.

In reality, European identity involves both cultural and civic elements but is certainly not a primary political identity in the same sense as national identity, requiring and actually obtaining the primary loyalty of Europeans (as happens with members of a nation). Anthony D. Smith (1992) argued more than 20 years ago that Europeans differ among themselves in many respects such as language, law, religion, territory, and economic and political system just like they differ also from non-Europeans. However, he conceded that 'at one time or another all Europe's communities have participated in at least some of these traditions and heritages, in some degree' (ibid., 1992, p. 70). He distinguished, however, between families of culture that tend to 'come into being over long time-spans and are the product of particular historical circumstances, often unanticipated and unintentional. Such cultural realities' he argued, 'are no less potent for being so often inchoate and uninstitutionalised' (ibid., p. 71).

It would be fair to say that there is a lot of truth in Smith's scepticism over the mere possibility and probability that a strong sense of European identity would emerge in Europe, not least because this cultural 'glue' of the nation is lacking. This reflection brings us to one of the main issues that have prompted the whole discussion about what European identity is or should be and notably what is the relationship between national and European identity.

There are competing views on this topic. Inglehart (1977), in his seminal study, suggested that national and European identities are competing and that people who feel more cosmopolitan would tend to identify less with the nation and more with Europe. From this perspective, this is the reason why European identity is today (still) very weak: because it is in conflict with national identity (Carey 2002; McLaren 2006). According to this line of argument, nations possess a strong pulling power over their members for several reasons including a set of powerful myths and symbols or the state's capacity of coercion. The emerging European polity, however, does not possess these qualities and as a result European identity remains weak. European identity needs to be promoted by the creation of historical myths and political symbols so as to prompt citizens' identification with it. Indeed, as explored in Chapter 4, European cultural policies such as the adoption of the flag and anthem, and to some extent the introduction of the single currency, may also be seen as strategies aiming to foster a common European political identity (Shore 2000).

While national identity is by definition competing with other primary political identities as it requires the uncontested loyalty of the citizen to the

nation, research has shown that national and European identity are compat-
ible and can even be mutually reinforcing. They can better be conceptualised
as nested identities (Herb and Kaplan 1999). Medrano and Gutierrez (2001)
argue that European identity is nested in local and regional identities, which
are not seen by individuals as competing but rather that a positive identification
with Europe can empower a local or regional identity. The reason is that these
are two different levels of collective political identity. The lower level, which
is closer to the individual identity, is stronger but the higher level and larger
group identity may further add a layer and reinforce that of the smaller group.
Spaniards interviewed in the Diez Medrano and Gutierrez (2001) research felt
that their European identities symbolised their being 'modern' and 'democratic'.
They thus reinforced the cultural content and emotional strength of their local
and regional Spanish identities. A different but converging explanation of such
mutual reinforcement of local, regional, and European identities also comes
from their contextual character: European identities are activated under differ-
ent circumstances than regional or national ones. For instance, I am a Spaniard
when abroad, an Andalusian in Spain, a Sevillian in Andalusia, and so on (see
also Risse 2003).

There is a growing group of scholars, however, who reject this conflictive
model in which national and European identities are understood to be in an
antagonistic or zero-sum relationship. They also reject the notion of an umbrella
type of secondary identity. This is seen as too simplistic to account for the rela-
tionship between European and national identities. Some have put forward a
marble-cake metaphor in which both national and European identities, in addi-
tion to other forms of identity, are held to coexist, influence, and blend together
(Risse 2004, 2010). This means that national identification and attachment to
Europe combine into one another. Thus, there are different national narratives
of a European identity. Ichijo and Spohn (2005) have also argued that national
and European identities are entangled and there is now a European dimension
in national identities like there are different national versions of the European
identity.

Identity within regional nationalism

In the 2010s, European identity took another twist and became particularly
relevant for the emergence of regional nationalism of nations without states
(Scotland and Catalonia, for example) that asserted their right to independence.
Europeanness for these small nations was adopted as an anchor against the mul-
tinational state (the United Kingdom or Spain) from which they want to secede.
Their belonging to Europe (and particularly the European Union) appears to
provide for the necessary reference point and is actually manipulated in politi-
cal discourse. While appeals by nations without states about their Europeanness
may remind one of the bloody conflict in Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s, which
also involved references to Europe, the situation today points to less violent and

more sophisticated identity discourses whose focal point is a renewed relevance for European identity.

European identity may be conceptualised as a mainly instrumental political identity. It may be built on individual interest: a perception of potential gains or losses from membership in a given social group can influence people's identification with that group. This perspective suggests that the more citizens perceive that they have a net benefit from participating in a group, the more they will identify with it. In addition, if citizens perceive that their own nation-state is doing poorly in terms of economic performance and democratic accountability, the more likely they are to identify with a higher-level political identity – in this case with a European identity.

An earlier comparative study looked at whether European identity develops in ways similar to national identities and how it relates to them (Ruiz Jimenez et al. 2004). The quantitative survey findings of the project suggested that European identity rests mainly on two instrumental features of the European integration project: the right to free movement and the common currency. More specifically, the study found that national and European identities are compatible mainly because national identities are largely cultural while identification with the European Union is primarily instrumental. The research findings, however, also showed that there is a sufficient common cultural ground for a European identity to emerge. The study confirmed that because national and European identities are different, the development of a European identity does not necessarily imply the transfer of loyalties from the national to the supranational level.

Is it a civilisational identity then?

The question, of course, remains whether European identity, beyond the specific European integration process today, should better be conceptualised as a wider notion of a civilisational identity: in other words, whether it could be seen as a looser cultural category that points to an orientation of a wider set of values or to a set of historical events but does not have immediate political consequences. Such an understanding of European identity resembles what Smith (1990) has called 'families of culture'. While such a view has some historical validity and is concomitant to the notion that Europe is a historically constructed idea with different facets at different points in time (discussed in Chapter 2), it would today risk neglecting the increasing importance of European identity. European identity has been salient during the last decades perhaps precisely because it has been contested and denied by many of Europe's residents. Research on the attitude to Europe of the 'European' public shows that there is an increasing effect of political socialisation into Europe through the European integration project (Risse 2010) and that people build their national understandings and attitudes based on their perception of what Europe is (Medrano 2003; Bruter 2005). At the same time, people may develop a nationalist view of Europe. Thus for French people, for instance, European identity can be a projection of French identity writ large,

while for Polish people holding such views, European identity is the sum of national Christian identities (Risse 2010).

Research (Duchesne et al. 2013) has also shown that the way in which we study the attitudes and reactions of citizens towards Europe and the European Union matter. Eurobarometer surveys asking people whether they feel more or less national or European may be misleading as they constrain people's opinions and force them into boxes of national, European, first national and then European, or first European and then national. Qualitative studies such as that conducted by Duchesne and her colleagues confirm the importance of national lenses for understanding European identity and, at the same time, point to the fact that citizens make sense of social and political developments in complex and clever ways rather than by adopting blanket-type explanations or definitions.

Class and nation within European identity

Our discussion of how national identity fits with European identity would not however be complete if we did not consider the class factor. Indeed, European identity is not class-neutral. Neil Fligstein, in his well-known book (2008) *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*, argued that the possible emergence of a collective European identity depended very much on socio-economic issues. Nearly 15 years later, in the early 2020s, and after a global economic crisis in 2009, the Eurozone crisis of the 2010s, and the Brexit referendum in 2016 and its aftermath, there is little doubt that socio-economic factors and class issues intertwine closely with citizens feeling 'European' (Curtis 2014; Chopin and Jamet 2016; Serricchio et al. 2013).

A European identity project remains mainly an elite project that concerns mostly educated people and people with high-status occupations. These 'Europeans' are part of the national elites but are also people who have opportunities to travel for work and leisure (Recchi and Favell 2009, 2019). Their European identity resonates with a narrative of a modern and enlightened culturally diverse Europe that brings peace and prosperity and leaves behind a past of violent nationalism, war, and authoritarianism. While these people tend to be part of an elite minority that have opportunities to learn foreign languages, travel, and work or study abroad, their number has been increasing, and, as Recchi and Favell (2019) have shown, they tend to construct a transnational Europe from below. Nonetheless, they are mostly among the 'winners' of the European integration project. Their European identity may be shaped by their specific national narratives of Europe but it is characterised overall by a close intertwining of a national-cum-European identity fully compatible with both and civic in character. By contrast, blue collar workers and less-educated people are not as attached to a sense of European identity, not least because they have fewer opportunities to travel and interact with other Europeans outside their own communities but also because European integration has not brought either

better jobs or better income and quality of life to them (Fligstein 2008; Green 2007).

More recent studies (Clark and Rohrschneider 2019; Carl 2017) have shown that the link between a sense of European identity and the evaluation of how the European Union is performing has become stronger today compared to the 1990s for ideologically moderate citizens as well. Interestingly though, and despite the effects of the Eurozone crisis particularly on southern European countries (Serricchio et al. 2013), research has also shown that support for the common European currency is positively correlated with feelings of European identity (Hobolt 2014, Hobolt and Wratil 2015). These studies suggest that European identity includes an important socio-economic dimension without necessarily being instrumental in nature.

In short, at the private level, any understanding of European identity is shaped by both the socio-economic and national positionality of the subject that expresses it. At the public level, official narratives of European identity are similarly incorporating national historical narratives and national understandings of Europe. Such official narratives are politically tainted and may be pro- or anti-European. They may come from an elite perspective and reflect the view of the 'winners' of the European integration process or they may be popular and populist and reflect the view of the 'losers' or of anti-systemic forces (see also Chapter 7). What is, however, important to note is that they can never be either class-free or colour-free or void of national connotations.

Diversity as identity

There is a concern that if European identity is like national identity, it can breed conflict. Jacques Derrida wrote in 1992:

> Hope, fear and trembling are commensurate with the signs that are coming to us from everywhere in Europe, where, precisely in the name of identity, be it cultural or not, the worst violences, those that can recognize all too well without yet having thought them through, the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism, are being unleashed, mixed up, mixed up with each other, but also, and there is nothing fortuitous in this, mixed it with the breath, with the respiration, with the very 'spirit' of the promise.
>
> *(p. 6)*

Derrida was writing at a time of political and social turmoil signalled by the revival of national identities in central and eastern Europe after the implosion of the communist regimes. The breakup of Yugoslavia was still on course (even if the worst atrocities happened later) and there was a widespread concern in Europe about the management of minorities in the newly emerging nation-states in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. Such concerns about the destructive

forces of national identity and about the divisions within Europe are part and parcel of the historical baggage of a European identity.

Writing in the same period, Mary Fulbrook (1993) was contemplating a possible future scenario where national identities would be transformed into a common European identity. Although she emphasised the contingency of such historical processes, she also only considered this process as unidirectional, from the national to the European.

European identity is not only contested and fluid, linked to different national projects as we shall explain below, but it also risks symbolising more a history of conflict and friction rather than a history of unity or similarity. There is an underlying tension between *European nationalism*, understood as the sum of nationalisms of different European countries, and, at the same time, a common historical process that may have taken place in slightly different periods in the different countries. This process has some common discernible features, such as the emergence of a national consciousness and identity and the building of a nation-state. *European identity* was thus perceived as a cosmopolitan attitude based on a belief in European cultural unity and also a European cultural superiority towards non-European populations as we have already noted in the previous chapters. Indeed, the tension between these two intellectual and political currents is visible in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe.

What is perhaps paradoxical is that the emergence of 'national nationalism' gave rise to the first expression of European nationalism (D'Apollonia 2002). It was precisely the division among European nation-states, the wars among them, that bred a belief in European unity. The different versions of a 'European nationalism' as visions of a united Europe have been discussed in Chapter 4 so we will not repeat them here. However, it is important to note this double meaning that European nationalism can have as the sum of national nationalisms or as a distinctive current towards the formation of a common European identity and perhaps towards some sort of a united Europe project. This project, of course, took various forms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see again here Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion) but culminated in the EEC and later EU – pan-European institutions that are still evolving to this day.

The notion of European identity can be seen as loosely linked to the overall idea of Europe through the centuries and to this day (see also Chapter 2). However, the discussion of a European identity enters forcefully into the public discourse in the early 1970s when the then–nine member states of the European Economic Communities signed the famous 'Declaration of European Identity' in Copenhagen in 1973. This document stated that:

> The Nine member countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on the European Identity This will enable them to achieve a better definition of the relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs.

That declaration already made a reference to the notion that European identity is characterised by internal cultural diversity and that it rather refers the idea of a wider European civilisation understood as a common heritage that involves converging attitudes and ways of life while respecting the needs of individuals, the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice, and respect for human rights. The declaration continues:

> The diversity of cultures within the framework of common European civilization, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a united Europe, all give the European identity its originality and its own dynamism.

The introduction of the European identity discourse in the 1970s was a political action, and any European identity was intended as a political one, even if its referents were cultural and rather vague. As Luisa Passerini (2002) and Robert Picht (1993) note, identity is like health: you become aware of it when it is threatened. Indeed, that initial identity declaration at the Copenhagen Summit of December 1973 was brought into discussion at one of the many critical phases of the European unification project in the last decades. The failure to agree on anything led to launching the European identity as a face-saving tool (Schulz-Forberg and Strath 2010, p. 41), an 'escape forward'. Strangely, those views may seem out of tune today and highly contested, even if the economic and political process of European integration has since deepened, expanded, and enlarged to 28 European countries, until the UK's departure brought the member states of the EU down to 27.

The values cited in the declaration were broad enough to also be considered as overall Western values and at the same time allowed for cultural variation within Europe. They thus did not oppose a vision of European unity still characterised by the existence of nation-states with their separate and much deeper national identities. Rather, this view was further reiterated in many EEC and EU documents that pointed out that respect for national and regional diversity and the flowering of the different national cultures of Europe was part and parcel of the valorisation of a common European cultural identity and heritage as mentioned in the Treaty of the European Union signed at Maastricht in 1992 (Commission of the European Communities 1992).

Through the development of regional and related cultural policies of the EEC and EU in the 1980s and the 1990s (Sassatelli 2002), the conciliation of an emerging European identity and antagonistic national identities took a new turn. Internal diversity – which embodied both migration-related diversity and native minorities as well as distinct national identities, hence a multi-levelled diversity with different civic or ethnic connotations in each European country – became the distinctive feature of European identity. The discussion was no longer about how to reconcile unity with diversity but rather that the

recognition and celebration of this diversity of Europe was a formative part of its unity. This is probably the concept that is embodied in today's slogan of 'Unity in Diversity', launched in the late 1990s. This view of diversity as constitutive of the new European identity signals the fact that the latter is neither a pre-existing quality nor a historical given, but rather a process in the making, an identity to be achieved.

There are several elements that emerge from the conception of European identity as 'Unity in Diversity'. First and foremost, this slogan and a related set of cultural policies recognise and valorise the existence of a plurality of collective identities within Europe. Such identities are not necessarily political nor only national in character; they can be local or regional and have culture as their main reference point. But they may also be ethnic and have seeds of political autonomy within them. The level of diversity that is implied is left purposefully vague and unlimited in terms of character and scope.

At the same time the slogan 'Unity in Diversity' implies a self-limitation for both unity and diversity. The unity is self-limited in that it can never acquire a higher level of similarity and osmosis to the extent that these separate and multiple identities are constitutive of the common identity, of the European unity-as-identity. At the same time diversity is self-limited as the slogan posits that none of these interlocking and integrated identities will challenge the very existence of a European unity-as-identity.

The 'Unity in Diversity' slogan seeks to achieve a middle ground between a federalist view of a united Europe with a quasi-national identity that resembles a national identity in its features and functions and a universalistic view of European identity as a set of moral values that would however fall short from distinguishing Europeanness from a universalistic culture of human rights (Delanty and Rumford 2005, pp. 63–64).

There are a few problematic points in this version of European identity that point neither to unity nor diversity but actually turn diversity into unity. First, this view risks reifying regional, ethnic, or national identities by taking them as given and static. The contestation and amalgamation or tension is recognised only at the European level, and the sub-European levels are taken for granted. However, this view overlooks important levels of collective identity contestation and transformation that take place at the national and subnational levels (see also Spohn and Triandafyllidou 2003). Such a vision of 'unity in diversity' elevates diversity to a constitutive element of identity (even if this sounds paradoxical), but at the same time makes this higher level of identity merely a reflection of the unity. This concurrently overlooks the capacity of the unity-in-diversity process to generate social change and further transform both European identity and the national, local, or ethnic identities included within it.

A second risk that the 'unity in diversity' identity model involves is that it eventually completely loses its cultural content and remains an empty shell. It actually is a form of cultural communication and exchange or a way of engaging with cultural diversity but is void of any cultural essence. Such a view conforms to Habermas's

idea of constitutional patriotism in that it signals a way of engaging with diversity through public critique and deliberation (according to Habermas). The risk arises that such a type of identity is too 'cold', too culturally 'naked' to matter for people. Hence, we run the risk that European identity becomes irrelevant.

Third, it remains unclear how much diversity is included in the European diversity-as-identity notion. Ethnic minorities, people who may be citizens or long-term residents of Europe having moved to Europe two or three generations ago (often as part of post-colonial migration waves), put the 'unity in diversity' perspective to the test. How much diversity is included in this unity? Are people of dark or black skin colour considered European? Is 'Europeanness' a civic and territorial identity that can be acquired by anyone or are there some ethnic or racial boundaries that cannot be crossed? Are all Europeans White or Christian? And what about minorities that are European for a thousand years, like the Roma, and still not considered as fully European because they are seen as culturally deviant to the modern European way of life? Also, how are these dimensions of diversity negotiated in western and eastern Europe? In the following sections we discuss these questions with a view to providing a guide for understanding the ethnic, racial, and religious markers of and tensions within European identity/ies.

European identity and racism

The French philosopher Étienne Balibar argues that racism as a social phenomenon has preceded all biological ideologies and has actually also survived them. In an interview given on 15 April 2014 on his book *Race, Nation, Class* (Balibar and Wallerstein 2011), Balibar states:

> No civilisation has a monopoly on racism. And, besides, as the history of the uses of the word 'race' and related words like caste or lineage in fact demonstrates, racism both preceded biological ideologies and has survived them. The anthropological red thread of which I am making use consists of studying the discriminatory uses and the metamorphoses of the 'genealogical schema', that is, the idea that generation after generation children inherit the 'qualities' – or, conversely, collective 'defects' – of their parents, be they physical, moral or intellectual.

(2014)

While Balibar argues that racism as a structural ideology of inequality characterises human society and somehow reproduces an inner belief in our genealogical continuity, he also points to the fact that racism can take different forms, more or less violent and more or less explicit, in different societies and different political systems (Balibar and Wallerstein 2011).

Looking at the history of Europe, racism has been part of both the presumed cradle of European civilisation, notably Classical Greece with its slavery system,

and again very strongly in the Age of Discovery (1700s). While transatlantic slavery was abolished two centuries ago, it took the Holocaust for biological racism to be repudiated in Europe. Still, despite the spreading of the values of the Civil Rights movement in North America in the 1960s, post-colonial immigration brought the question of 'colour' dramatically to the fore in European political debates again in the 1960s and 1970s (see also Painter 2010). In France, the question of racism and of the construction of 'Blackness' was discussed critically already in the 1950s (Fanon 1952; Genet 1958). In Britain, the issue acquired prominence from the 1960s onwards and was eloquently analysed by Paul Gilroy (1987) in his famous book *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*. In southern (Papadopoulos 2012; Uyangoda 2021) or eastern European countries (Balogun and Joseph-Salisbury 2021) or also in Germany (Amoateng 1989), race remains seen as alien, presuming that Europeans can only be White people. Overall, race has remained a contested though largely silent dimension of Europeanness (Lentin 2014; Essed and Trienekens 2008).

Racism is the belief that a person's identity is predetermined by genetic origin. More specifically, it is the belief that factors associated with a person's descent (ethnic, national, or racial) predetermine not just their physical traits but also their psychological predispositions, mental abilities, and other capacities. Racism, though, must also be understood in its broader terms as referring to societal and institutional structures that disadvantage people of subordinated races because of the collective effect of discriminatory attitudes and practices. Last but not least, racism is also a system of power and advantage based on phenotypical characteristics.

Physical appearance, and skin colour specifically, have been used throughout history to categorise and evaluate people. These physical differences were developed into folk taxonomies and defined as 'races' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. 'Scientific' arguments were provided to sustain a presumed relationship between such characteristics and moral or socio-cultural features of people classified into these categories. In Europe, the argument underlying such categorisations was that the White, European race was morally and intellectually superior to all others. Different versions of racist ideologies have found their political expression in Western colonialism and imperialism, slavery, and Nazism.

Racism may be conceptually related to nationalism. In Europe this is true to the degree that the process of nationalisation (i.e., the construction of a national identity and a national culture within each nation-state) involved a process of racialisation. The bourgeois ruling classes of the European nation-states in the nineteenth century racialised the underclass as inferior and backward. Simultaneously, these ruling classes portrayed themselves as having a 'racial history and character' that was typical of the nation as a whole. In such discourses of ethnic descent and membership, the notions of 'race' and 'nation' often became indistinguishable. The racialisation of the working class, though, has come full circle in the early twenty-first century through the populist racialisation of the European (and North American) working class as White and 'left behind'

(Mondon and Winter 2018). Such arguments have obscured institutional racism inherent to European (and other Western) liberal democracies while they obscured and conflated the intersections between race, ethnicity, and class. Such White racialisation of the working class indirectly delegitimises Black, ethnic minority, and migrant experiences and interests asserting that the 'people' or the 'nation' is 'White' (Mondon and Winter ibid.).

Even though biological racism, creating a direct link between ethnic/racial descent, physical appearance, and the abilities of an individual, has been condemned and actually forbidden in the European Union – in 2001, the European Union explicitly banned racism along with many other forms of social discrimination and the ban has been enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (European Commission 2012) – immigrant and ethnic minorities are often the subject of racist comments and racial discrimination. Racism persists as ideology and practice in Western societies, though perhaps in more subtle and covert forms than in the past. As a matter of fact, immigrants and ethnic minorities are usually categorised on the basis of their physical appearance and associated cultural or ethnic features. As Teun van Dijk (1991) argued:

> Throughout western history [such categorisations] have been used to distinguish in- and out-groups according to a variable mixture of perceived differences of language, religion, dress or customs, until today often associated with different origin or bodily appearance.

Race thus becomes intertwined with ethnicity and culture, and it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. Cultural differences are commonly used to justify racial discrimination and the exclusion of minorities. When analysing racism and discrimination in real-life situations, it is often hard to distinguish between racism and ethnic or cultural prejudice. Is prejudice against the Roma, for instance, related to their categorisation as a 'racial' group or as an 'ethnic' group? Does it have more to do with their presumed biological predispositions or with their cultural traditions?

Looking, for instance, into intra-European migrations and the process of racialisation of central eastern European migrant workers in western Europe we find that 'Whiteness' is a pivotal concept. Romanian migrants in the UK, for instance, are excluded from the 'White space' mostly in occupational and economic terms, while in Paris it is their ethnicity that serves as their cultural exclusion marker (Paraschivescu 2020).

And is anti-Black racism one single current or can we identify both a racial component based on skin phenotype and an ethnic or religious component based on people's ethnic origin or religion? While we shall discuss the question of religion and its intertwining with European identity below, a few words are pertinent here with specific regard to anti-Black racism.

In the early 2020s, there has been a significant mobilisation in both North America and Europe known as the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. Started as a

movement against police violence disproportionately affecting Black individuals, the movement has gained currency as a quest for recognition of the persistence of anti-Black racism in both North America and Europe. With regard to its European ramifications, the movement has focused specifically on reckoning with the long history of Black populations in Europe which is directly related to the European colonial project.

> Black Europe is not just Black people in Europe. It did not begin in the second half of the twentieth century, when Europe actively recruited more Black people than ever before to fight and work and live here. It began with the invasion of Africa by Europeans; it continued with the kidnap, transportation, and enslavement of millions of Africans; and with the encompassing grasp of colonialism and imperialism across Africa, the Americas, and elsewhere.
>
> *(Small 2017, p. 217, in Beaman 2021, p. 105)*

Following from the importance of understanding and recognising today that historically European identity has been shaped by colonialism and that despite the decolonisation process of the 1960s and 1970s, racial differentiation persists and Blackness is seen as foreign and even antithetical to Europe and its values. This is also particularly pertinent as colonial histories in some European countries (like Italy, Germany, or Sweden) are minimised relative to those of France, the UK, or Belgium which are more openly seeking to come to terms with their colonial pasts (Muvumbi 2021). While concepts of European identity remain predominantly racialised as White, current anti-racist struggles assert the racial diversity of European populations and the belonging of Black Europeans (Beaman 2021: 110; Skinner 2019).

Religion, European identity, and the Muslim 'Other'

Europe represents an exception compared to much of the world, including other parts of the 'West' such as the United States, since European societies have undergone a long process of secularisation, reflected in the fact that participation in religious activities, including private prayer, has become a minority pursuit, particularly in western Europe (Berger 1999; Berger et al. 2008, pp. 9–21). While Europe is not the only part of the world to have undergone secularisation, it is the only place where this has not resulted from state ideology or coercion but from social and economic change, education, political argument, and the working of liberal democracy (Casanova 1994). But both religion and religious intolerance have been re-emerging in European society and politics through multiple channels. These channels include the dynamics of international migration and the 'new' religions – notably Islam, even though there is a long pedigree of that faith and its adherents in Europe going back many centuries – that accompany such migration. They are also returning through international relations.

Religion in the early twenty-first century has become an important dimension structuring global governance through perceived hierarchies of 'good', 'bad', 'modern', 'advanced', and 'backward' cultures. Islam has been largely stigmatised in the public arena by the West, with a warped reading that provides part of the rationale for terrorist violence perpetrated in the early 2000s by Al Qaeda and its related affiliates. Today, Islam's stigmatisation is being violently exploited by insurgent extremist Islamist groups like ISIS (Triandafyllidou and Magazzini 2021. p. 1).

In order to understand the role of Islam as Europe's 'Other' we need to look back to the 1990s and the socio-political transformations occurring after 1989 in Europe and globally. Despite the important economic and political challenges posed by the reunification of Europe in 1989, the 1990s were marked by a certain ideological enthusiasm that the European Union would offer a platform for both economic and geopolitical integration while European identity would become intertwined with national identities, enriching and not replacing them. Not only were the 1990s a decade of European optimism and drive for unification, they were also characterised by an increased confidence that multiculturalism offered an appropriate framework for accommodating cultural and religious diversity and building an inclusive citizenship. This pro-diversity policy extended also to the then-newly independent states in central and eastern Europe which were strongly encouraged to recognise their national minorities and provide appropriate guarantees for their rights as foreseen in relevant European and international legal instruments (Triandafyllidou and Ulasiuk 2014).

The new millennium started, however, with a profound geopolitical, cultural, and existential crisis for Europe and the West. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 signalled the end of the post-1989 euphoria. While the US government was proclaiming the War on Terror and attacking Afghanistan and later again Iraq, Europe was facing important internal and external challenges. Urban violence erupted in northern English cities in the summer of 2001, while the French cities followed suit in 2005. National grievances of second-generation children that were failing both in school and the labour market were then coupled with global cultural crises like that surrounding the Danish cartoons of Prophet Mohammad in 2006. While jihadist, extremist forms of Islam were emerging as a global terrorist threat, more moderate versions of Islam and European Muslims were becoming invisible, portrayed by conservative parties as unfit for European liberal and secular societies. The Madrid (2004) and London (2005) bomb attacks did nothing but reinforce this view. Far-right and even simply conservative politicians argued that Islam as a religion is incompatible with European liberal democratic societies and impossible to accommodate in a secular system.

Islam emerged forcefully as an important dividing 'civilisational' line within Europe during the same period in which the post-1989 European reunification enthusiasm started declining. Indeed, the magnitude of the economic and political challenges of the transition of central eastern European countries from communism to free market capitalism and liberal democracy became increasingly

felt in Europe in the late 1990s when several of the former communist countries experienced a second round of economic and political decline. Discussions about their integration into the European Union seemed to come to a dead end when the Helsinki summit of 1999 reaffirmed the political will of the EU15 to integrate the new countries possibly in one big enlargement wave by 2004. Thus, economic objectives were subsumed to the overarching political goal of reuniting Europe, provided the new member states would be full-fledged democracies and would subscribe to European values that included the accommodation of national minorities and the abandonment of irredentist claims or border disputes.

In a way it was the very success of Eastern Enlargement, alongside the emergence of international jihadist terrorism, urban tensions among post-migration minorities, and native majorities that paved the way for Islam to become a convenient 'Other' against which European identity was shaped. Not only had communism collapsed and with it the overall Cold War geopolitical and symbolic framework, but the central eastern European countries were fully subscribing to the by-then hegemonic western European model. The communists had been successfully 'reformed' – there was a need for a new 'Other' at the European and global levels towards whom a united Europe and the Western/European values would be reaffirmed.

While for a good part of the 2000s this debate gained momentum and actually led to the public repudiation of multiculturalism by a number of European leaders (Angela Merkel in October 2010, David Cameron in February 2011), there were other important developments in Europe that changed the course of things. The collapse of the communist regimes in central and eastern Europe was followed by significant east-to-west or east-to-south labour migrations in the 1990s. These further intensified after the 2004 enlargement and the 2007 accession of Bulgaria and Romania and the progressive lifting of restrictions in terms of the new member states citizens' access to the labour markets of the old member states. There was a rising concern that intra-EU migration includes welfare tourism, and while it was Nicolas Sarkozy's government in France in 2009 that caused wide condemnation in relation to their (Romanian) Roma expulsion practices, such debates gained high currency in Britain in the 2010s. While such debates were initially to be found only among extremist and populist parties like UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party) or Front National (in France) or the party of Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, they gradually expanded to the mainstream political discourse. Thus, what was initially seen as mainly an issue of second-generation migrant youth and of Muslim communities became a wider anxiety that national governments and national majority groups are losing control over their territory, labour market, and national identity. The European integration process shifted from being the epitome of Western cultural, economic, and political dominance over communism – the victory of democracy over authoritarian rule – to posing a threat of losing national control over important social and economic issues. The result of the Brexit referendum in June 2016 can certainly be read through this lens too (see also Chapter 7).

Thus, Europe has been faced with a complex socio-political reality where Muslims and Islam continue to be stigmatised by mainstream media and conservative political parties as 'unfit', while at the same time populist movements have emerged in both eastern and western European countries arguing that the European integration process is stripping states of their power, leaving their national populations unprotected from the cultural and economic invasion of the newcomers. The refugee emergency of 2015 has been represented as an 'invasion' of Muslims that put under strain the already scarce welfare resources while also threatening the European secular way of life (see Krzyzanowski, Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2018).

In the paragraphs that follow we elaborate on how this anti-Muslim dynamic has unfolded in Europe over the last couple of decades, briefly surveying the different experiences of western, southern, and eastern European countries to show how these dynamics develop to some extent independently of socio-demographic realities.

By contrast to south-eastern Europe where Muslims have been established for several centuries, large Muslim populations in western and northern European countries are mostly of immigrant origin. In the UK, Belgium and France, they are linked to pre-existing colonial ties and the decolonisation processes in North Africa and South or Southeast Asia. In countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Spain, or also Greece, Muslims came as economic migrants without any previous special relationship between the country of origin and the country of destination. In terms of nationality, the vast majority of Germany's Muslims are Turks (or of Turkish origin). French and Belgian Muslims are mainly of Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Turkish origin. British Muslims are South Asians for the most part, in particular Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. In the Netherlands the largest Muslim populations are Turkish and Moroccan. In Italy and Spain, the vast majority of Muslim residents are of North African origin (Moroccans, predominantly). In Greece, and also to some extent in Italy (in addition to the Moroccans), Muslims are mainly Southeast Asians (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Afghani, and Somali citizens). In Sweden, Muslims are mainly Somalis, Iranians, Iraqis, and Bosnians. In recent years, Syrian asylum seekers have also settled in significant numbers in Germany, Austria, and Sweden.

Despite this internal ethnic and cultural diversity of European Muslims, they are often portrayed in public discourse as a uniform group, 'the Muslims', that challenges the liberal and secular character of European societies. This challenge, however, is each time shaped by the integration model of each country.

Thus, in France, for instance, where religion is seen as a private matter and where public space is thought of as absolutely secular, Muslims pose a specific challenge to the dominant concept of *laïcité*.[1] In the French context, the term 'French Muslim' tends to refer mainly to the community of believers, those who identify as such, rather than to all French citizens or residents of Muslim religion. In a situation where religious belonging is seldom used as a basis for political mobilisation, it is more common to hear of '*maghrebins*' to refer to the

members of minorities who trace their ancestry to North Africa. Islam in France is thus constructed as an ethnic marker that encompasses a religious dimension as well. Muslims in France can be considered a 'visible' minority and are discriminated against in employment, housing, and social services much as people of colour are in general. However, since ethnic statistics are a contentious issue in France, there are no official data that can appropriately document these phenomena (Simon 2008).

In Germany, Muslims were previously generally referred to as Turks, i.e., by reference to their nationality or ethnicity. It was only in the 1990s, and increasingly in the 2000s, that Turks became 'Muslims' and that the public debate on immigrant integration centred on the notion of a common German 'leading culture' (*Leitkultur*). Proposed by a conservative politician, Friedrich Merz, the idea of the German *Leitkultur* demanded that immigrants adapt to this leading culture if they want to stay in Germany for good. Thus, the socio-economic dimension of the problems of Turkish/Muslim migrant integration in German society was set aside, and integration challenges were increasingly seen as issues of culture and religion – especially after 9/11 (Yurdakul 2009).

The cultural attribution of social problems (attributing all contested issues such as arranged/forced marriages or homophobia to the religious beliefs and identity of the group) contributed to the stigmatisation of all Muslims in Germany, regardless of their personal beliefs (Modood 2005) and to the politicisation of these issues. Especially since the relaxation of the naturalisation provisions in Germany in 2000, there has been a simultaneous reactionary turn towards scrutinising whether Turkish citizens, even those established in Germany for decades, espouse the main German values or constitute some kind of suspect and dangerous 'Others' in the midst of the German nation. In this context, the term 'tolerance' became particularly relevant, as Muslims were seen as asking for tolerance of their difference, while they were themselves supposedly intolerant of the German national majority or their own members who held dissenting views or both. In Germany there was a clear shift from the 1990s, when it was mainly right-wing extremists who were considered intolerant in society, to the post-2001 years where it is the Muslims who are the 'intolerant' ones (Schiffauer 2006). This public discourse in Germany, which also flourishes widely in Denmark and the Netherlands, ignores the fact that in Germany, for instance, Turks and people with Turkish background are not the only Muslim groups – and many of them are not practising Muslims or not Muslims at all.

Other European countries have Muslim communities that are highly diverse in terms of ethnic origin. For instance, Sweden has one of the most heterogeneous Muslim populations of all western European countries. They have different ethnic, political, linguistic, or educational backgrounds and come from over 40 different countries in north and sub-Saharan Africa, from Arabic, Turkish, or Persian parts of Asia, and from Europe. They come from secularised states such as Turkey, religious states such as Iran, and from former socialist states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and several of the new states that formerly belonged to the

Soviet Union. The same is true for Ireland, where Muslims come from Malaysia, Somalia, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Libya, Bosnia, and Pakistan. Greece has a moderately diverse Muslim population: while native Muslims are of Turkish, Roma, and Pomak ethnicity, immigrant Muslims are mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The definition of the 'Muslim problem' as essentially one of a radical (fundamentalist) religion and a culture incompatible with Western values also obscures in Germany (but in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, and France as well) the socio-economic dimension of Muslim stigmatisation, exclusion, and indeed inability to integrate successfully. The poor educational attainment of Turkish and Moroccan children in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark, or of Bangladeshi and Pakistani children in Britain (documented in numerous studies) has a lot to do with their socio-economic background (profession and schooling of parents, socio-economic level, area of residence) but also with the discrimination that they face at schools and later in the labour market. Several studies (such as for instance Heath and Cheung 2007) find it hard to explain why inequalities persist and what the factors that matter most are: socio-economic background, discrimination, unequal opportunities, religion, specific ethnic background, structure of the educational system, or indeed a variable combination of all.

In Denmark, Germany, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, and France, Muslims have been treated with increasing suspicion in the last 15 years. Indeed, the rise of a fundamentalist international terrorism and the issue of foreign fighters – even if they are only a few hundred – has contributed to the stigmatisation of both Islam and Muslims. Social scientists have coined the terms 'Islamophobia' and 'Muslimophobia' to analyse these phenomena (Klug 2012). Islamophobia is the irrational fear of and prejudice against Islam as a faith and a culture without any discrimination between different Islamic religious currents. Muslimophobia is the irrational fear of and prejudice against Muslims as individuals, assuming that all people who are nominally Muslims experience their identity and faith in a fanatical and absolutist way that involves, among other things, the fusion of religious and political power, the subjugation of women to men, and certain other customs that are indeed incompatible with dominant Western values such as forced and under-age marriages, homophobia, and anti-Semitism. This post-2001 discourse overlooks the fact that some of the issues seen as emblematic of Muslim incompatibility with European secular and liberal democracies, notably homophobia or anti-Semitism, are persisting issues of tension among Christian or secular majorities in these countries.

Islamophobia was initially a phenomenon noted in the countries with large Muslim immigrant populations, i.e., the 'old host' countries (Erdenir 2012). However, such prejudice and irrational fear exists also in 'new' host countries. The case of Greece with respect to recent irregular migrants arriving in the country is interesting, as it shows how a fundamentally socio-economic or humanitarian problem can be framed as a question of culture and religion. Indeed, Greece

has an increasing Muslim immigrant population, which was, however, largely invisible in the public space until the last decade. The vast majority of Muslim immigrants in Greece were in fact of Albanian origin and hence not practising Muslims, raising no claims for mosques, headscarves, or religious education. For Albanian Muslims, faith was a personal and private manner and had little to do with their integration into Greek, predominantly Christian Orthodox, society. The South Asian immigrants who have arrived in Greece during the last two decades were also mainly male workers who had left their families back home in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Hence there were no challenges of integration of Muslim children in schools nor any women wearing the veil in public places. Islam was however instrumentalised in the late 2000s and early 2010s as part of the irregular migration discourse. Most irregular migrants/asylum seekers arriving through Turkey to Greece without documents, crossing the Greek-Turkish border illegally, were and still are Afghan, Somali, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi, and more recently since 2014, Syrian. While the challenges these people face have more to do with their legal status (as irregular migrants or asylum seekers) and eventually their socio-economic integration, religion has come to the fore particularly during this last decade, largely through the discourse of extreme right-wing groups portraying them as a threat to the cultural and economic survival of Greece (Kouki and Triandafyllidou 2014).

A particularly interesting case is that of Poland, a post-communist and predominantly Catholic country that has mainly experienced emigration rather than immigration in the post-1989 period and in which migration discourse was virtually absent until the 2015 refugee emergency (Buchowski 2016; Krzyzanowski 2018). While immigrants account for approximately one per cent of the resident population in Poland and are mainly Ukrainians, considered to be culturally and religiously akin to the Poles, the country has experienced a spectacular rise in anti-Muslim sentiment. Poland is home to four distinct, even if numerically quite small, Muslim populations (Buchowski 2016): native Polish Tatars, by now assimilated (approx. 1,000 in the 2011 census), new Muslim immigrants including refugees from the former Yugoslav Republics, students, and small entrepreneurs from Muslim majority countries who eventually settled in Poland (estimated between 10,000 and 30,000), Chechen refugees who numbered around 80,000 have left the country after brief stays and are estimated at 7,000–8,000. This is what Renata Wloch (2009) has termed 'phantom Islamophobia' as anti-Muslim attitudes in Poland are not the result of personal experiences, competition for jobs, or challenges in the public sphere but rather emerge out of media and public discourses presenting the Polish nation as culturally and religiously homogenous and unchanging, threatened though by the 'Muslim menace' (Buchowski 2016). Beyond the role of the dominant discourse which sees national identity as homogenous and compact, not allowing for migrants or minorities within the definition of Polishness, Buchowski points to the similarities between anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim attitudes in Poland and the role that paradoxically both Jews and Muslims in their demographically very small presence play in

defining Polish national identity. In other words, religion becomes a vehicle for exclusionary nationalism.

This brief review suggests two converging trends: on one hand, there is an increasing tendency to identify Muslim populations by their religion and not by their national or ethnic background, despite their marked diversity of origins and histories of migration. On the other hand, nationalist discourses adopt an anti-Muslim overtone regardless of the actual presence of Muslim populations in a country or of whether such populations pose specific social, economic, or political challenges.

In short, European identity is neither ethnicity-blind nor religion-neutral. People of Muslim religion, whether migrants or natives, whether residents or citizens, are often faced with a double exclusion from European and national identity, as aliens, as 'Others within'. Many naturalised migrant residents (who are fully integrated in their country of residence) encounter discrimination and exclusion when moving to another European country or when travelling for business or leisure. French, Dutch, or Swedish, and/or European though they may feel, they are scorned by fellow citizens as not 'fully' or 'properly' European because of their darker skin or their phenotypic traits that do not conform to a White majority stereotype.

Indeed, when considering European identity, one needs to take into account the experiences of minorities, and particularly of Black Europeans and European Muslims, and their own view of what European identity entails and what kind of diversity can fit into the 'unity-in-diversity' motto.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has aimed to provide answers to some apparently simple but in substance quite complicated questions such as whether European identity exists and if it does what kind of identity it is.

We have argued that European identity is, like all collective identities, in the eye of the beholder. It is shaped by the socio-economic, national, both subjective and objective circumstances of the subject that expresses it. It can be enacted or simply expressed through discourses. It is one among many collective identities that people have and is in constant evolution. There is no essence of a European identity that has always existed and that remains immutable. European identity is part of a multiple set of identity features that may form part of an individual's identity and its salience varies not only among individuals but in line with a given context and situation.

We understand European identity as deeply intertwined with national identity and reject the conflictive model in which national and European identities are understood to be in an antagonistic or zero-sum relationship. The question of whether European identity is a primarily political or cultural one is something that can be answered only with reference to a specific historical moment. Thus, today, European identity is predominantly cultural in character and not

political. It goes hand in hand, sometimes in tension and other times in mutual support, with different national identities, but it is nowhere near substituting them. Actually, it is the cultural connotations that make European identity today compatible with strong national identities.

To our set of questions on whether European identity is essentially open to diversity and inclusive, answers are more tentative. Dominant European identity narratives today turn diversity into a distinctive feature of European identity. While this view entails a risk of reifying subnational and national identities and neglecting important processes of national and regional or ethnic identity transformations, it is also promising because it remains open to diversity. However, there is a risk here that European identity becomes an empty shell and completely loses its cultural vitality. It becomes too 'thin' to matter.

Finally, a more careful and critical sociological inquiry shows that the type of diversity that can be incorporated into European identity is less open-ended than one would think. Minorities and immigrants, Muslims and Black people have a hard time identifying as Europeans or being accepted as such. Racism and ethnic superiority are strong historical elements that have in the past constituted European identity. Today, they are officially discredited but often creep into the everyday encounters among Europeans as well as in political debates.

Perhaps what is the most important conclusion drawn from our discussion in this chapter is that identity, not only national but also European, is a *dispositive*: it is a device for social or political ends. Thus, more than what European identity *is*, one should pay attention to what European identity *does*. While European identity has not been inimical to national identities and actually has buttressed, indirectly, the development of regional national identities in places like Catalonia or Scotland (which saw in European identity their immediate referent bypassing the straitjacket of the multinational Spanish or British state), its effects on immigrant populations and ethnic minorities are ambivalent. While, on the one hand, European institutions like the European Union or the Council of Europe have taken a leading role in developing international law instruments for the protection of 'old' ethnic (mainly linguistic and cultural) minorities in the post-1989 period (Triandafyllidou and Ulasiuk 2014), on the other hand, the European identity construct has rather marginalised and excluded European Muslims and Black Europeans.

Note

1 Concretely, *laïcité* is the complete separation of Church and State, and represents an institutional arrangement that sets the conditions for the exercise of religion and the limits of religious forms of expression.

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6

THE BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES OF EUROPE

On the European continent, borders have been drawn and redrawn through wars, annexations, and peace treaties. They have shifted countless times in some areas and have remained intransigent in others. They have come to symbolically represent the essence of a nation in certain cases or a seemingly insurmountable cross-border conflict in others. The consolidation and militarisation of frontiers has been accorded immense political and strategic value throughout the centuries. At the same time, alliances, cooperations, and, in more recent decades, efforts at regional integration have reduced the significance of some borders to administrative formalities or zones rich with various forms and types of exchanges. Europe's history has thus been a combination of efforts aimed at maintaining borders and also at transcending them.

According to Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (1926), 'geographically, there is no European continent; there is only a European peninsula of the Eurasian continent'. All discussions around borders inescapably lead to a couple of seemingly straightforward questions with far from simple answers: Why do borders matter? And where does Europe end? Obviously the answers depend on where you stand: on this side of a border or on the other. They also depend on who you are. Nationality, language, religion, ideology, interests, and wealth all define the answers to both questions. They also depend on time, as borders and their relative importance changes over time.

Europe's external borders trace its political and administrative limits. These are not the only borders that matter; there are also borders within. These internal borders – whether functional, spatial, national, ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic, ideological, or socio-economic – are just as defining in terms of creating identities and attributing substance to the concept of Europe as the previous chapter has discussed. These internal borders may exclude or marginalise some socio-economic groups from access to certain policies, privileges, or rights much more than the external ones.

They have structured both the course of Europe's history and also perceptions about Europe in the rest of the world.

Understanding Europe's internal and external borders is fundamental to any attempt at defining what Europe is, what it represents, and what it aspires to. We tackle the issue of borders and boundaries in this chapter in order to trace and identify some of the constitutive elements that define Europe, the changes that have occurred to these, and how they have transformed and influenced what Europe represents. William Walters (2009) has argued that debates about the frontiers of Europe are necessary political interventions that interject elements of fixture into the fluid, diverse, and ambiguous space that constitutes Europe. Thus, this chapter highlights the politics of power behind different configurations of Europe's borders and boundaries and through this provides some insights on how others perceive Europe.

We start with a discussion on borders and boundaries, on why they matter, and how they contribute to the definition of Europe. We then look at the presence of borders in contemporary Europe and how the continent has been debordered and rebordered. This leads us to the consequences that the process of European integration has had on Europe's borders. Finally, we discuss the main phenomenon that appears to be defining and challenging both the role of borders and perceptions of Europe today, namely, immigration.

Why do borders matter? And where does Europe end?

Borders and boundaries represent the outermost limits of a system, an organism, a legal entity. Borders demarcate space and as such set limits and represent the physical and functional end of political power, sovereignty, and authority. They delineate the space within which a certain order exists and define areas within which certain activities take place. Borders carry meaning and symbolism and take on many different functions. In their most typical sense, borders are boundaries between countries or within states. They are geographic contours all too often adjusted through violent means to unite, reunite, or separate peoples. For some they have been fundamental in the creation and formation of identities; for others they have been hindrances to unity, freedom, and peace. For some they have constituted means of protection from external pressures and competition; for others, they have represented obstacles to the operation of free market forces.

Etienne Balibar has noted that since Antiquity there have been 'borders' and 'marches' with different and changing functions (2002, p. 77). These have been lines, zones, or strips of land that have served either as places of separation, confrontation and blockage, or areas of contact and passage. In the post-imperial age, nations and states have been defined by borders, and geography has been of the essence. In fact, for many political geographers up until the early twentieth century, natural borders (such as mountains, rivers, or deserts) were considered as the only 'good' borders to be had from a military standpoint (see Minghi 1963). Analyses gradually shifted away from a naturalistic or organic view of

borders, approaching borders more as 'man-made' than as natural divisions. In effect, borders reflect the cultural life of a society as much as its territorial boundaries (Delanty 2004, p. 186). As such, borders acquired increased political, socio-economic, and symbolic importance both in terms of how and why they become established. The explosion of Border Studies throughout the twentieth century indeed testifies to the various ways in which borders, borderlands, and border regions are understood and conceptualised by institutionalist, functionalist, constructivist, structuralist, post-structuralist, post-modern, and cosmopolitan perspectives.

Borders are simultaneously creators and outcomes of spatialities (Herrschel 2011, p. 17). They reflect current and historical legacies and political and social processes at all levels, from the individual to the collective, the societal, and the international. When unbundled from their territorial and spatial dimension, borders are a normative idea. They represent a belief in the existence and continuity of a binding and differentiated power that becomes concrete and real through everyday social practices. They involve the constitution of power and its control over a specific space. As van Houtum and Struver (2002) have stated, borders are socially (re)produced phenomena that are context-dependent as regards their meaning and their form. Borders have been defined as legal facts that materialise in a set of connected practices ranging from maps to checkpoints, guard towers, and landscape inscriptions (van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer 2005; van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002). They have also been approached as political and economic resources that can be mobilised as they are opened or closed; they have been studied as institutions and as limits that condition human behaviour.

If these are some of the aspects of *what* borders represent, the next challenge is to understand *why* and *when* they matter. Borders matter because of the importance and meaning individuals, groups, and societies assign to them – either individually or collectively. At the risk of generalising, we could argue that borders gain importance mainly in two situations. First, when they are pressured or contested from the outside by external forces and actors; and second, when the 'in-group' has the need to define (and often expand) its standing. In the former case, pressure may be exerted in both direct and indirect ways in order to render them more open to trade and commerce, to human mobility and exchange, and to various forms of influence; this occurs mainly when what lies within the borders is of geopolitical or economic interest. In the latter case, definitions of borders are associated with identities, with aspirations, and often with emotional narratives of glory long-lost or never quite accomplished. Thus, borders matter because they frame meaning – both real and desired.

Borders and boundaries demarcate between those who are included and those who are excluded, and they are traced in relation to the 'other' side. The combination of these dimensions explains why the bordering, and thereby also the ordering of space, in whatever form or shape, seems to be such a persistent, constitutive human and societal need. Liam O'Dowd eloquently synthesises the

various dimensions of borders (in Anderson, O'Dowd and Wilson 2003, pp. 14–15) as follows:

> Borders are integral to human behaviour – they are a product of the need for order, control and protection in human life and they reflect our contending desire for sameness and difference, for a marker between 'us' and 'them'. They are ubiquitous human constructions, an inevitable outcome of the range and limits of power and coercion, social organization, the division of labour and the promotion of collective identity within a bordered territory. Yet, all boundaries must be sufficiently fluid and permeable to accommodate survival and change and permit cross-border exchange … It may be taken as axiomatic, therefore, that boundary creation, maintenance and transcendence will be integral features of human behaviour for as long as human beings demand a measure of autonomy and self-direction.

The question of where Europe's boundaries lie has significantly defined Europe's history and its identity. It has certainly defined the identities and histories of certain countries that have effectively been 'borderlands' themselves between East and West. Poland, Ukraine, and Turkey are Europe's most meaningful 'border countries' and their identity and historical parkours have been deeply influenced by where the limits of one or another vision of Europe have been traced, and by the criteria that have defined these visions.

The subject of Europe's borders has also defined the most elaborate attempt at regional integration, namely the European Union. It has defined its nature, its processes, its institutions, the way it defines itself, and the way others view it. We return to these points in this chapter's subsequent sections.

As we have already discussed in previous chapters, geographic criteria become combined with cultural and subjective considerations. Thus, there are those who are considered 'Europeans' but only marginally or peripherally so, and then there are those who neighbour Europe further east. The further east we go, the more boundaries become fuzzy in this common civilisational and geographical space that ties the Old Continent with Asia. As the limits of Europe become blurrier, so too does the question 'Where does Europe end?' become ever more complicated. As culture becomes entwined with geopolitical considerations, interpretations vary. For some, the limits of Europe are determined by the borders of the ancient Roman Empire that define the boundaries of what is widely referred to as Western culture and civilisation. For others, Europe's borders lie well outside the limits of the continent's Christian legacy. The map of Europe's boundaries is further confounded as we move south. There are those on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea who despite their extreme proximity are separated from Europe by geography. Nonetheless, their ties to Europe are as tightly knit as possible given that they have been significantly 'exposed' to one or another kind of Europe through a common history characterised by conquests, colonialism, power relations of dependency, and migrations.

Although Europe has unavoidably been attributed a map-based definition, its geography has always posed a challenge. The colonial legacy has always meant that jurisdictionally 'Europe' and even the EC/EU have existed outside the continent. Overseas countries and territories in the Atlantic, Antarctic, Arctic, Caribbean, and Pacific regions include Aruba, Bonaire, Curação, French Polynesia, the uninhabited French Southern and Antarctic Territories, Greenland, New Caledonia, Saba, Saint Barthélemy, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Wallis and Futuna Islands.

Sea and ocean borders have conditioned Europe's boundaries to the west. The English Channel, or *La Manche*, has always served as a marker of the British Isles from 'continental' Europe, while the Atlantic Ocean has been perceived as a pond pooling together Americans and Europeans, their identities and values, their security and their economies, their past and their future. In effect, these boundaries have not been considered problematic, even when either side has tried to assert its independence from one another. Europe's western borders fuse into a wider geopolitical space that has consistently been approached as a community of common values. Europe thus blends into and is a core constitutive element of the transatlantic community that merges the concepts of 'Europe' and of the 'West' with an almost borderless seam. Differences are consistently underlined in order to subtly differentiate political and cultural identities but these have not been perceived as posing existentialist challenges to the definition of Europe.

On the contrary, the subject that has undoubtedly triggered the most passionate and divisive debates on where Europe's borders lie and by extension, what Europe is and what being European means, has been the place of Turkey vis-à-vis Europe's boundaries and especially the prospect of Turkey's accession to the European Union. Geography, culture, values, governance, religious differences, and shared history have been used by all sides to define Europe's boundaries physically and politically vis-à-vis Turkey. The political sensitivities that frame the debate of whether the boundaries of Europe lie on the western side of Turkey's borders or on the eastern side, or even vaguely somewhere in between along the planes of Anatolia, are revealing of the importance that territorial, political, and cultural borders continue to have in Europe today, in spite of the dominant rhetoric of consolidating a division-free Europe comfortable with the richness of its multiculturalism.

The debates provoked by the EU enlargement processes and the prospect of Turkey's accession constitute tangible expressions of the long-running questions that have been running through this book, namely 'Where does Europe begin?', or more aptly, 'Where is Europe's core?'

The rise and fall (and rise again) of borders

The establishment of territorially defined and mutually exclusive enclaves of legitimate domination is a creation of the modern world established through the

Westphalian order (Ruggie 1993). Although Westphalia did not aim at territorial sovereignty of unitary states, it essentially led contemporary international relations to

> [a] system of territorially organized states operating in an anarchic environment. These states are constitutionally independent (sovereign) and have exclusive authority to rule within their own borders. They relate to the population within their borders as citizens (*Staatsangehoerige*, those belonging to the state) and to other states as legal equals.
>
> *(Caporaso 2000, p. 2)*

Drawing from this, the territorial dimension of states is core, thereby rendering borders strategic lines to be legally protected and militarily defended or defied. From the realist perspective of international relations, state survival is based on the deterrent function of borders against military incursions by other states. As noted by Charles Tilly (1992), the relationship between borders, states, and wars is rather clear-cut: states make war and wars make states and it is all defined through borders. To wage wars, rulers needed to be able to raise funds through taxation; to be able to tax effectively, it was necessary to delineate precise territorial borders incorporating people and resources. These territorially bound communities developed collective identities, as united and uniform as possible within. This description by Tilly is probably also the simplest yet most straightforward description of Europe's contemporary history: one of a continent of wars, states, and borders created, erected, dismantled, and refortified. Some of the most symbolic borders include the *Ligne Maginot* between France and Germany, the Berlin Wall and Checkpoint Charlie separating East from West, the Green Line in Cyprus, the Rock of Gibraltar, the region of Kaliningrad, or the German-Polish border. Europe's history is rich with sensitive cross-border conflicts that have defined alliances, political and institutional developments, and the continent's cultural and ideological diversity. Its borders have thus been zones of conflict, mutual suspicion, and threat.

Most European borders were traced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it is only in the twentieth century that these were consolidated and refined into their present form. Michel Foucher (1998) has estimated that approximately 60 per cent of contemporary Europe's borders were established during the twentieth century, which witnessed the splintering of all European empires (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, German, French, British, and eventually Soviet) into smaller nation-states. The most intense period of border creation and change is associated with the two World Wars and the post-1989 collapse of the Soviet bloc. Territories were taken away from all defeated nations of both wars, while treaties and agreements attempted to stabilise new frontiers and land exchanges.

The Paris Peace Conference after World War I prepared the peace treaties between the Allies and the vanquished. The Treaty of Versailles, signed in 1919,

left an enduring mark on the history and the historiography of Europe and the world. The aims of this peace treaty between the Allies and Germany not only involved settling the material issues arising from the war but setting the groundwork for a stable (or as it turned out unstable) international system. This meant defining the border between Germany and Poland, preserving Germany but containing its ability to fight future wars, and establishing a ring of independent and viable states around the Reich (Boemeke et al. 1998, pp. 2, 328). Its harsh indemnity provisions are considered to have contributed to German revisionism, the economic crisis of the 1930s, and the rise of National Socialism.

Versailles was followed by the Treaty of Saint-Germain with Austria, the Treaty of Neuilly with Bulgaria, the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, and the Treaty of Sèvres (followed by the Treaty of Lausanne) with the Ottoman Empire/Republic of Turkey. Also perceived as a *diktat*, Trianon essentially dismantled Hungary, reducing it to a third of its territory and half of its population. Just as Versailles fed German vindictiveness, Trianon fed Hungarian irredentism. When the treaty's terms became public, there was outrage in Hungary; there was the same reaction in Bulgaria after Neuilly, while Saint-Germain and Sèvres dismantled the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires provoking anger and resentment that contributed to the resurgence of massive violence across the continent and around the globe just two decades later. The Treaty of Lausanne with the Republic of Turkey went even further, specifying the conditions for compulsory exchanges of minority populations of Greece and Turkey. So, along with borders being redrawn, people were also forcibly uprooted and moved to either side of the borders in order to 'unmix' them.

As regards the borders that resulted from World War II, it is the meeting in the Crimean city of Yalta in February 1945 that brought together Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin D. Roosevelt to essentially carve up the post-war modern world. The Yalta Conference, codenamed Argonaut, together with the Potsdam Conference in July–August 1945 defined the post-war borders of Europe. Germany and Berlin were divided into four zones of Allied occupation, Poland lost territory to the Soviet Union and received a large swathe of German land in return, and millions of Germans were expelled from the disputed territories.

During the Cold War, the salience of borders became even more magnified with national borders becoming harder than ever before. Militarised, securitised, and impenetrable borders came to symbolise a harsh and tense ideological division of Europe between liberal and socialist democracies. Where national borders coincided with the divisions between the two ideological blocs, they were 'overdetermined', to use Balibar's terminology. On the contrary, national borders within either of the two blocs though concrete and definite were weaker, softer, and more permeable to political exchange, commerce and trade, and human mobility and cultural interaction.

The Cold War border-era was marked by three exceptional events that illustrate the political and symbolic significance of borders and are characteristic of

visions and identities of Europe. The first was on 23 October 1955, the second on 13 August 1961, and the third in 1989.

In the first case, we have what Liam O'Dowd (2002) described as a rare example of popular democratic input in the designation of state borders. The Saar was for long a region of contention between France and Germany. Detached from Germany after World War II, it was a French protectorate until 1955. Although France and West Germany had agreed in 1954 to establish an independent Saarland, when asked to decide in a plebiscite, the region's inhabitants rejected independence and voted for unification with West Germany. Unification was indeed concluded on 1 January 1957 in democratic, and above all peaceful, ways.

In the second instance, we have a construction of a border of concrete and barbed wire that defined the latter half of the twentieth century as a period of division and suspicion, ideological confrontation, and isolation. For the East German leaders, the Berlin Wall was the only way to stop the flight of East Germans to the West. For the West, though unwelcome, the wall erected by the East Germans separating Berlin in two was seen as a stabiliser of a tense situation at a time when the threat of mutual nuclear annihilation seemed very real. Apparently, better a wall than another war. As a side note, it is worth mentioning that the borders separating Eastern from Western Europe were essentially patrolled and policed by the Soviet forces with the aim of not letting anyone out. As is the case with most obstacles to human mobility, the Berlin Wall proved to be a short-sighted solution that perpetuated and magnified rather than resolved insecurities and weaknesses. It barely lasted the length of the bipolar Cold War. And indeed, as soon as the international system started to change, the wall tumbled down on 9 November 1989.

This leads us to the third exceptional border-related event of Europe's twentieth-century history. The fall of the Berlin Wall served as the symbol of a new era for Europe and for international relations (Bort 1998; Dalby 1993; Donnan and Wilson 2001). The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and its influence over the Eastern bloc were followed by the intensification of the processes of globalisation and regional integration. This led to two completely opposite trends. On the one hand, these developments challenged traditional notions of borders, often rendering them less significant than ever; on the other, they rendered previously 'inactive' borders relevant again. Let us briefly turn to each of these trends.

Volumes have been written about the globalisation phenomenon of all aspects of human activity ranging from culture to economics and politics. The associated time-space compressions have not rendered borders redundant by any means, but they have permeabilised and perforated them to movement, exchange, and communication. As many scholars of international relations and politics have argued, global interconnectivity has resulted in major transformations in the strength and resilience of the nation-state and in a variety of social, political, and economic processes long thought to be the sole or principal domain of the state. As communication and exchange, formal and informal, legal and illegal, across national

borders has become increasingly dense, the political importance of these national borders has been tested while the concept of sovereignty has become ever more differentiated. The globalist understanding of borders stresses the benign, pacifying effects of interdependence, which involves a process of 'debordering' or 'unbundling' of the relationship between territory and the state, with authority simultaneously relocated upward towards supranational entities, horizontally towards transnational organisations and social movements, and downward towards subnational groups and communities and local levels of government (see Blatter 2001; Ruggie 1993).

At the close of the twentieth century, there was a lot of public talk and euphoria about the prospects of a borderless world (Ohmae 1990, 1995; Newman 2006; Allen and Hamnet 1995). Many hoped that Europe's borders in particular would wither away and gradually become irrelevant as the relationship between territory and governance was changing in innovative ways (Ansell and di Palma 2004; Anderson and O'Dowd 1999; van Houtum 2000; O'Dowd 2003; Perkmann 2003). But political developments were unravelling a different story, with borders once again occupying centre-stage. The end of the bipolar system brought the revival of nationalisms in eastern Europe, that in turn led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the reconstitution of the Baltic states, and the 'velvet divorce' of Czechoslovakia (Bort 1998; O'Loughlin and Van der Hermann 1993). Along with an impressive number of new states declaring their independence or waging war to achieve it, 8,000 miles of new international borders were erected across central and eastern Europe (Anderson and Bort 1998; Donnan and Wilson 2001). The disintegration of the socialist system created a proliferation of borders and a new political geography that radically redrew Europe geopolitically, socially, culturally, and economically.

Borders in post-socialist Europe have undergone deep changes in recent decades. This area includes countries that were integrated into the USSR or satellite states serving as 'borderlands' between the Soviet Union's borders and the Iron Curtain. With the 1989 collapse of the Eastern bloc, fundamental changes were provoked to the borders, politics, and identities of these countries of 'Central', 'Eastern', or 'Southeast' Europe. The most radical transformation occurred in the case of East Germany and the Baltic states. In the case of the former, previously inexistent borders that had been traced by the Allies at the end of World War II were erased with Germany's reunification in 1990. While they were erased in administrative and military terms, they have persisted in socio-economic and cultural terms despite decades of cohesion and redistribution policies. In the case of the Baltic countries, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania went from republics in the USSR to member states of the European Union and NATO. This transformed borders that were an administrative formality to some of the most reinforced international borders on the European continent (Geddes 2000; Herrschel 2011).

The geopolitical changes that came with the end of the Soviet Union affected all borders in Europe, replacing previous dividing lines with new ones. For the newly independent states of central, eastern, and south-eastern Europe, asserting

their borders and rendering them visible was an important way through which to assert their nationhood (Herrschel 2011, pp. 21). This was crucial both symbolically and substantially to make the break from the oppression that Sovietisation or the Yugoslav identity was felt to have had on their national identity. The new dividing lines came to reflect various degrees of 'Europeanisation' and 'Westernisation', with different degrees of structural adjustment, political reform, and economic development. The change in the importance of each border was voluntarily pursued by the countries in the post-Soviet space that wanted EU membership, thereby transforming their new national borders into EU borders and effectively sharing and giving up some of their recently acquired sovereignty and independence. Actually, as Milada Anna Vachudova (2000, pp. 153) explained, 'demonstrating that they could control their borders became a way for Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic to prove their "Western" character' and stay in the good graces of EU governments. They consequently guarded their borders vigilantly and adopted EU border and migration policies and visa lists often at the expense of their historical ties with their eastern neighbours. During this period, it is the borders of the European Union that became the most politically important and dominant markers across the continent, the core reference on any discussion about borders.

Thus, some borders were 'raised' into EU external borders and others were 'lowered' into intra-EU crossings. In both cases, the costs have been significant. Where borders have been 'raised' or 'hardened', this has come at a cost as long-established flows and patterns of mobility were prevented and resulted in societal ties becoming hindered. The border between Poland and Ukraine, and later between Romania and Moldova, are illustrative of this. Where borders have been 'lowered', this too has required difficult structural adjustments, and reforms have come with rapid transitions and transformations. For some socio-economic groups in the newer member states, the transition to a market economy, liberalisation, privatisation, access to freedom of movement, and the opening up to globalisation came with unprecedented opportunity; for others, it came with deep costs. Border-change through EU accession also carried a psychological dimension as it was often pursued in a rather paternalistic manner by the older member states and EU institutions. The reforms and transformations that were expected on behalf of the central and eastern European countries were based on an underlying approach that they would totally adjust and 'slot into' existing policies, practices, and ways of doing politics and business. The reunification of Europe was effectively to be undertaken through a one-sided transformation. So, as Herrschel (2011, pp. 13) noted, 'it is not surprising that border policies were expected to originate in the European Union and "reach out" to those outside, who would comply as a matter of course'.

These dimensions underline the power relations associated with borders. Although their existence depends on the mutually accepted territorial delineation of the limits of each side's sovereignty, power, and authority, nevertheless, the meaning that is attributed to borders and the ways through which

cross-border communication and exchange is undertaken is the result of power relations between the two sides. When the balance fairs out, then cross-border exchange leads to a constructive and mutually appreciated interdependence; border regions become zones vivid with cultural exchange and rich commercial activities. When the balance tips towards one side, then the overall power dependencies and asymmetries characterising the political and economic dimensions of interstate relations are reflected in the way common borders are managed and perceived. They are opened or lowered selectively based on the more dominant side's interests and security concerns, and they are regulated in accordance with the more dominant side's system of governance. Naturally, this has not always been easily or happily 'digested' by adjacent countries.

Changing Europe and its borders

Over the course of the past 70 years, borders between most European countries have been altered significantly as a result of various initiatives of regional cooperation ranging from the Council of Europe to the OSCE and EFTA and culminating in the EEC/EU experience of increased integration, pooled sovereignty, and managed interdependence. The EU experience has been the most far-reaching in this respect and the uniqueness of this experiment makes it particularly interesting to examine further. We focus here, therefore, on the transformations that have occurred on borders and boundaries as a result of European integration. Cross-border or transnational cooperation in the EU has been premised on growth, stability, and security, as well as a limited but notable degree of solidarity and redistribution to achieve greater socio-economic cohesion within the member states and across the Union. The EU integration process has also affected the borders of non-EU member states such as Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway through their associations with the EU, for instance through participation in the Schengen Area.

The EU's underlying normative vision has been that borders should be more about defining the territorial limits of particular redistribution policies rather than about sovereign control exercised by the nation-state (Zielonka 2006). As such, Europe's 'internal' borders have been subjected to a process of denaturalisation, i.e., decoupling the connection between borders and nation-states (Walters 2002). During this same period, Europe's external borders appear to have become more tangible, though certainly not more definite. As the EEC/EU has enlarged and has pretty much reached the imagined historic confines of Europe, it has gradually come to stand for Europe. Thus, the borders of its member states have increasingly defined contemporary in- and out-groups and Europe's borders. With each enlargement, however, a number of parallel and often contradictory and even confusing processes seem to have been happening, rendering some borders harder than others – or more aptly, rendering borders 'harder' in some cases and 'softer' in others.

For one, each enlargement has essentially been a geographic shifting of borders and has involved a substantial change in the nature of each acceding country's borders. These changes have in all instances occurred voluntarily, willingly, and on some occasions with the explicit assent of the population through a referendum. This, in itself, is rather exceptional given that most border changes throughout history have occurred through violence and coercion. Furthermore, each enlargement has been presented as a (re)unification of Europe and as a historic accomplishment in overcoming one or another cross-border conflict that has stigmatised Europe's history. Initially it was centred around Franco–German reconciliation; in the 1970s it contributed to the Northern Ireland peace process; more recently, it was about overcoming the Iron Curtain and even contributing towards improving Greek-Turkish or Cypriot-Turkish relations.

Each enlargement has also been a confirmation of each acceding member state's 'European' nature and thereby a normative step closer towards consolidating the Continent and Europe's core. Each country that applied for EU membership stressed its nation's quintessential 'European' values and history (Walters in Rumford 2009, p. 493). As such, through a loaded civilisational discourse, 'old' historic borders regained importance as cultural markers in a new and very different geopolitical context and became instrumentalised to justify a series of policies associated with enlargement, on the one side, and accession, on the other. Thus, treaty changes, economic liberalisation, privatisations, political, judicial and administrative reforms, redistribution policies, constitutional reforms, and changes in citizenship legislation were all rationalised by the idea of 'return to Europe' and shift of EU borders to coincide with Europe's borders.

While each enlargement has shifted and delineated the EU's external borders southwards, northwards, and eastwards in clearer terms, it has also always been accompanied by a promise towards the new neighbouring states that they are welcome to be next to accede – of course provided conditions are met. Thus, Europe's borders may have become more tangible but they have also become more temporary in anticipation of the next EU enlargement round. This temporary nature has naturally affected the permeability and nature of both the borders of the Union and of its neighbours in several ways. The geographic expansion of EU borders was accompanied by an expansion of the Community's authority, extending it beyond the Union's physical borders. Through its external economic and political relations, the reach of EU policies' influence and guiding principles extends across and beyond borders. For one, accession and applicant countries focus their efforts on adopting, implementing, and digesting the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis communautaire* throughout the pre-accession procedure. European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg, and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) have stimulated regional cross-border joint actions and policy exchanges through funding along both internal and external EU borders. Lastly, the functional nature of EU integration allows non-member states to participate in certain policies, thereby clearly leading to a situation where Community competence and outreach goes

well beyond the Union's formal territorial limits. The customs union with Turkey is one such example; the inclusion of the EFTA countries and Israel in the EU's student exchange and academic mobility programmes such as ERASMUS, LEONARDO, or the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships are others. Thus, the influence and impact of EU policies and directives has trickled out through the borders into different economic and policy sectors of neighbouring regions. Even in cases where the prospect of future integration and membership is not a factor at play, countries recipient of EU technical assistance or development cooperation are held to political and economic conditionality criteria that may not be as determining as many would like them to be but that are certainly not negligible either (as in the case of the European Neighbourhood Policy). Elements of the EU's common foreign policy and its security concerns also extend the EU's authority and competence across its external borders and into its neighbouring states' territories. The case of south-eastern Europe is particularly illustrative of this with the EU's involvement in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, for instance. Thus, EU policies, values, and governance methods have gone well beyond its external 'hard' borders.

Each enlargement has meant that while all types of border controls have decreased among member states, they have substantially increased at the external borders separating Europeans in two different categories (EU and non-EU citizens) and distinguishing Europeans from 'Others'. As DeBardeleben (2005) has concluded, enlargement is not only about including EU members, it is also a new delineation of outsiders.

There is no doubt EU integration intensified cross-border activity and cooperation in all sectors of social, economic, and political life among its member states, its associated and candidate countries, and its neighbouring countries. The political project of constructing the European Union has focused on attempting to reduce the importance of borders through making them increasingly permeable. It has concentrated on bridging elements of civil society, of politics, and of the economy, and linking them at the supranational level to transcend nationalistic or ethnically driven anxieties. The drivers have been security and prosperity. The EU has evolved based on the premise that the functional spill–over effects of trans-border cooperation and integration are the foundations for a dynamic economic development. This has in turn been associated with a normative aspiration of consolidating a democratic peace and a stable and secure regional community of like-minded states with common interests and values. On the European continent at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the concept of security and of what constitutes national interest for a liberal democracy was redefined on the basis of economic liberalism, interdependence, cooperation. and integration. Over the past decades, national security was gradually redefined to no longer be solely associated with the military protection of geographically defined borders and of the population within them. Rather, as the process of EU integration intensified, national security came to be increasingly associated with good neighbourly relations based on deeper cooperation through cross–border

tackling of common problems and challenges, attachment to common values and respect for the rule of law, and interdependency with common borders aiming to protect from the negative effects of globalisation (European Commission 2017). As such, borders have been approached as impediments to the free movement of goods, services, information, and ideas, with most EU policies founded on strategies aimed at 'overcoming' borders (see Ratti 1993; van Houtum 2000).

EU borders have been considered fuzzy because 'they produce interfaces or intermediate spaces between the inside and the outside of the polity … Fuzzy borders are moving zones and they can easily be crossed by persons, goods, capital and ideas' (Christiansen et al. 2000, p. 393). By no means does this diffused notion of borders imply that they are vanishing or losing their salience. Rather, it is argued that the continuous spill-over process and the intentional political project on behalf of the European political and economic elites have fostered conditions conducive to moving away from an inclusion–exclusion or inside–outside dichotomy and altering the concept of borders. It is certainly true that some of Europe's borders have become fuzzy, vague, and even invisible. It is typically noted that driving from one Benelux country to another, one can barely notice where the border crossing lies and that even the French-German border crossing that was at the heart of the twentieth century's two World Wars is today almost unnoticeable. The 1986 Single European Act had a notable impact on Europe's borders in the ways it facilitated and encouraged the free movement of capital, goods, services, and labour to create the Single European Market. And while in some cases borders appear to have disappeared from the visible geography, at others, even though they remain very vivid, cross-border activity is denser, easier, and probably also friendlier than it had been in a long time. The Greek-Bulgarian border would be one such example, the Gulf of Finland another. In these cases, the premise of EU integration and of the EU's enlargement strategy overall has been based on the aim not of necessarily doing away with borders but transforming them into 'good fences' or areas of 'joint responsibility' as these may be able to make 'good neighbours' (DeBardeleben 2005; Walters 2004).

Etienne Balibar (2002) has noted the *polysemic* nature of borders, meaning that borders neither function equally for all nor are they all experienced in the same way by different people belonging to different social groups. This is truer than ever as regards the EU's borders. Balibar's analysis of Europe's borders as borderlands rather than rigid lines of division is perhaps the best-suited to the continent's contemporary reality. Balibar has described borderlands as blurred zones of interchange and spaces of cultural mixing and ambiguous affiliation as much as fixed identity. Inspired by this definition, William Walters (2009, p. 493) synthesises the essence of the relationship between space, the notion of Europe, politics, and the role of borders:

> to describe Europe as a space of borderlands is to insist on its multiple spatiality and its irreducibly plural social constitution. It is to understand Europe as an open space of intersection and overlapping borderlands. For

instance, there is a Euro–Atlantic space, but also a Euro–Mediterranean space. Each borderland exceeds Europe, revealing how the world is folded into Europe and vice versa. Since each can provide the basis for a claim to be the authentic heartland, then the foundational character of such centres and peripheries is made relative, and Europe is decentred.

These references to open spaces and out-reaching borderlands are apt when Europe is defined in universalistic, cosmopolitan, and humanistic terms. They are suited to the dominant rhetoric of aiming to reunify the continent and over-come inequalities, divisions, and conflicts that have been consistently declared on the part of the EU and its member states. This is of course not the entire picture, nor is it the only dominant narrative regarding the notion of Europe and the role of borders. Borders as physical frontiers may have faded across most of the western and northern parts of the continent, but the importance of the ter-ritorial state has not. Indeed, not everyone has been convinced of the benefits of this approach to borders. In effect, along with apprehension about the fate of the nation–state (Milward 1992), so too the fate of Europe's borders has continued to trigger much concern, anxiety, expectation, enthusiasm, and trepidation. Must the European Union's borders be lowered and further dismantled or should they be rescued and refortified? Are the borders of the EU member states withering away or are they standing strong like fortress walls, withstanding attacks that are launched against them from within and without? Are they becoming irrelevant in some areas and extremely important in others? Do some feel the need to 'get back control' of national borders as existential? Should the Union's borders shift further east and if not, why? So, it is not only a matter of where Europe's physi-cal frontiers are settled, it is also a matter of what kind of borders these will be.

Europe has not become border-free; it has been bounded, unbounded, and rebounded in powerful ways. A number of newer challenges have increasingly impacted Europe's borders, raising their stakes: acute socio-economic inequali-ties within Europe and at the global level; security threats emanating from one or another form of fundamentalism or nationalism; challenges related to climate change, weapons proliferation, or migration; the COVID-19 pandemic; access to energy resources and other critical raw materials. These issues all ensure that despite globalisation's pervasive nature, the continued existential importance of borders is as relevant as ever.

Indeed, the importance of borders in geopolitical and security terms has remained primordial. On the eve of the fifth enlargement of the European Union in 2003, the EU launched a neighbourhood policy aimed to 'prevent further lines of division in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity' and to create a 'circle of friends', in the words of then-President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi (European Parliament 2021; Foucher and Lepesant 2015). In parallel to the emergence of the Eastern Partnership (7 May 2009), conflicts were reignited across the region. The secession of South Ossetia from Georgia with the military support of Moscow in 2008, along with Russia's formal recognition

of Abkhazia, demonstrated the importance that geostrategic territorial influence still holds. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its military intervention in eastern Ukraine and mainly in the Donbas, followed by the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, underlined the unfaltering strategic and symbolic importance of territorial boundaries. It also manifested yet again the long-standing challenge of where Europe's borders lie in the east and how to balance out the continued legacy of past empires (going back to Catherine the Great's eighteenth-century Russia) on present-day identities, nationalisms, and perceptions of where security threats are perceived to come from – east or west.

Essentially, the question of how much closer this region can come to the 'West' or to 'Europe' is defined by how 'far' it can turn away from Russian strategic influence. It raises the question of whether Russia is part of Europe, its antithesis, or its most direct existential security threat. Unresolved territorial or separatist conflicts in the EU's eastern neighbourhood (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Transnistria) have their roots in the collapse of the Soviet Union (de Waal and von Twickel 2020), however, deliberate choices on the part of the governments in Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Chisinau to pursue a Western-oriented pathway and seek NATO and EU membership have changed the geopolitical dynamics in the region. These choices have been instrumentalised by Moscow to justify military interventions aimed at expanding Russian influence and once again have rendered these regions into dividing lines characterised by direct conflict, war, mutual suspicion, and isolation. The Kremlin's nostalgic vision of a great Russia (*Russky Mir*) comes with a strong-held belief that it exercises the right to control the orientations of the states born of the dissolution of the USSR. Without Ukraine, Russia's efforts to reunite them in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) – which includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, along with Moldova, Uzbekistan, and Cuba in observer status and Tajikistan as a candidate country – is significantly weakened.

The importance of bordered sovereignty has also retained its pertinence, as has been demonstrated most vividly by the UK referendum on its EU membership in 2016. For decades, EU membership had diffused border tensions and zero-sum national questions on the independence of Scotland, while a combination of the peace agreement known as the Good Friday Agreement and the European Internal Market allowed an opening of the frontier and the abolition of any physical border between Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland. Indeed, between 1973 and 2016 these borders had largely ceased to be an object of contention. The referendum changed this. The relationship of the United Kingdom with European integration had long been defined by the question of sovereignty (Grob-Fitzgibbon 2016). In the absence of a codified constitution, successive UK governments have argued that that they had merely lent powers to the EU but could take them back at any time. Brexit was thus presented as a project to 'take back control of our money, laws and borders', restrict immigration, and reaffirm parliamentary sovereignty first and popular sovereignty subsequently (Keating 2021; Niblett 2016). Withdrawal from the EU, however, reignited Scottish independence and risked destabilising peace

in Ireland. It raised contentious and highly politicised debates on the nature that the new borders should have, and on where the economic and regulatory border between the UK and the EU would lie (Keating 2021; Hobolt 2016). Just as importantly, it raised the existential question of the future of the UK and triggered an even wider and deeper reflection across the continent on what a member state's withdrawal from the EU means for the future of the European project, underlining once again the continued importance of the territorial dimension of sovereignty and the symbolic importance of borders well into the twenty-first century.

Geopolitical realities, therefore, render some borders 'harder' than others, while the legacy of past empires and cultural differences render some borders more hostile, forbidding, or difficult than others. Societies, states, and regional organisations continue their efforts to find the most effective way to maintain open borders while making them more impermeable to traditional and transnational threats, both real and perceived. The EU's external borders have indeed hardened in some locations more than in others, and in some spheres and public policy areas and not in others. To complicate matters further, the same external borders may be hard towards some countries and policies and soft towards others. Thus, the border between Italy and Switzerland is softer than the one between Greece and Turkey, just as all of the EU's borders are open to goods from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries but increasingly closed to migrants from the very same countries of origin. This diversity has made Border Studies a rich field for research while also triggering passionate political debates on the need to open or close and liberalise or securitise the Union's borders to human mobility.

Europe as fortress, with gateways and migrants

> The 126-mile border between Turkey, which is not in the European Union, and Greece, which is, has become the back door to the European Union, making member countries ever more resentful as a tide of immigrants from the Middle East, South Asia and Africa continues to grow … The flow has raised tensions throughout Europe, to the point where the top French official responsible for immigration seriously suggested that a wall be built along the entire border.
>
> *(International Herald Tribune, 14 July 2010)[1]*

> Greece said … it had completed a 40-km fence on its border with Turkey and a new surveillance system was in place to stop possible asylum seekers from trying to reach Europe following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. Events in Afghanistan have fuelled fears in the European Union of a repeat of the 2015 refugee crisis, when nearly a million people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and beyond crossed to Greece from Turkey before travelling north to wealthier states.
>
> *(Reuters, 21 August 2021)*

These two newspaper excerpts were published a decade apart – a decade that significantly intensified the importance of borders once again in the long cyclical history of Europe's borders and that witnessed the erection of walls and fences along the EU's external borders.

Since the early 2000s, migrants and asylum seekers – without legal documents, some smuggled and others trafficked – have made their way across land and sea borders from Southeast Asia, from Asia's heartland, from sub-Saharan Africa, and from North Africa and the Middle East into Europe. These passages are dangerous and risky, and thousands have died along the journey. In the Mediterranean alone, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has registered over 23,568 missing persons in the period 2014–2022.

Greece, Italy, and Spain have been the main points of entry for undocumented migrants and asylum seekers. As a result, the Mediterranean Sea borders have become heavily patrolled, and fences have increasingly appeared along the EU's external borders, adding to the image of Europe as a 'fortress'.

A high-tech surveillance fence has been built on the Greek-Turkish border to close off the short land crossing between the two countries and prevent the entry of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. After the 2015–2016 humanitarian and border crisis, further north, Hungary built a barrier on its border with Serbia and Croatia. And in 2021, even further north, Lithuania began erecting a wall on its border with Belarus, following the example of Poland and Latvia, in response to Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko's use of displaced persons as a means to pressure EU member states and exploit deep political divisions and public fears over uncontrolled immigration.

As Andreas and Snyder noted already back in 2000, the popularity of walls persists in the West,

> [B]ut the nature of these walls and the threats they are built to repel have changed. The new walls are designed not to keep people in or to keep militaries out, but to deter a perceived invasion of 'undesirables' – with unwanted immigrants leading the list of state concerns. Nowhere is this more evident than along the geographic fault line dividing rich and poor regions: most notably the … eastern and southern borders of the European Union.
>
> *(2000, p. 1)*

Over two decades later, this description stands strong with Europe's border controls tighter and stricter.

It is usually contended that the EU lowered its internal borders at the expense of strengthening or raising its external ones (see, for instance, Andreas 2000; Bialasiewicz and O'Loughlin 2002; Foucher 1998; Lavenex 2005; Newahl 2005; O'Dowd and Wilson 1996; Stolcke 1995). Concerns have been particularly expressed about the development of a protectionist internal market or with regard to its asylum and immigration policies and the classic reference to 'Fortress

Europe' (Geddes 2000). The European Area of Freedom, Justice and Security has achieved a border-free zone and facilitated internal mobility and freedom for EU citizens and legal residents (including through the Schengen Agreement). This has come with stricter control of external borders and intra-EU police cooperation to protect from organised crime, illegal migration, terrorism, and trafficking of people and drugs (see http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries /justice_freedom_security/index_en.htm). It has also come with an effort at harmonising immigration policies and achieving common standards in the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees (through a number of additional multilateral agreements such as the Dublin Convention, the London Resolutions, the Migration and Asylum Pact, and the Amsterdam and Lisbon treaties).

The 9/11 attacks and the launch of the 'War on Terror' led to a further securitisation of member states' external borders, and with efforts shifting to heightened security concerns, most of Europe's borders have become tenser checkpoints. This has been compounded by mounting anxiety about irregular migration pressures as well as trafficking, smuggling, and other criminal cross-border activities increasingly since the outbreak of the 2008 global financial crisis and the unravelling Eurozone crisis (van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009). Thus, in spite of the rhetoric of the declared aim of reuniting Europe and erasing dividing lines, EU integration and enlargement have essentially drawn new dividing lines, replacing the Iron Curtain with a 'Eurocurtain' (Bialasiewicz and O'Loughlin 2002). As Foucher has concluded, far from having a Europe without borders, we have an EU based on a logic of 'frontierisation' (1998, p. 237). While the military function may have declined along most European borders and economic liberalisation and globalisation have lessened the role of the border as a site of customs inspection and foreign exchange control, this is not the case as regards human mobility. The function of policing Europe's sea and land borders, and also Europe's main city-centres, which have become gateways for legal and irregular migration mainly due to the role of airports and ports, has become central to the concept of the border. And it is this function in specific that is responsible for the 'hardening' of Europe's borders.

This hardening of Europe's edges is criticised for several reasons. It is criticised for having a destabilising impact on the internal politics of its neighbours, especially towards those to which the promise of membership is not (yet) extended (Brusis 1999; Hughes et al. 2004; Batt and Wolzcsuk 2002; Batt 2002, 2003; Amato and Batt 1999). It is also condemned for the outrageous toll it has on human lives. As control has increased at Europe's external borders, smuggling and trafficking networks have intensified their activities bringing migrants into the EU from the most precarious and dangerous crossings and routes. Europe's sea borders have claimed thousands of lives as boats have capsized or sunk while being 'pushed back', and many other 'undocumented' migrants have perished in transit or in detention centres. The deaths of these 'undocumented' migrants can be neither legally punished nor memorialised through rituals (Davison and Muppidi 2009) thereby attributing a darker side to Europe's borders which is

in antithesis with the sort of Union and global, normative actor that the EU presents itself as. Liz Fekete (2003) has described Europe's external borders as a space of suffering and death and the Mediterranean full of 'nautical graveyards' of 'dehumanised', desperate migrants, while Roland Freudenstein (2000) has referred to it as a new frontier of poverty. Lastly, it has been condemned for creating a 'Huntingdonian' border, a marker between civilisations, separating cultures and societies and laying the foundations for new divisions in the twenty-first century (ibid.) as well as a dividing line based on wealth and opportunity thereby creating a 'golden curtain of wealth' (Dalby 1993), a 'new Schengen wall' (Lowenhardt, Hill and Light 2001), or a 'Schengen divide' (Anderson, Bigo and Bort 2000).

But, has this always been the case? Not really. In fact, although some borders and passages have historically been tighter and more restrictive, Europe's borders have been seen in a uniform manner as fortress walls only recently. Until the 1960s, Commonwealth subjects from South Asia or the Caribbean could travel to the United Kingdom without restrictions. Indeed, during the 1950s and 1960s, western and northern Europe had permissive or even promotional migration policies towards migrants from southern Europe, north Africa, and beyond, motivated by the need for extra labour. The oil price crises of the 1970s, changes in Europe's labour markets, and a desire to protect the social and economic rights of the domestic workforce shifted immigration policy towards more controls and more restrictions. Family reunion became the main legal migration pathway to Europe, while political rhetoric increasingly linked migration to security and identity issues. In the latter half of the twentieth century, European borders became increasingly difficult sites for non-EU citizens – whether migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. To adequately manage these external borders, the EU has extended their governance outward into the neighbouring countries. Visa Liberalisation Action Plans are based on conditions seeking to improve third countries' law enforcement and border management to essentially transform them into a 'cordon sanitaire'; in exchange for filtering and limiting migration and irregular cross-border movements of migrants from further afar, visa-free access is facilitated for their own citizens (Armstrong and Anderson 2007; Bossong and Carrapico 2016).

It took a pandemic to close Europe's borders almost completely. When the COVID-19 virus spread across the globe in early 2020, the world came to a standstill as border controls were restored, checkpoints sprouted on major highways, air travel ended, and global supply chains were disrupted. As the coronavirus struck Europe hard in March 2020, member states began unilaterally closing their borders, prohibiting most travel from neighbouring countries. Trucks transporting food and supplies became stuck in traffic jams stretching for kilometres as they waited to cross previously open borders, while governments had to charter airlines and ferries to repatriate their citizens. A sweeping closure of the EU external borders to all non-EU citizens was announced on 17 March 2020 – a rare occasion where EU citizenship had a tangible effect on all EU citizens' livelihoods without being mediated by their

national citizenship. That closure confirmed that EU citizens and their national governments felt they were closer together and in solidarity and interdependence under this pandemic, although intra-EU border closures followed shortly thereafter (Triandafyllidou 2022).

The management of the pandemic across European borders and within European countries had a polarising effect on understandings and practices of membership by assigning different mobility rights to citizens/permanent residents and temporary residents. On the one hand, it pushed people with temporary status towards the inner circle; on the other hand, it pushed those who may have needed protection the most outside. Illustrative of the former is the fact that those migrant workers previously considered 'disposable' like farmworkers, domestic and care workers, courier employees, and platform workers suddenly became 'frontline' essential workers, much needed and much coveted, and triggered long-needed efforts to regularise their status and revaluate their working conditions (Loi 2022). Illustrative of the latter was the treatment of asylum seekers in reception centres, where priority was given to keeping the virus in the camps and avoiding its spread among the wider community of citizens outside the camp (Triandafyllidou 2022). A 'sanitary' border was thus often recreated, separating those who do not belong from those who do belong within the country's territory.

Concluding remarks

On the European continent, bordering is not a nation-state affair solely. The EU has emerged as a major actor in creating, relocating, and dismissing borders, and in transforming national borders into 'European' ones. This transformation is deeply meaningful for all on both sides of the border as it regulates, harmonises, and defines which borders are important for whom, when, and where.

Access to financial means, access to rights, and access to security and freedoms changes in fundamental ways as national borders have become European (Rumford 2007; Delanty 2012). Ulrich Beck (2000) has framed the issue of borders from a cosmopolitan perspective, emphasising the range of possibilities and potential that may be offered when we approach borders as 'mobile patterns that facilite overlapping loyalties'. This is largely what has been happenning with Europe's borders, and it has certainly contributed to the current definition of Europe in functional, spatial, and identity terms.

Borders are integral to all visions of Europe. We consider that Europe's borders matter for those who are on the other side of the frontier when Europe is attractive, confident, inspiring, powerful, and relevant. On the contrary, Europe's borders matter for those within when there is a perception of threat and peril that triggers protectionist and phobic impulses. They are hardened when the desire to keep out the 'undesirables' takes precedence. And they are indeed no longer just at the physical border of European nation-states because, in this phase of European and global history, they are about protecting territory, but

more importantly they are about controlling and defining mobility – mobility of people, of goods, of services, and perhaps also of ideas.

The hardening of the European Union's external borders seems to be increasingly following a modernist logic of (b)ordering. Van Houtum and Pijpers (2007) have described the EU as a gated community with what is slowly resembling the colonial mindset, one based on a divisive perception between what is on the in-side of the borders as illuminated, enlightened, liberal, and prosperous, and what is on the out-side of the border as threatening, invading, and even culturally deviant. The current spatial imaginative bordering process of the European Union involves the colonisation of neighbours and 'friends' as members or associated members among whom common assets of knowledge and wealth are constructed and distributed. These must be separated by secure boundaries from 'the inhabitants of the imagined *terra incognita* surrounding the insulating Union [who] are the politically invoked new barbarians from a world outside who are undesirable, the imagined cause of many societal problems and hence, they are denied access' (van Houtum and Pijpers 2007, p. 298). Gated communities are clear-cut forms of socio-spatial insolidarity as they attempt to purify space under the flag of privacy, control, comfort, and security, and produce and reproduce segregation, protecting and maintaining social homogeneity and wealth inequality.

This is neither a flattering nor a tenable state of affairs, and one that requires thoughtful reflection and policy attention for the ways in which Europe's borders and its boundaries are managed and defined. How mobility is framed across these is fundamental to the quality of European democracy.

Note

1 Kennedy, Michael (2012) For Illegal Immigrants, Greek Border Offers a Back Door to Europe, IHT, 14 July, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/world/europe/illegal-immigrants-slip-into-europe-by-way-of-greek-border.html?_r=1

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7
POLITICAL EUROPE

As an adjective, the word 'political' refers to matters of government or public affairs. It pertains to active engagement, ideological alignment, and power. In this chapter we delve into the political dimensions that have defined Europe. Europe's political map is rich with competing ideologies characterised by universalist aspirations and global resonance, political systems that range from the liberal to the illiberal and from the democratic to the non-democratic. Europe has been crafted through the coexistence of a long legacy of nation-building and state-building, and of political projects aimed at improving democratic governance or imposing authoritarian rule. It has also been shaped by a history of tensions between the civil and the military centres of power and between the civil and religious centres of power.

Until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Europe's political landscape was characterised by a rather fluid territorial organisation. Then, during the Late Middle Ages, the Church's hegemony was gradually challenged by powerful rulers. The social structures of feudalism lay the ground for the political structures that established Europe's nation-states. This historical period saw the emergence of assemblies that are the roots of Europe's parliamentarism and of a system of justice that enabled the systematic and organised record of judgements and administrative decisions. With the exception of the fluidity that continued to define south-eastern Europe and the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the east, the interstate system that began to emerge became characteristic of Europe and was then exported to the rest of the world, forming the basis of the organisation of modern political life and the building blocks of international relations. This period of Europe's history also saw the emergence of capitalism, mainly in the urban centres of northern Italy and the Netherlands, that fundamentally shaped the socio-economic cleavages and ideological conflicts characterising Europe's political systems over the next six centuries.

In this chapter we discuss the main political cleavages and ideologies that form the background of contemporary European politics. We then examine Europe's authoritarian legacies of fascism and communism and how these remain part of the contemporary European political context. Certain countries (and particularly Germany) engaged in a collective self-examination, seeking to understand the conditions that led to the manifestation of fascism, Nazism, and communism to purge their state apparatuses from these legacies and move forward in their identity and policies without however denying these experiences from their national pasts. Others (such as Austria or Italy) treated their authoritarian experiences as unhappy interludes rather than engaging in a collective critical reflection on the cultural, social, and economic causes that led to the rise of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, and addressing these consistently through public discourse and state policies. Obviously, most countries fall somewhere in between and some critical rethinking has gone hand in hand with a collective desire to forget and move forward (most notably in the cases of Spain, France, Belgium, Poland, and Hungary). Against this background, it is interesting to consider the role that Europe may have played in becoming a moral and political vision that provided the vehicle for political change in national political discourses.

We concentrate on the left–right divisions in European politics among western European countries. We start from the main tenets of the left–right wing cleavage in the 1980s, when the Iron Curtain was still in place and the world was divided into 'good' and 'evil', 'Capitalists' and 'Communists', and corporativist models of mass production were still largely functioning in western European countries. We then look at how the left–right dimension was reconsidered in the post-1989 context. The demise of the Eastern bloc was so powerful that some thinkers proclaimed that it heralded the 'end of ideologies' or even 'the end of history' as Francis Fukuyama (1992) famously put it. In the post-1989 context, the issue was initially mostly about how the left–right wing cleavage was reshaped or intertwined with the notions of 'western' or 'eastern' Europe. Very soon after, however, as globalisation and its impacts became more acute, the left–right cleavage morphed into a debate of what kind of reforms were necessary to address globalisation's consequences and the challenges these were posing, and what place, if any, 'united Europe' had in these efforts.

In the last couple of decades, democratic politics have been experiencing a period of disruption and fragmentation across much of Europe. In western, northern, and southern Europe, traditional lines of political conflict appear to be in decline as many established governing parties of the centre-left and centre-right have hit record lows in elections. The far-right and far-left have achieved unprecedented electoral successes. As for central and eastern Europe, illiberal populist forces have used the opportunities offered by digital tools and social media to polarise, construct, and spread illiberal narratives. Across Europe, the vote share for Eurosceptic parties has more than doubled since 2000, even though support for the EU remains at record highs – particularly since the UK decision to leave the EU (Rooduijn et al. 2019). These political developments

have been shaped by socio-demographic trends that have characterised Europe: the expansion of higher education and changes in the labour market caused by globalisation, automation, and digitisation; mass migration and the growing ethnic diversity of electorates; the ageing of societies and sharpening of generational divides; and increased geographical segregation of populations between prospering, globalised major cities and declining hinterlands (Ford and Jennings 2020).

We build on these trends in the concluding section and follow up on the idea of a 'united Europe' discussed in Chapter 3 to explore the EU factor and the development of a distinct level of European politics.

First, though, let us start from the building blocks of politics: cleavages, systems, values, institutions, and power.

Politics and political cleavages

Stricto sensus, politics is about competition for power. Individuals or groups seek power to further a specific set of interests or put into effect a political ideal. Politics are marked by divisions of interest between groups and individuals who compete for the resources of society. They are also marked by differences in doctrine and ideology. To understand European politics, it is necessary to understand the main social and political cleavages that cut across contemporary European societies and the core currents of modern European political thought.

Political cleavages are the manifestation of competing interests and values within each political system. Over the past five centuries political conflicts have been territorially framed. They have been framed within empires for a long time, within nation-states in more recent centuries, and over the past seven decades they have also been framed at the supranational (EEC/EU) as well as at the subnational levels (for instance, in the cases of Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK). This territorial dimension has its origins in the Late Middle Ages, but it was during the Renaissance that the principle of territorial sovereignty, that is, *raison d' état*, became consolidated. The rise of the nation-states in Europe was characterised by the establishment of absolutist monarchies and the decline of the Papacy's influence, which in both cases basically meant armed conflict. Europe's political history has been defined by religious wars, by the Reformation of the Church, and the need to find mechanisms of reconciliation (which formed the origins of Europe's tradition of consociationalism), and by the nature of the absolutist regimes that required a permanent state of war (against neighbours or countries in other continents) to consolidate their power.

In this context, social structural transformations triggered by large-scale processes such as nation-building or industrialisation led to social conflicts that took the form of deep-seated 'cleavages'. These 'critical junctures' have subsequently been expressed through specific political parties and party families in each country. They consist of an empirical dimension (a socio-structural basis), a normative one (a specific set of political values and beliefs), and an institutional one (consisting of a particular political organisation of social groups). Essentially,

how critical junctures have been framed has largely shaped each country's political system in western Europe (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

The Peace Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 are considered the foundations of the European interstate system and one of modern Europe's 'critical' political junctures. The French Revolution of 1789 is another such juncture as it represents the final shift from the feudal world to the modern one. This shift was represented through the demands of the *tiers état* (meaning the emerging bourgeoisie) for representation in relation to the nobility and clergy in the *états généraux*. The democratic revolutions of 1848 constitute a third such juncture, marking the transition to mass politics.

Lipset and Rokkan (ibid.) identified the most important patterns for mobilisation and politicisation of collective action in modern societies; their work has framed most comparative electoral and party research on Europe. Four cleavages have largely structured political conflicts and coalitions in western Europe since the nineteenth century. The long-term alignments between social groups and political parties that framed each country's cleavages have been impressively durable, largely defining European politics and the public sphere.

Until the nineteenth century, European societies were characterised by two core cleavages: the centre–periphery cleavage and the religious cleavage, each affecting every country's political life in different ways. The centre–periphery cleavage was triggered by the conflict between the central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations in the provinces and peripheries. The religious cleavage, for its part, developed from the conflict between the centralising, standardising, and mobilising of the nation-state and the historically established corporate privileges of the Church (ibid.). This division has taken two forms. Since the sixteenth century's Reformation, the divisions between Catholics and Protestants led to religious wars where doctrinal differences were just as strong as the power politics. And second, the Church–Lay division grew mainly during the nineteenth century as the anti-clerical forces drew from the rational, secular traditions of the Enlightenment and the principles of the French Revolution to push back the established Church from public affairs, education, and the economy. Modernity undermined the social significance of religion, and secularisation postulated the declining relevance of religion in the public sphere (Wilson 1969; Norris and Inglehart 2004); however, the start of the twenty-first century saw religion's role in Europe acquire a new public countenance and become increasingly instrumental in influencing people's actions (Pollack 2015). The challenges arising from growing religious diversity within European societies due to decades of immigration from other continents brought religion back into the discussion of what defines the quality of a democracy, the principles of the rule of law, human rights and non-discrimination, and what institutional accommodations are necessary in order to achieve democratic, cohesive, mutually respectful, and tolerant European societies.

Two further cleavages were produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the sectoral and the class cleavages. The sectoral cleavage developed

between the first and the secondary sectors of the economy, opposing agricultural and industrial interests. As for the class cleavage, it fundamentally structured politics in every European country throughout the twentieth century and provided the ideological underpinning for regimes that separated the continent, and the world, into two distinct blocs for over 50 years (the 'West' and the Soviet bloc).

In more recent decades, class divisions in the traditional sense have become increasingly less pronounced as divides related to origins, ethnoreligious identities, and even location have recently tended to take unprecedented importance (Gethin et al. 2021). And while class divisions in a strict sense have become much more difficult to discern – largely due to globalisation and digitisation's impact on income, jobs, and labour markets – inequality has come back to revitalise political conflict and social cleavages. The global financial crisis of the late 2000s simplified it as staggering wealth inequality between the famous 1 per cent and 99 per cent in terms of 'have' and 'have-nots', both globally and within Europe (Chancel and Piketty 2021). Moreover, it raised the salience of European integration in domestic debate, particularly among groups and parties taking extreme positions (Hutter et al. 2016).

Since the 1980s, new value conflicts have been making their way onto the political agenda of Europe's advanced industrial democracies. These have been defined as opposition between the 'materialists' and 'postmaterialists' (Inglehart 1977, 1990, 1997); the 'winners' and 'losers' of globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2008, 2012); and a conflict over 'transnational' political integration between 'Green-Alternative-Liberal' and 'Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist' voters and parties (Hooghe and Marks 2009, 2018).

'Post-materialist' issues such as environmental protection and the extension of democratic rights over traditional materialist values that emphasise physical and economic security have been brought into the political scene mainly by the left and green parties. Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel (2005) described these socio-cultural shifts as a cultural transition Europe has undergone from the survival values of industrial society to the self-expressive values of post-industrial society. Survival values emphasise collective discipline, group conformity, and state authority. Self-expressive values include a post-materialist emphasis on personal and political liberty, civilian protest activities, tolerance of others' liberty, and a sense of subjective well-being reflected in life satisfaction. These changes have realigned the left–right cleavage but have not outright replaced it, as most of the mainstream parties absorbed many of these post-materialist issues.

Driven by the populist right and the parties of the new left, Kriesi et al. (2008) approached the emergence of a new value-based cleavage from a different perspective. In their analysis, voters have been mobilised 'along a protective-nationalist versus liberal-cosmopolitan divide' (ibid., pp. 298–299). The end of the Cold War helped 'un-freeze' party alignments that had been consolidated in western European countries under the blanket of the bipolar ideological opposition. Political coalitions across the political spectrum that were

previously unthought of became possible. At the same time, the demise of the Soviet bloc completely altered the political realities and framings in central and eastern European countries, where the class cleavage had in principle (though not in practice) ideologically overridden other cleavages. The cleavage approach to understanding the socio-political landscape in Europe is much less applicable to the countries of central and eastern Europe, where political parties originated in the state institutions and developed from there instead of following the trajectory common to the western parts of the continent where political parties were rooted firmly in civil society.

Hanspieter Kriesi et al. (2012) have argued that globalisation, or 'denationalisation', transformed the basis of politics in western Europe by giving rise to what they define as the 'integration–demarcation' cleavage between globalisation's winners and losers. The mobilisation of the 'losers' by parties of the new populist right has influenced the mainstream established parties of the liberal and conservative right thereby leading to changes in politics in western Europe. This mobilisation has taken place in response to their cultural anxieties more than their economic interests and has been as relevant for western European politics as it has been for southern, central, and eastern European politics. Contemporary European polities are thus characterised by increased volatility and de/realignments, party fragmentation, a consolidated presence of populism, and the rise of anti-establishment parties.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2009, 2018) explored the transnational or GAL-TAN (Green-Alternative-Liberal versus Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist) cleavage. In their view, the economic and political integration and mobility across borders that came with the development of the European Union in the past few decades constitute a 'critical juncture' akin to those identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) as fundamental to the formation of party system cleavages. Like the earlier revolutions, the contemporary 'European Revolution' polarised societies between those who embrace changes that fit their values or serve their interests (the highly educated, the young, migrants, and residents of globally integrated big cities) and those who resist changes they see as threatening to traditional identities and economic security (the low-skilled, the old, cultural and national traditionalists, and residents of struggling hinterland regions).

Europe's political systems

A look at the political systems that have been formed in each country also offers valuable insights into Europe's political landscape. Political scientists have conducted extensive empirical analyses of the political processes and underlying dynamics of governmental forms and have yielded a rich base of data and an important body of comparative theory that classifies Europe's political systems in regional clusters. These categories of political systems highlight the differences distinguishing each country's political system and map the fascinating diversity that characterises Europe's political realm. Studies focus on whether the state

is unitary or federal, whether it has a presidential or a parliamentary executive, or whether its party system is characterised by fragmentation or polarisation, by multi-partisanship and a sequence of coalition governments, or by a two-party system resulting in durable single-majority governments. Seminal studies of comparative politics have categorised European countries on the spectrum between the 'Westminster ideal' type (where Great Britain and its adversarial style of parliamentary debate constitute the most representative example) and the 'Consensus' type (which involves far greater compromise and significant accommodation of minority rights, and is best represented by the cases of Switzerland, Belgium, and even the EU itself). These studies have concentrated their analyses on explaining the different implications that majoritarian or consensual processes of politics have on the different democratic political traditions identified across most of western and northern Europe.

So, what kind of democratic political traditions do we find in Europe's plural societies?

Italy, France under the Third and Fourth Republics, and Weimer Germany have been classified as *centrifugal democracies* due to their fragmented political culture, immobilism, and instability. Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have been classified as *consociational* democracies due to the considerable stability they have achieved despite the fragmentation of their political cultures. Britain, Ireland, the Scandinavian countries, and West Germany during the latter half of the twentieth century have been described as *centripetal* democracies due to their homogenous political culture characterised by a stability unthreatened by normal inter-party competition (Lijphart 1969, p. 72).

The quality and stability of democratic governance have been the overriding concerns of most studies of Europe's different political cultures. As regards the political systems of southern European countries, here too, studies have emphasised the differences that set them apart from the northern or western European democracies even though their state institutions have been modelled on western European prototypes. The entirely different way in which political and economic life was structured in the countries of central and eastern Europe during the latter half of the twentieth century left little scope for comparative analyses. In more recent decades, however, political studies have concentrated on the challenges of the transition from communist rule and the legacies of the Soviet era and the ways in which national politics and democratic governance are played out.

Politics are indeed mainly framed within the nation-state context. This does not mean, however, that political structures or political ideologies are nationally bound. How Europe's national political systems and cultures have developed is more intertwined than commonly acknowledged. Institutions, constitutions, models, and policies of one country have served as templates for others. Thus, the Belgian Constitution of 1830 was inspired by the French Charter of 1815 and the Dutch Constitution of 1815, which also served as a template for the constitutions of Denmark, Greece, and various states in Germany. Or, for instance, when Romania and Bulgaria emerged as independent countries in the late nineteenth

century, they adopted the British two-party system. Furthermore, fundamentally similar ideas and ideologies have formed and framed corresponding political cleavages across countries and have acquired transnational momentum and cross-border relevance. Thus, tensions between authoritarian and libertarian values and between individualism and collectivism have structured the political systems of all European countries.

This essentially implies that Europe's historical context has produced parallel kinds of political parties in all countries, with remarkably stable patterns of political behaviour over a long period of time (since the nineteenth century), based on similar types of constituencies (see Bartolini and Mair 1990).

Values, ideologies, and main political currents

Politics is also about ideology and values. Ideologies try to explain, shape, and direct social change. As such, they consist of a comprehensive set of ideas that (subjectively) explain and evaluate social conditions. They offer a normative understanding of the way society functions, or rather how it ought to function and the individual's place in it. They also propose a programme for social and political action (Ball and Dagger 2009a; 2009b). It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that Europe is the birthplace of the most influential and defining political ideologies, and that the main political currents that have developed in Europe have had a unique unrivalled global resonance and applicability around the world in societies that are extremely different.

The European political map has been defined by two core value axes that interact in complex ways. First, there exists a historic opposition between authoritarian and libertarian values. This has been most distinctively expressed in the nineteenth century by attitudes to the French Revolution and the liberal and democratic movements that followed it across the continent. Second, there exists a value cleavage between individualism and collectivism, where the former is wary of big government and strong social institutions, whereas the latter stresses the need for cooperation and collective institutions that further common interests. Michael Keating (1993) has convincingly argued that European politics were essentially framed by the ways in which these two axes have interacted in relation to the role of the state across three issues: in managing the economy and the means of production; in managing societal differences and inequalities; and, in setting the framework within which different identities can be expressed and can coexist.

As regards the role of the state in managing the economy, the core challenge has been to ascertain whether and in what ways the state should indeed interfere in economic life. It has also been about the form that government policies ought to take to nurture economic growth. In the post-World War II era, in central and eastern Europe the state defined economic needs, controlled the means of production, and planned all aspects of economic policy. During this same time however, across western Europe, there was a consensus in favour of mixed economies

based on a Keynesian logic and with substantial roles for both public and private sectors. In the 1980s this was challenged by neoliberal economic thought that pushed back the state in favour of deregulation and privatisation until the global economic crisis in 2008 and the subsequent eurozone crisis that demonstrated its limits and flaws. It took a once-in-a-century pandemic in 2020 for European governments to take a very active and direct role in their economies through a series of non-pharmaceutical interventions, including bailing out firms, buying shares in companies, and providing loans.

As regards the role of the state on matters of wealth distribution, the issue that European governments have had to respond to was how to manage differences in wealth, income, and opportunity between social groups, classes, regions, and generations. The different ways in which the welfare state has developed across Europe testify to this challenge that is suffused with ideology and value choices, as Chapter 8 argues. Class structures that had developed in the period of industrialisation were transformed in the post-industrial era. With the working class declining or becoming more affluent, societal tensions shifted, and as the processes of globalisation led to new tensions between winners and losers, haves and have-nots, the challenges of how to deal with exclusion or whether to pursue policies of inclusion have led to new social questions of how to deal with inequalities or diversities.

Finally, in all political systems across Europe, governments have had to balance the need for societal (or national) cohesion with respect for diversity, democracy, equality, and justice. The expectation that mass consumer society and democracy would lead to assimilation and uniformity making questions of identity less relevant has not materialised. Rather the contrary would seem to hold true today. Similarly, shifts towards non-material values such as respect for the environment, culture, leisure, and quality of life that are associated with the post-material reality of the late twentieth century have not rendered traditional identity cleavages less relevant nor less politically salient across Europe.

Against this background, seven political currents have developed in Europe: liberalism, socialism and social democracy, communism, conservatism, Christian Democracy, the extreme right, and the greens (see Keating 1993). Although this chapter does not aim to thoroughly review these political currents, it is necessary to highlight the core principles of each because they defined the political conflicts throughout Europe's history and continue to define Europe's political nature today. Moreover, the universalist aspirations inherent to each of these political currents have global resonance and have made them relevant or influential in the political life of political systems in every corner of the planet.

Turning to liberalism first, it has its origins in eighteenth-century Enlightenment and grew to become one of the most dominant political forces of the nineteenth century through its opposition to the absolutism of Europe's monarchs and the Church, and its support for constitutional government with clear checks and balances and division of powers. Liberalism has taken a variety of forms, from the more radical to the republican or democratic, but essentially it

has advanced political claims that emphasise individual liberty, a set of economic doctrines based on private property, the market economy, and free trade. In some of the continent's countries, such as Spain and France, protracted conflict with the Church infused it with anticlerical sentiments, whereas English (and American) liberalism was largely devoid of hostility towards the Church or religion in general. Given that the wider political context within which liberalism developed was that of nationalism and nation-building, liberals also supported collective claims of self-determination. As a largely middle-class movement that reflected social change, industrialism, and the rise of entrepreneurial and professional groups, liberalism challenged traditional social hierarchies on the basis of rationalist, materialist, and individualistic principles. One of the most challenging aspects of the liberal movement is that it has been characterised with a wide, and often opposing, range of views on important political issues. For instance, some liberals favoured universal suffrage as a means to advance democracy; others saw mass democracy as a threat to the values of individualism and constitutionalism. Similarly, while some supported the development of an active welfare state as a means to create an equal citizenship, others concentrated on the need to limit the outreach of the state and public expenditure. Liberals were also divided as regards Europe's colonialism. Whereas for some liberals, colonial expansion offered new commercial outlets, others opposed this military expansion on either pacifist or libertarian grounds or because of its burden on public expenditure. In the twentieth century, with most of their demands concerning constitutionalism, national self-determination, secularisation, and the market economy met, liberals lost most of their political relevance and have been largely limited to small political parties in the political centre, often participating in coalitions while remaining by far among the strongest supporters of European integration (see Rosenblatt 2018).

Socialism emerged in the nineteenth century in response to the social and economic inequalities produced by the rise of industrial capitalism. Driven by a strong morality and the belief in a more egalitarian society, socialism has urged for a more collectivist, socially conscious mode of government. European socialism's different shades of 'left' cover a wide range of strands, from those who favour a revolutionary overthrow of the existing order and the establishment of Marx's proletarian rule to those who considered that the advance of democracy meant that socialism could be achieved through constitutional means (mainly in the UK and Germany). The different strands essentially coalesced around two poles: the communists who aligned themselves with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and took a pro-Soviet stand preaching the overthrow of the state and capitalism; and the moderates who became the socialist or social democrat parties across Europe and who sought gradual improvement from within the system. This division was maintained throughout the Cold War until the demise of the Soviet model that, in part, discredited the applicability of communism. However, during the four decades that followed the end of World War II, social democracy was particularly influential in building Europe's welfare states and social market

economies, each country's public services particularly as regards healthcare and free education, Europe's mixed economies where public and private ownership coexisted, and an elaborate taxation policy driven by ideals of social equalisation and redistribution of wealth and opportunities.

Social democracy was challenged by the economic crises of the 1970s and the slowdown in growth rates across Europe and the changing realities of the global economy that shifted towards privatisation, monetarism, and reliance on market self-regulation. From the shift away from the old statist model by the German Social Democratic Party in the 1950s to Britain's New Labour in the late 1990s, to remain relevant, social democracy repositioned itself as a socially and environmentally conscious form of liberalism (see Harrisson and Boyd 2018).

As regards the communist strand, it was suppressed and persecuted in the inter-war period, especially in the countries that experienced authoritarian and fascist rule and formed much of the basis of the resistance during World War II. It governed central and eastern Europe after the war and was largely a political outcast in most of western and southern Europe during this same period due to its faithful support of Moscow's policies. Its undemocratic nature made it a marginal political force in most of western Europe, while it remained important in France and Italy and was respected in Spain as part of the anti-Franco resistance. The reformist tendencies within western European communist parties – which argued that radical change could be achieved through peaceful parliamentary means, and which also recognised national differences and that the Soviet model could not be applied to western Europe – came to be known as 'Eurocommunism'. In spite of these changes, the communist parties experienced severe declines in their electoral bases as a result of social change, the shrinking blue-collar working class, and, after the 1980s, the demise of the Soviet bloc.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the doctrine most resistant to change has been conservatism. Its origins can be traced to the opposition on behalf of the ruling classes to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Traditional conservatism highlights the importance of hierarchy, order, and the prerogatives of traditional authority in the state, church, and family. Intertwined with nationalism, Europe's conservatives often endorsed militarism and the continent's imperialist aspirations. In the inter-war period, the conservative segments of Europe's societies became the support base of the rise of fascism. In the post-World War II period, conservative movements increasingly became proponents of privatisations, pure market economics, and the rollback of the state on all matters except security, law, and order. The adoption of a neoliberal or neo-right school discourse enabled them to return to power, while in more recent decades their tougher talk on immigration policy has also enlarged their support base.

One of the most influential varieties of Europe's conservatism has been Christian democracy. Driven by the goal to reconcile Christian values with industrialism, class division, and the democratic demands of the liberals, Christian democratic movements spread across Europe and mainly in Italy, Germany, and France. Between the two World Wars, along with the Papacy that aligned itself

with Benito Mussolini's and Franco's fascist dictatorships, many Christian democratic movements also sided with the reactionary authoritarian regimes that swept across Europe. However, a strong Christian democratic tradition opposed the dictatorships and then became one of the most powerful political forces in post–World War II mainland Europe. In Germany, in fact, it brought together Catholics and Protestants, and the Christian democrats played a key role in pushing democracy forward at all levels, proposing policies aimed at reconciling class conflict, improving the socio-economic conditions and political participation of the working class, and developing a welfare state with an expansive social programme. The Christian democratic tradition was also particularly instrumental in favouring the development of a strong and vibrant civil society of voluntary associations, from trade unions to youth organisations, sport clubs, and humanitarian organisations. Inspired by the principle of subsidiarity, according to which matters ought to be regulated at the closest level possible before being turned over to larger institutions, Christian democrats favoured corporatist principles for the representation of professional groups and virtues of intermediate associations between the citizen and the state. These principles to a large extent have defined the development of civil society in Europe and the continent's corporatist tradition. They have also served as the blueprint for the construction of the European Union (according to the principle of subsidiarity, for instance) and its policies, both within the member states and in its external relations (for instance in the vast grassroots democracy-building projects the EU has funded for decades in its development cooperation policies in the ACP partner countries).

At the far right of Europe's conservatism lies one of its darkest political legacies. The various expressions of Europe's extreme right have deeply stigmatised the continent's history, with implications reaching far beyond Europe's boundaries, not only through the impact of pseudo-scientific theories of racial superiority but also due to the global consequences of World War II. Since the nineteenth century, rejection of the Enlightenment (also known as the Counter-Enlightenment) and the principles of the French Revolution were associated with a preference for pre-democratic forms of governance. Drawing strength from monarchists and absolutists, as well as from nationalistic impulses, the far-right adapted to the advent of the modern age through the new fascist movements of the early twentieth century. Fascism perceived itself as a cultural and revolutionary movement (Mosse 1999). It aimed to restore authority through its distorted view of popular sovereignty and violently rejected parliamentary democracy, the principles of liberalism, and all elements of an independent civil society. While fascism took its most extreme form in Adolf Hitler's regime of National Socialism in Germany, revolutionary fascism swept across all of Europe in the 1930s, feeding on Europe's legacy of racism and anti-Semitism. Europe thus introduced this openly totalitarian ideology to the world – an ideology that expressed contempt for both the liberal emphasis on the individual and the socialist emphasis on contending social classes, proposing instead a world view in which individuals and classes would be absorbed

in an all-encompassing mighty nation under the control of a single party and a supreme leader. The scars of the atrocities of World War II delegitimised the far-right in the immediate post-war period, albeit not for long as far-right parties quickly reappeared in France, Germany, Italy, and eventually in Spain. Since the 1980s the far-right has appeared in the political arena with an increasingly explicit anti-immigration discourse, playing on the fears and insecurities caused by the pressures of globalisation, competition, and rising unemployment rates. The most evident illustration has been the consolidation of Le Pen's Front National in French politics, though the importance of the far-right in the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Poland, in Scandinavian countries, and Greece is just as noteworthy. The far-right has also expressed the claims of perceived superiority of minority nationalists and separatist movements, as the cases of the Belgian Flanders region or the Italian Lega Nord have long illustrated. Europe's far-right appeals to nationalism and racism, has inspired regimes in other continents, such as Peron's Argentina or South Africa's Apartheid policy, illustrating yet again the global outreach of ideologies constructed in the European context.

Finally, the last, and more recent, green politics – a political ideology that has its roots in Europe and has influenced political life across the continent while also inspiring similar movements around the world. Green parties find their origins in the 1970s environmental or ecological movements that built on the social movements and student protest movements of the 1960s and the libertarian left. The prospect of total annihilation due to the superpowers' Nuclear Balance of Terror during the Cold War, along with the fear of massive ecological and humanitarian disasters from potential accidents in nuclear energy power plants and increasing scientific evidence of man-induced environmental degradation and ecological destruction, brought together Europe's long pacifist tradition with a newer 'green' awareness. What started as protest movements aimed at raising environmental awareness and was driven by what many analysts have defined as 'post-materialist' values, eventually took the form of green parties in western Europe in the 1980s. These developed much later in southern Europe (1990s) and later still in central and eastern Europe.

Situated on the left arm of the political spectrum, the greens promote principled positions on environmentally friendly growth, ecologically conscious consumption, ethical trading with the developing countries (fair trade), participatory democracy, and decentralisation. They have had their largest electoral successes in elections for the European Parliament (with their best score to date in 2019) but have also managed to join government coalitions as in the case of Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Support for green parties reflects the growing salience of environmental concerns, particularly among younger voters and the so-called winners of globalisation (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008, 2012; Wagner 2012; Abou-Chadi 2016). In effect, higher education consistently correlates with support for European green parties (Dolezal 2010); graduate voters tend to find the mix of social liberalism with a distinctive internationalist and environmentalist

ideology particularly appealing (Rüdig 2012; Vasilopoulos and Demertzis 2013; Beaudonnet and Vasilopoulos 2014; Grant and Tilley 2019).

At the EU level, climate has risen up the political agenda, notably through the greens' electoral successes, but just as significantly, by the fact that all the other mainstream parties began to make their political platforms more eco-friendly and by the massive mobilisation of youth activists (including the Fridays for Future) and global environmental movements (including Extinction Rebellion). While the EU has committed to making Europe the first carbon-neutral continent and has succeeded in rolling out consensus, funding, and support for the green transition, climate politics hold the potential of becoming a deep cleavage across European political systems if legitimate fears about who will bear the adjustment costs are not met. Many populist parties are denying the reality of human-caused climate change, while others are co-opting the ecological crisis to support calls for protectionism and against migration (Grabbe and Lehne 2019).

This very brief overview of Europe's main political doctrines did not aim to thoroughly describe these families of political thought. Nor did it aim to cover, even succinctly, European political thought that is quite simply vast. Rather, the aim of this section has been to highlight some of the core features that have indeed defined political life and the fields in which political conflicts have been battled in European countries – and to identify the key elements and dimensions within these doctrines that have made European political thought relevant, influential, and even defining in framing the political systems, cleavages, and conflicts across Europe but also around the globe, however different and however distant.

The political legacies of Europe

Liberal democracy and authoritarianism/totalitarianism continue to define the contemporary European political context.

What is perhaps most interesting to highlight is not the benign nature of democracy and the malignant forces of totalitarianism, but rather how these seemingly opposing legacies have in fact interacted in modern European history. One of their most powerful interactions was during the tail end of the French Revolution, when modern Europe experienced totalitarian democracy during the radicalisation of the French Revolution under Maximilien de Robespierre. Also known as the 'reign of terror', this period of totalitarian democracy, characterised by the dominance of a self-proclaimed elite that claimed to represent the 'absolute truth', abused its powers in order to eradicate alternatives. It controlled the population through intimidation and the extreme use of force and defended an ideological commitment to a model of society (the Republican model) while eliminating all other symbols of power (such as Christian symbols) and replacing them with symbols related to the principles of Deism and the Enlightenment. This approach has been compared to the methods adopted by the early twentieth century's totalitarian movements, namely National Socialism, fascism, and

communism, and whose vestiges continue to frame current European politics (Magone 2011). We do not endorse legacy theories suggesting that the power of the past defines subsequent eras, but legacies are meaningful in how they frame the narratives and understandings of national identity and the relationship between people and polity.

Let us first turn to Europe's tradition of liberal democracy. Far from having developed in a uniform manner, it came about through two paths: gradual (largely peaceful) reforms and revolutions.

Nordic Europe and the United Kingdom share certain common experiences as a series of reforms undertaken from the seventeenth century resulted in a strengthened role of their parliaments on matters of taxation and the army, and a gradually elaborate system of checks and balances over the powers of the monarchies. In parallel, the institutionalisation of political parties and formalisation of the representation of organised interests resulted in the incremental expansion of voting rights to ever-greater segments of the populations throughout the nineteenth century, even though male universal suffrage was only introduced in 1907 in Sweden (1917 for women) and in 1918 in Britain (and in 1928 for women).

The democratic trajectories across the rest of the continent were, however, more revolutionary. In some cases, the revolutions were smoother, in others more interrupted. Belgium declared its independence from the Netherlands while establishing one of the most sophisticated constitutions in Europe that later served as a template for many countries of central and eastern Europe. In Italy, Germany, and Hungary, democratic ideals were closely linked with the nationalist movements and the push towards unification, as elites and social groups excluded from the existing power structures wanted political liberalisation and democracy in order to emancipate themselves. As for the Baltic States, the February and Bolshevik October Revolutions in 1917 in Russia offered the opportunity to establish independent, though short-lived, democracies in the period 1918–1920.

The evolution of democracy in the Iberian Peninsula was repeatedly interrupted by military coups and periods of authoritarian rule throughout the nineteenth century and which continued well into the latter half of the twentieth century with the military dictatorships of Franco and Salazar. As for south-eastern Europe, democracy came here too through the struggles of independence from the Ottoman Empire. This late or incomplete experience of state-building unavoidably affected the way democracy developed, often resulting in weak political institutions and even weaker civil societies.

The early twentieth century presented a rather confusing political reality. On the one hand, democratic governance had been established in a growing number of countries and universal suffrage had become the norm across much of Europe. On the other, emerging democratisation was accompanied with political and economic instability and, particularly in southern and south-eastern Europe, with manipulated electoral systems. These conditions were propitious to the rise

of authoritarian dictatorships. The 1929 New York Stock Exchange crash and the economic depression that followed had shattering consequences for Europe's newer and inexperienced democracies. As an alternative to the instability of liberal democracy and in response to the threat of a communist revolution, authoritarian regimes multiplied across the continent.

This leads us to the political legacy that lies at the opposite side of liberal democracy, that of authoritarianism and specifically its manifestations in the twentieth century. Italian fascism derived its ideology from Italian nationalism of the pre-war period and drew its revolutionary politics from the socialist parties. It fed off the discontent with the liberal democratic political system and proposed an authoritarian state based on a new corporatist organisation of the economy that would restore social order as well as the glory of the Roman Empire. The establishment of fascist squads, *Fasci di Combattimento*, to intimidate the left and local government epitomised their use of scare tactics. Fascism's corporatism presented itself as an alternative to the extremes of capitalism's competition and communism's planned economy that would restore an idealised balance of power between labour and employers' associations. Benito Mussolini's regime succeeded in establishing a semi-totalitarian state, whereas the German version of National Socialism led to the establishment of a fully-fledged totalitarian dictatorship and World War II. Adolf Hitler used similar scare tactics and political violence to come to power in 1933, pursuing militaristic ideological indoctrination and an aggressively expansionist *Lebensraumpolitik* to establish a prototypical totalitarianism and one of the most sophisticated regimes of mass politics.

Regimes emulating fascism that were established in central and eastern Europe collapsed during World War II, while those in Portugal and Spain survived until the mid-1970s. While very few countries were able to resist the temptation of authoritarianism in the 1930s and 1940s, the collapse of the Third Reich created the conditions for a more democratic Europe. The end of World War II thus constituted another significant critical juncture for European politics. In the wake of the war's atrocities and scars, although the European far-right did not disappear, it seemed that right-wing populist or far-right parties would not be able to become a significant presence in European politics again. The post-war constitutions of Italy and Germany outlawed fascism and Nazism, while Germany embarked on widespread denazification (with the Allied Powers playing an often-controversial role). Facing what happened during the Third Reich and emphasising the importance of remembering the Holocaust and learning the lessons that had to be learnt from Nazism's crimes has been an ongoing process in Germany, both during the post-war period of division and after reunification.

And yet, only a couple of decades after the end of World War II, right-wing populist movements started gaining in strength, and by the 1990s had visibly emerged as legitimate political actors in many contexts. The rise of Gianfranco Fini's 'post-fascist' National Alliance in Italy, Jorg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National in France, Pim Fortuyn and later Geert Wilders PVV in the Netherlands, Jobbik in Hungary, and the neo-Nazi

Golden Dawn in Greece, all confirm that the extreme right is a fixture rather than a fissure on the European political map. The legacy of the extreme right remains relevant in the current political landscape of both western Europe, which has experienced seven decades of stable liberal democracy and economic prosperity, and of eastern Europe, which experienced half a century of socialist rule. Though it may not benefit from a consistent loyalty on behalf of its electorate, the far-right does manage to capture the vote of once-again growing segments of the population who are feeling insecure, threatened by globalisation and European integration, increasingly xenophobic towards non-Western immigrants and racist towards Roma, and disenchanted and 'distrustful' of mainstream politicians.

The other major manifestation of authoritarianism/totalitarianism in Europe was expressed in the form of communism. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the dire social conditions of the working class led to the emergence of new political forces that wanted reforms. Friedrich Engels's critique of the unregulated labour conditions, the exploitation of workers including child labour, debt dependency and poverty of capitalism in Manchester was accompanied by proposals for social reforms that would improve the situation of the working class. In *The Communist Manifesto* that he then published with Karl Marx during the revolutionary period of 1848, they lay the foundations for social democracy and communism that were to fundamentally change Europe's politics, both conceptually and in practice. Marxism became the foundation of social democratic parties in western Europe that pursued a reformist approach to improving the conditions of the working class. It also provoked a set of pre-emptive measures on the part of conservative governments (such as German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck) that sought to create a welfare state that would provide social protection to the working class and hence neutralise the revolutionary potential of the social question. Finally, it inspired the Bolshevik revolution under Ivan Iljitsch Lenin that completely altered Russia's political life, European politics, and the international political system.

Under the rule of Joseph Stalin, the first communist state in the history of humanity, the Soviet Union, eventually developed into a totalitarian regime based on a centrally planned economy, forced collectivisation of the agricultural sector, single-party politics, the blurring of the demarcation between the party and the state apparatus, and massive ideological indoctrination. Although efforts were focused on building communism in the USSR, Stalin supported the establishment of communist parties across Europe. In southern, central, and eastern Europe, these communist movements were at the centre of the resistance against the emerging fascist/authoritarian regimes. World War II threw Stalin into an alliance with the UK and the US despite their ideological differences, thereby consolidating the USSR as a global power that replaced the Russian Empire. The Allied Victory in 1945 enabled Moscow to carve out a *cordon sanitaire* separating it from its capitalist neighbours by establishing people's democracies in central and eastern Europe and controlling East Berlin, and to thus roll out a sphere of influence with global outreach. The Cold War and the division of Europe after

the end of World War II meant that each bloc followed a different trajectory for the subsequent half century, with limited exchanges and influences between the political systems of either side.

Half a century of communist rule left significant imprints on the countries of central and eastern Europe in all spheres of societal and state life. Gabor Toka (2006) identified at least four mechanisms that had defined the political realities and attitudes of people in these countries, and which subsequently affected their (often difficult) experience of transition from communism to liberal democracy after the demise of the Soviet bloc. The first dimension involved indoctrination in the fields of economic policy and egalitarianism leading to an emphasis on industrial progress (even at the expense of the environment) and the easier acceptance of the role of women in the workplace. The second involved repression. Freedom of expression was curtailed while criticism of political parties' choices was suppressed, often violently, thereby limiting public deliberation and experience with public debate. Third, radical social change was rendered familiar and even perceived as mainstream. This not only involved nationalising the means of production, for instance, it also meant dynamically establishing compulsory education for all, thereby achieving unprecedented levels of literacy in all countries of central and eastern Europe. Finally, the demise of communist rule left several vacuums in these societies with dramatic and traumatic results. One of the most widespread phenomena that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the USSR, was the backlash against communist rule, or what has been termed post-communism.

As these countries of central and eastern Europe embarked upon their transition from communism, they had to come to terms with their communist past. Each state adopted a different approach in dealing with this reality. Some banned communist parties (a ban later lifted), some replaced monuments of the old regime with new monuments in honour of democracy, while others encouraged the opening of secret police files, lustration, and restitution (Appel 2005; Nodia 2000). Lustration was the process of screening groups of people for previous acts of collaboration under the communist regime. For instance, the Czech Republic passed laws in 1991 prohibiting members of certain groups (mainly the secret police) from entering high public office for five years. Restitution, for its part, was a programme that sought to return 'illegally confiscated property' to misappropriated owners and heirs.

These countries' 'Return to Europe' essentially meant that all political institutions had to be restructured and re-established. Institutions were thus modelled on their western European counterparts, the EU *acquis* was imported and automatically transposed into national legislation, national identity and sovereignty were rediscovered, the economy had to be modernised, privatised, and deregulated, and civil society had to become plural, active, and democratic from below. These dramatic changes meant that during this period, in central and eastern Europe, one of Europe's defining political cleavages between left and right took on a different dimension. In fact, Francis Fukuyama (1992) argued that the end

of the ideological opposition that had come with the end of the Soviet Empire meant that the political cleavages that had divided populations across industrial societies were henceforth anachronistic. The argument was that if the end of the Cold War meant the absence of an alternative method of organising modern society, then this convergence of values and ideologies around the principles of liberal democracy had rendered Europe's political cleavages irrelevant.

By atomising social relationships, disaggregating social classes, destroying or inhibiting the formation of voluntarily organised civil society causing citizens to retreat from the public to the private domain, many expected that communism had 'flattened' the social and ideological landscape to the extent that no political cleavages would or could appear – at least not without significant long-term social reconstruction. It was even argued that communist rule had removed the capacity of East Europeans to locate themselves on a left–right spectrum and had caused them to distrust politics. Peter Mair's work (1997) suggested that decades of communism had led to a pronounced lack of social stratification in central and eastern Europe that was reflected in the fact that post-communist electorates were volatile and that a crystallisation of socio-political identities was unlikely to consolidate for quite some time. Thus, party formation was based more on politicised attitudinal differences concerning the desirability, degree, and direction of regime change than on the result of politicised social stratification. Herbert Kitschelt (1992, 1995) posited that during the period of their transition to market democracies, post-communist societies were divided in a distinctive manner along a single liberal–authoritarian axis of political competition. As regards the positioning of citizens on this cleavage, those best suited to market conditions and globalisation – the young, the educated, men, those with transferable skills, or even those who had privileges within the old communist system that they could privatise to themselves in the new order – were likely to be found in the pro-market/libertarian quadrant. By contrast, those likely to be most adversely affected by change, or cognitively least able to deal flexibly with social flux – the old, the less-educated, industrial workers, and so on – would support anti-market/authoritarian ideologies. Furthermore, he argued that the higher the degree of the country's economic development, the more market liberals it would contain. A more diverse reading of the post-communist political landscape of central and eastern Europe was put forward by Stephen Whitefield (2002). He argued that political cleavages emerged in each state across the region reflecting the country's historical inheritances as well as its post-communist economic and social experiences. He made the case that communist rule did not destroy social identities of class, religion, region, and ethnicity, which were to prove immediate sources of division; rather he argued the contrary, that it probably maintained and even stimulated them.

During the transition to market economies and following their accession to the EU, studies of Europe's post-communist democracies have both emphasised the lack of institutionalisation of patterns of government and opposition (characteristic of western Europe) and have flagged a significant confluence between

East and West to a much wider degree than previously expected (Casal Bertoa 2013; Albertazzi and Mueller 2013; Best 2013; van Biezen and Wallace 2013).

European politics transformed and contested

Examining the political dimensions that define or contribute to our understanding of what Europe is essentially requires one to navigate between continuity and change. The twentieth century has been a period of deep transformation that has culminated in a Union of member states that by and large aims to represent the long-aspired ideals of peace, unity, and democracy. These accomplishments were severely challenged by the euro crisis and its consequences, as well as the rise of illiberal authoritarianism and far-right populists. But to better understand today's undercurrents of political change within and across Europe, it is useful to take a closer look at the transformations that occurred during the twentieth century on the European political landscape:

> the transformation of the European state through progressive European integration; the redrawing of the boundaries between public and private (nationalisation and, later, privatisation), as well as the readjustment of territorial boundaries through decentralisation, regionalisation and federalisation; changes in patters of democratic participation, protest, elections and political communication; the changing character of political parties and changing patterns of party competition; the new challenges faced the European welfare states; and changes in the organization and style of executive government.
>
> *(Goetz, Mair and Smith 2008, p. 40)*

These changes have altered both the character of Europe and our understanding of it. Today, any discussion of European politics or of politics in Europe is defined by the European Union, even if by contrast rather than consensus or support. Since the 1980s, researchers have been examining the effects of the EU on democratic politics within and across the member states. One of the core concerns was whether European integration could remain a broadly consensual elite project detached from domestic political competition. Another was how the democratic deficit that characterised the EU could be addressed to protect the quality of democracy within the nation-states. In essence these issues raised the overarching question of whether European integration might constitute a new political cleavage, one pitting the winners of globalisation against the losers (Hooghe and Marks 2008).

Many analysts have argued that during the twentieth century there has been a transition from modern to post-modern politics. Although the nation-state remains at the core of all political action and identification, nonetheless, the processes of de-territorialisation, denationalisation, internationalisation, and increasingly transnationalisation have deeply transformed national politics. This

is closely connected with the transformation (for some, even the decline) of the concept of state sovereignty that took place in the late twentieth century. This happened through the process of European integration and member states' decisions to pool together sovereignty at the EU level in order to allow for more leverage and influence in policy areas ranging from economic matters to trade, justice, and home affairs. It has also happened through pressures from below and the moves towards devolution. As a result, since the 1980s there has been a clear move towards decentralised subnational government as the examples of the UK, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia illustrate.

European politics have also been transformed through large-scale immigration since the 1950s that has diversified societies to an unprecedented degree. 'Multicultural' societies and 'super diverse' cities from a religious, ethnic, cultural, and racial perspective have emerged, and in spite of decades of integration policies in some countries, some segments of society are still finding difficulties in adjusting to the new societal realities. Integration policies have been underpinned by very different conceptions of national identity or of how to manage and accommodate difference in the public space in both older host countries such as the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Germany, or in newer migration-receiving states such as Ireland, Spain, Italy, and Greece. Despite the recognised benefits of immigration, either with regard to Europe's demographic decline or actual economic needs, there has been increasing resistance towards further immigration that has provided a growing electoral base to populist and far-right parties and gradually influenced the discourse of mainstream political parties in more restrictive directions. The political context has also been affected by the coming to age of the second and third generations, that is, individuals of migrant origin born or raised in the European countries of destination who may or may not have naturalised (depending on citizenship policies) and who have been increasingly staking their claims in the public space seeking rights, recognition, and acceptance. They have been defending their participation in the receiving society and the need to pluralise conceptions of national identity, revisit the nation's historical narratives to accord greater attention to the country's migration history, and open public institutions to different religious practices.

Changes in the post-World War II global economy, combined with the gradual decline of Europe's industrial sector and the growing importance of its services sector, have equally provoked far-reaching transformations on the European political scene. In post-war Europe, the welfare state developed as a fundamental pillar of each country's political identity. In the East it was essentially at the heart of the Soviet Union's ideological project; in the West, Keynesian economics enabled the rebuilding of Europe's economic prosperity, which permitted upward socio-economic mobility, societal democratisation, and an improvement in living and working conditions for the post-war generations. The stagflation-stagnation of the 1970s challenged both East and West, and the state became increasingly inefficient. Efforts to reduce welfare

costs were met unavoidably with very strong resistance from trade unions and employee associations. The state's retreat from the economy was most success-fully championed by Margaret Thatcher, who also managed to change the nature of interest intermediation in economic and social policy, although even in the UK this took a long time and was rather restricted. Thatcherism had lim-ited resonance in the rest of Europe and the reform of the welfare state in west-ern, northern, and southern Europe was resisted until the end of the twentieth century. In central and eastern Europe, the welfare state simply collapsed with the demise of the Soviet bloc.

The pressures of competition from globalisation and persistently high levels of (particularly youth) unemployment led to an approach defined as 'flexicurity' on the eve of the new millennium. Devised in Denmark initially and spreading first to the Scandinavian countries before serving as a model for the rest of Europe, 'flexicurity' aimed at increasing labour market flexibility while maintaining a strong welfare system that would assist people to return to work with new quali-fications. The global and financial crisis that unravelled after 2008 challenged the welfare state even further across Europe, making it increasingly evident that the welfare state as we knew it was no longer a viable possibility. The socio-political and even cultural repercussions of the shift from a 'welfare' to a 'workfare' state have been far-reaching – and not only in countries most hard-hit by the cri-sis. The socio-economic groups that have been feeling most threatened by the pressures of globalisation and immigration have been voicing their insecurity through protest voting and have shifted to the extremes of the political spectrum and towards populist and even anti-systemic parties. This electoral trend towards populist and particularly far-right parties in recent years has been challenging the political balances of power that had been worked out between centre-right and centre-left parties in the post–Cold War era of European politics. One of the core issues being challenged at present involves the political nature of the EU and the accepted role that it should play in national affairs.

European integration and the establishment of an Economic and Monetary Union and a common currency have been a further driver of transforma-tion of Europe's politics. The Single European Market programme essen-tially pushed an agenda of liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation in all member states, while the introduction of the euro in 2002 reduced the pow-ers of national governments and magnified the interdependence between the European economies and consequently between Europe's political systems. The *sui generis* political system of multi-level governance that developed through the process of European integration and the fact that member states' national governments have voluntarily assigned sovereignty to supranational institutions has affected Europe's political systems and its political cleavages. European integration has been elite-driven for decades, benefitting from the continent's economic growth and a widespread permissive consensus (Hooghe and Marks 2009). The nature of its politics and its institutional complexity are at the same time its strength and its weakness. The formal and

informal structures, decision-making processes, and coordination mechanisms have led to vertical and horizontal Europeanisation of national politics.

In effect, the process of European integration has contributed to the convergence of public administrative practices. Across Europe's national political systems, in the post–Cold War era there has been a notable convergence towards more accountable, transparent, and participatory democratic governance, towards an increasingly consolidated institutional and regulatory framework that defends principles of equal opportunity, non–discrimination, and fundamental human rights and freedoms, and towards regional integration. There has also been the widespread phenomenon of the 'disappearing voter' (Patterson 2002) due to plummeting electoral participation rates that often lead to unpredictable electoral results (mainly benefitting fringe, extremist, and populist parties). High rates of abstention along with a growing propensity to fluctuate between parties has been characteristic of current European politics, suggesting not so much the 'end of ideology' but rather what Gianfranco Pasquino (2002) described as the end of ideological commitment. This has coincided with the 'Americanisation' of European parties and party systems, which means that elections are polarised around two main parties or party coalitions where clusters of specific issues are emphasised rather than ideology (Magone 2005). Europe's party systems have been changing; they are more volatile and are witnessing a gradual erosion of their electoral base and increasingly characterised by a growing de-ideologisation and pragmatism as politics have become more mediatised.

This increasing pragmatism is indeed a sign of the times as the rising complexities in global politics have pushed for improved technical capacity and skills to meet common challenges through shared means, policies, and instruments. The process of European integration has thus transformed European politics in the direction of a system of multi-level governance, linking even closer together the national politics of the 28 – and since the UK's departure from the EU on 1 February 2020, now 27 member states – and linking national politics with supranational European and global politics. William Wallace thus defined the Euro-polity as 'governance without statehood' and European governance as the 'post-sovereign state' characterised by extremely high levels of interdependence and elaborate regimes of cooperation spilling across boundaries and penetrating what were previously domestic aspects of national politics and administration (Wallace and Wallace 1996). European integration has thus challenged what used to be a core principle that defined interstate behaviour: non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. The European political system no longer allows this non-interference, and its multi-level governance system has presented itself as a model for world politics.

Yet back in 2005, Stefano Bartolini had raised caution in that European integration was undermining national boundaries without replacing them with a meaningful European boundary. On the positive side, this meant that individuals who had the resources to be mobile were no longer constrained by national borders and could therefore take advantage of the processes of EU integration

and globalisation and thrive. Those who did not were trapped in weakened national states that were increasingly unable to provide the necessary economic security.

The consequences of this dichotomy were experienced harshly a decade later with the eurozone crisis having nurtured an unprecedented rise of openly Eurosceptical parties – populist, anti-establishment, far-right or far-left – explicitly calling for a rollback of EU integration. As mentioned above, Hanspeter Kriesi and colleagues (2008, 2012) detected this powerful dimension of conflict resulting from EU integration and globalisation that has given rise to three kinds of competition which, in turn, have generated new sets of winners and losers: competition between sheltered and unsheltered economic sectors; cultural competition between natives and immigrants; and competition between defenders of national institutions and proponents of supranational governance. Political actors that proposed to demarcate their society against external competition and to push back the powers of supranational and international institutions to reclaim national sovereignty thereby attracted the 'losers' of globalisation and EU integration. Given that the traditional left–right cleavage and the respective mainstream political parties were not able to respond to this discontent in a meaningful manner, partisan realignment and a rise in radical right populism was the result within a wider context of pessimism about the resilience of European democracy (Streek 2014, 2011).

Democratic dissatisfaction has contributed to the rise of radical challenger parties, especially on the radical left in southern Europe, but also on the radical right across western Europe. These parties have expressed widespread dissatisfaction with democracy and contributed to it by their populist discourse (Kriesi 2020). This dissatisfaction has become tightly interlinked with opposition to further European integration across the European political landscape.

Euroscepticism, which essentially refers to opposition to the powers of the EU, has been an increasingly prominent force since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Political parties in the EU member states have positioned themselves in favour or in opposition to the EU project and of their country's participation, suggesting the emergence of an increasingly potent socio-political cleavage with particularly strong relevance for the UK, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, France, and the Czech Republic (Marks and Wilson 2000; Kriesi 1998; Hix 1995). The eurozone crisis 'embedded' Euroscepticism within European nation-states (Usherwood and Startin 2013), mainstreamed it, and rendered it more salient and less contested across Europe as a whole (Serricchio et al. 2013; Vassilopoulou 2013). This is discernible in the evolution of European public opinion that has become more hostile towards the EU; support for parties opposed to further European integration; an increase in Eurosceptic rhetoric among traditionally pro-EU mainstream parties; a rise in the number of Eurosceptic civil society groups; changing (and more challenging) media discourses; and more transnational cooperation among Eurosceptics within EU institutions, notably the European Parliament (Brack and Startin 2015).

Alongside the electoral growth of populist parties on the left and right, anti-establishment parties have also emerged that, overall, are extremely critical if not outrightly opposed to 'Europe' and to deepening integration. Populist parties have been rapidly spreading across Europe since the 1990s, constituting 'an important undercurrent in many European polities, if not a predominance in some' (van Biezen and Wallace 2013, p. 294). Given that populism distinguishes between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite' and pits them against one another, it is often perceived as a threat to the very principles of liberal democracies. The opportunity structures across Europe became conducive to a consolidation of populism, or what Cas Mudde (2004) has even referred to as a populist *Zeitgeist*.

In western Europe, populism finds its roots in post-industrialisation, globalisation, the changing nature of the nation-state, the transformation of political parties and party systems, and the consequences of the economic crisis (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Akkerman et al. 2016; Rooduijn 2016; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018; Hawkins et al. 2019; Kriesi 2014; Moffitt 2016; Mudde 2007; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Pappas 2019; Rooduijn 2019; Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017; van Kessel 2015; Zullianello 2020). In central and eastern Europe, populism has been nurtured by the frustrations emanating from the combined effects of the transition to and consolidation of liberal democracy, the implementation of a market economy, and apprehensions concerning European integration (Zaslove 2008). The 2008 financial and economic crisis and austerity policies further fuelled right- and left-wing populism, and growing hostility towards the EU's policy of freedom of movement (immigration overall and intra-EU mobility in particular), along with debates about the merits of European integration (Hobolt and Tilley 2016; Brack and Startin 2015).

Opposition to expanding EU competences and powers has paired well with segments of populations' growing discontent with traditional parties and elites (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2007, 2015; Mair 2011) and with growing mistrust towards democratic institutions that has opened the field wide to populist forces across all member states (Brack and Startin 2015). This opposition has been the strongest so far in the UK, which historically has had a contested relationship with the EU and has always been reticent to further integration. In recent years, a populist 'hard' version of Euroscepticism became mainstreamed in British politics (ibid.). This was epitomised by the UK Independence Party (UKIP) becoming the leading UK party at the 2014 European elections, and then effectively framing the debate that led to the referendum decision to leave the EU in 2016, challenging for the first time ever the irreversibility of a widened Europeanisation process as a gradual path towards a shared supranational dimension (Baldassari et al. 2019).

In central Europe, opposition to EU competences has grown equally strong and is notably represented by the *rassemblement* of the Visegrad Group, a cultural and political alliance on military, economic, cultural, and energy matters between the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Once considered

frontrunners of democratisation and Europeanisation, the Visegrad Group has gained a reputation as the European Union's protest group due to its increasing reluctance towards immigration or even asylum (particularly in the context of the 2015–2016 migration and refugee crisis and opposition to the European Commission's relocation quota proposal), rule of law, and fundamental freedoms (Baldassari et al. 2019; Végh 2018).

This contestation towards the EU has come hand in hand with an opposition to liberal politics. Krastev and Holmes have argued that central and eastern Europe's illiberal turn is a 'resentment-fuelled' reaction to the 'presumptively canonical status of Western European models after 1989' (2019, p. 13). In other words, the 'imitation obligation' imposed by the EU and the West overall to these countries that had just regained their independence after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union triggered contestation towards the EU and its liberalism as part of an effort to recast themselves on an equal footing. For Korolczuk and Graff (2020), resistance to neoliberalism (as an economic doctrine, governance regime, and cultural paradigm) has also been expressed through gender conservatism and anti-gender mobilisation. The dismantling of the socialist welfare state with its universal healthcare system, job security, and state support for families that came with the end of the Cold War and the transition to the EU was experienced by many in these countries as a destruction of community and tradition. From this perspective, resistance to feminism and neoliberalism reflect not so much ideological choices but rather resistance to rapid socio-economic change, a rejection of the European East–West hierarchy, and resentment towards the promises of agency and empowerment that European liberals and social democrats had held out yet fell short of delivering (Zacharenko 2019).

These oppositions to the EU have led politicians, scholars, and analysts to declare the 'disintegration' or 'decline' of the EU and the Europeanisation process (Zielonka 2018; Krastev 2017). And perhaps indeed, the structural transformations in the international system contesting the multilateral system that have shaped international politics and the global economy since the end of World War II may be heralding another phase for the EU project. At the same time, the EU has always been a conflicting plurality, an arena of different approaches, theories, and doctrines as well as pragmatic solutions, bargaining, mediation, and institutional compromises (Tsoukalis 2003). Given that diversity, plurality, and conflict are core building blocks of the European construction, so too anti-Europeanism, Euroscepticism, and Eurocriticism have accompanied the evolution of the EU construction and have been part of it (Baldassari et al. 2019). Similarly, the different forms of Euroscepticism are today a structural part of the European integration process itself; they are inescapably intertwined with the politicisation and re-articulation of fault lines and cleavages that have shaped Europe's history so far and contribute to shaping relations among the European nation-states, as well as their domestic and international choices.

Concluding remarks

Political cleavages, ideologies, and political processes have shaped Europe's current political landscape – a landscape marked by both continuity and change. In the post–materialist, post–communist, and until recently often-proclaimed post-national era, to what extent are pasts and presents reliable guides for the future of Europe's politics? Answering this question is particularly challenging due to the confluence of several trends and developments outlined in this book, including in the chapter on Global Europe.

European countries have faced numerous crises throughout their history, crises that have shaped, framed, and reframed their political landscape. Similarly, the EU is often considered as being shaped by crises that push European integration into novel areas and lead to policy and institutional changes that change Europe's political context. At the time of writing, in spring 2022, developments are suggesting that European politics are facing another historic juncture. On the international scene, geopolitics are being redefined through US–China technological competition and the impact of the digital revolution and emerging technologies on international security. The rise of China's economic model of authoritarian capitalism is challenging the power of Western liberal capitalism – and ultimately threatening the technological supremacy that has long underpinned Western hegemony and Pax Americana.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has spawned a new phase of heightened tensions and severe uncertainty that Europe has not witnessed since the end of the Cold War, with multiple direct and indirect consequences for Europe's security, economy, and its political landscape. These come to compound concerns about Europe's recovery from the damage wrought by the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, the cost of living crisis, and even more so the risks ahead due to heightened awareness of the impact of the climate crisis. The policies and choices that European governments and electorates make to address these parallel and mutually reinforcing challenges will define the future political cleavages and characteristics of Europe.

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8

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF EUROPE

Europe has long been known and distinguished from other parts of the world for its social dimension, notably for its redistributive mechanisms and welfare policies that aim at caring for the most vulnerable populations in society while also investing in human and social capital. In practical terms, this involves redistributing resources in various ways from those members who are better-off to those faced with material or other deprivation or are subject to higher social risks. It involves delivering poverty relief, providing some form of minimal income and shelter, redistributing income, and reducing social exclusion. In the labour market, it involves framing fair and safe working conditions and remuneration for one's work, protecting against unfair dismissal, and ensuring rights for workers. It also involves enabling citizens to insure themselves against social hardship, disability, or illness, and spread their income more securely over their lifetime, notably for their retirement years. And just as importantly, it involves investing in the nation's human and social capital by providing kindergarten care, state education from primary level through university, training for the unemployed, and various types of work-related tax benefits.

These functions are based on a shared notion of social solidarity and help governments reconcile the often-competing dynamics of capitalism, equity, and democracy. Though the breadth and depth of this social solidarity may differ among European countries, there is a view that European countries have placed great emphasis on their systems of social protection in the post-World War II era, thus creating a distinct European model (or indeed a set of European models) that share some common characteristics and that are different from other parts of the Western world such as North America or Australia. The emphasis on both synchronic (within the same generation) and diachronic (intergenerational) solidarity is a distinctive feature of European societies and European nation-states as well as of the European Union.

What matters for Europe's social dimension?

It is useful to unpack what we understand when referring to the European social model. First, the similarity between the national models of social protection that exist in Europe and the related national understandings of values such as community, solidarity, and social justice must be examined in relative rather than absolute terms. There is no single European social model; rather, there are regional clusters or families of European social models. They are more similar to one another than with the social protection models that exist in other countries outside Europe.

This assumption of relative similarity with one another, however, tends to be western Europe-oriented and leaves out the distinctive experiences and policy models of central and eastern Europe and the Baltics. These countries underwent a radical transition in the last three decades from a system of centralised and imposed social solidarity and welfare to a free market capitalism with a rather limited social protection net for its citizens. Yet while these countries share a common state-socialist legacy, the welfare systems they have developed are diverse, mixed, and impossible to categorise as 'conservative-corporatist', 'liberal', or 'social democratic' as in the case of their western European counterparts.

There is a generic assumption about the overall benign and supportive role of social solidarity and the social protection system in Europe, but it tends to overlook the system's exclusionary aspects (as well as the cultural values that underpin it). Thus, solidarity as a value and practice and the welfare system as a safety net may be challenged when migrants and minorities come into the picture. Effective access to this safety net interacts with considerations of who belongs and who does not; in other words, solidarity is neither ethnicity- nor religion- nor gender-blind. This has implications for the effectiveness of social policies in different parts of Europe in terms of offering equal opportunities or breaking generational cycles of inequalities. It has implications for how social cohesion and fairness are understood and how these impact Europe's political landscape.

Nowadays, 'the European social model' mainly refers to the social model developed in the framework of the European Union. The term was launched by Jacques Delors in the mid-1980s with a view to emphasising the welfare dimension of European capitalism and designating it as an alternative to the North American form of pure market capitalism (Jepsen and Serrano Pascual 2006, p. 25). It essentially reflects a division of labour between the European 'project' that aims to provide economic integration and foster growth, and the member states that provide social welfare and ensure that the benefits of higher growth are equitably distributed among different social groups.

References to the 'social dimension' are often generic and rarely clarify what it includes. The social dimension is about conceptions of equality and inequality, solidarity, and community, or indeed responsibility and autonomy; it is about the rights and obligations of citizens towards the state and of the state towards its citizens. The social dimension is fundamentally about what we consider a 'good' society and lies at the heart of the functioning of democracy and citizenship. Social protection enables all citizens to function as such and provides for the

institutional links between the individual and their family, on the one hand, and the state and society, on the other.

Thus, the sections that follow concentrate on the political framework and cultural connotations of concepts such as community, solidarity, and social cohesion. We argue that the current concept of social solidarity is strongly based on the concept of national citizenship that purports a high level of community cohesion and solidarity among fellow nationals. At the theoretical level, this is translated into T.H. Marshall's elaboration of three types of citizenship rights (political, social, and economic) in 1949. At the policy level, it has led to the development of the welfare state that invests in and provides for citizens throughout their life-course and for when they face hardship, illness, or vulnerability of any sort.

Europe's welfare systems developed during a period when the region's demographic profile could support extensive social spending and when solid economic growth made it affordable. The situation in Europe has since profoundly changed. For one, we have witnessed the withering away of the Fordist system of production and its replacement by a post-Fordist world that is much more volatile: geographic and socio-economic mobility have intensified. People move in multiple spatial and professional directions. Workers move among different countries and change jobs and labour market sectors more often than before. Upwards or downwards socio-economic mobility is also faster and more volatile. There are few guarantees for a skilled worker in a large company, or in a small firm or shop, that at the end of their working life they will have climbed a few steps up the professional and socio-economic ladders. On the contrary, we may witness both faster upwards socio-economic mobility (particularly among the university-educated) as well as a rapid fall, as professions and sectors experience important market fluctuations and are being profoundly reshaped by digitisation and automation.

Second, national societies, particularly in Europe, are more diverse. Such diversity has largely been the result of growing migration to Europe from around the world and from an increased pace of intra-EU mobility. This growing diversity has challenged the national cultural foundations of social solidarity and the established welfare systems.

Third, demographic parameters have changed. After the baby boom generation of the 1970s, Europe has been experiencing consistent demographic decline. While the severity of this decline varies among countries, the reality is that Europe's population is ageing, with ramifications for the labour market and the financial sustainability of each country's welfare state. In all European countries, the old-age dependency ratio, in other words the ratio of elderly dependents to the working population, has been growing. Just over two decades years ago, in 2001, the EU's old-age dependency ratio was 25.9 per cent, meaning there were slightly fewer than four adults of working age (20–64 years old) for every person aged 65 years or over. By 2020, the ratio had increased to 34.8 per cent, meaning there were slightly fewer than three adults of working age for every person aged

over 65 years (Eurostat 2021). In some rural, mountainous, or relatively remote regions of Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, and Finland, the ratios are higher as younger people have left to continue their studies or look for jobs in cities elsewhere. For central and eastern European countries and for the Baltic states, demographic decline has been steeper, influenced by both a sudden drop in birth rates after the transition to democracy and free market capitalism as well as by significant emigration, especially of the younger generations.

Fourth, economic globalisation brought changing work patterns and competition from emerging economies with lower labour and social welfare costs that increased the pressures at national levels. These pressures have been amplified by technological innovations brought about with the digital revolution that led to changes in the nature of work and new realities in where and how work is performed, remunerated, and taxed. They have raised concerns about the extent of the state's responsibility to its citizens and the sustainability of public finances.

Just as importantly, change has also been triggered by the implosion of the communist regimes in 1989 that led to the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant, if not hegemonic, paradigm for socio–economic relations. This temporary disruption of the ideological struggle between different conceptions of social solidarity and justice transformed social justice struggles to technocratic debates about whether one system of welfare payments or entitlements was more effective than another. For the European countries belonging to the EU, this meant increasingly explicit EU-level requirements for national budget discipline. This has had important implications for the normative and political foundations of European welfare systems and the values and self-conceptions of European societies. Following the acute financial crisis that Europe experienced in the late 2000s and early 2010s, and the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, neoliberal hegemony was challenged, and the importance of social protection and social solidarity is being considered anew. This reconsideration is all the more pressing as climate change is generating new social risks that European welfare states are ill-equipped to manage. An obvious example is fuel poverty resulting from rising energy prices.

After discussing the above issues and mapping how social protection has evolved in Europe in the post-war period but also particularly during the last three decades, the chapter presents the main features of the different European social models, outlining their normative and institutional foundations. Naturally, we take into account both the institutional apparatuses of social protection in each country as well as the related cultural assumptions and political culture buttressing them. Thus, the second part of the chapter discusses the distinction between the more family-oriented social models of southern and continental European countries, the more rational, Protestant-ethic-based models of northern and Nordic countries, the Anglo-Saxon system, and the emerging central eastern European social model.

But first, it is useful to look into the assumptions and norms framing the social dimension that we consider to be distinctively European.

The historical, cultural, and socio-economic foundations of social protection

Social protection encompasses a variety of terms used in different languages to refer to different types, modes, and degrees of welfare policies, whether services in kind or cash payments, aimed at providing a safety and support net for citizens and their families.

The term 'social protection' is certainly imperfect but is probably the most frequently used in different European languages (*protezione sociale, protecciòn social, κοινωνική προστασία*) and also the least nationally loaded. Indeed, the terms 'welfare system' and 'welfare state' have strong English connotations as the word 'welfare' is difficult to translate and is even used in some countries (e.g., Italy) in English (e.g., *politiche di 'welfare'*). Expressions like *état providence* in French have an implicit religious connotation because of the use of the term 'providence', as in divine providence. The term *Sozialraat* (in German) or *état social* (in French) is considered by some to be an exaggeration as it overestimates the role of the state (Barbier 2013, p. 11). In the 1980s, the OECD had translated the term 'welfare state' as *état protecteur* in French although this translation overloaded the protective character of the state and perhaps downplayed the accent that welfare puts on the collective well-being. The term 'social security' or *securité sociale* is more limited as it mainly refers to the institutions, the social security apparatus, rather than a wider notion of social protection. Security is a narrower concept that brings to mind the notion of insurance rather than a broader concern of enabling people to live well and act as citizens. As for 'social solidarity' and 'social justice', these are normatively loaded terms that shape political expectations of what Europe ought to represent and aim for.

While the question of community solidarity is probably as old as humankind, it is the advent of the nation-state that proposes it with a new emphasis. The nationalist doctrine asserts that each individual belongs to a nation, that all members of the nation are equal, and that each nation has a right to self-government. These views implicitly create the basis of a notion of social solidarity that extends beyond the immediate local community, the community of fellow villagers, or of the family clan as it existed in pre-modern times. Indeed, the possibility of a system based on social solidarity is born together with the notion of the nation as an 'imagined community'. As Benedict Anderson (1981) argued, nations are imagined communities and all members of a nation imagine their fellow nationals, but they will never get to meet them all. Still, this does not prevent them from feeling a sense of common belonging and solidarity with one another. According to Anderson, this kind of national imagination was made possible by the advent of print capitalism, which transformed people's understanding of time and space, allowing for news to be distributed in short time across different parts of large territories, thus providing for the necessary unification of the social, economic, and political space that we find in the national state.[1]

In addition, the advent of nationalism and of national states created the normative and cultural basis for social solidarity to emerge among large communities. Fellow members of the nation share a common culture and language and can thus communicate more easily among themselves and with the state institutions than what happened before in large empires or in feudal states that were politically and culturally fragmented. They are equal, they have a shared stake, and they have to care for one another – or at least so the nationalist doctrine says. Their feeling of belonging to the nation, their mutual solidarity bonds, and their rights and obligations as citizens of the nation-state are all tightly integrated into the modern concept of the nation–state and national citizenship. This cultural assumption of solidarity among fellow nationals that is inherent in the very conception of the national state may be challenged by class differences and contrasted interests of different socio-economic strata. Nonetheless, it forms the basis of the solidarity bond that links the citizens to the state.

Beyond the cultural framework provided by the nation and the nation-state for social solidarity as a norm and as a set of institutions and policies, it is important to understand the socio-economic processes that brought about the notion of social protection and the welfare state. Following Polanyi (1957), we argue that the notion of social solidarity within a nation-state and the concept or institution of social protection are closely linked to the process of industrialisation and the contradictions that this entailed. It was the advent of capitalism and economic liberalism in northern and western Europe that, perhaps paradoxically, brought with it the seeds of the social protection system. The development of a self-regulating market in capitalism found its counterpart in the development of a social protection regime (of different types in the different European countries) that would tame the forces of the market and provide security to workers and their families. It would thus solve the fundamental contradiction between the inequalities produced by a market economy and the fundamental equality among citizens on which democracy is postulated and on which it finds its legitimacy.

To understand the role of the welfare system in contemporary European societies, we need to consider not simply its levels or sectors of social expenditure but most importantly how state activities are intertwined with the role of the family and the market in providing for social protection to the citizens. Industrialisation and capitalism stripped society of the intermediate layers of community, kinship, family, servant-and-patron relation, or the parish/church that in pre-capitalist societies would provide for social protection to those in need. The welfare state acquired a fundamental role in contemporary societies as farmers and other workers were drawn into the wage-earner status and societies became fundamentally wage–earner societies. In this new socio-economic order, work and the worker are commodified, and the welfare state must come in to seek to de-commodify work by providing social rights. National social protection systems in Europe have different ways of providing for social protection, different levels and logics that we discuss in some more detail further below. It is, however, important

to note that the welfare state is today a structural feature of society; it organises the relations between the individual, the market, and the state in germane ways.

Social solidarity has become codified into a national system of social protection with the advent of the wage-earner society in the twentieth century and particularly after World War II and the traumatic experiences of the Great Recession of the 1930s. It is not by coincidence that T.H. Marshall (1950) developed his theory on citizenship rights and social welfare in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Marshall saw citizenship as developing cumulatively through social struggle over rights. Civil rights were the first to be contested in the seventeenth century by movements that demanded what we could call today the most basic rights such as individual freedom, freedom of speech, right to own property, liberty of the person, and so on. Political rights, associated with representative democracy, were achieved in the eighteenth century as a result of the French Revolution, and were further developed in the United States and the rest of Europe. They included universal male suffrage, but also the right to organise in political parties, the right to assemble, to petition, to hold public office. These rights were extended in the twentieth century (earlier or later) to include women as citizens, and to also include ethnic and religious minorities.

The above two sets of rights, the civil and the political, helped individuals to organise democratically and demand socio-economic rights. These last developed from the mid-twentieth century onwards, and concern the guarantee of minimum standards of housing, employment, and healthcare, as well as insurance against unemployment or illness, and free collective bargaining over wages and working conditions. In Marshall's conception, the state is the citizen's birthplace, executive manager, and guardian (1950). Citizenship and its three sets of rights thus formed the public realm, and the state was the enclosed territory where private interests and public issues met (Bauman 2005, p. 13). The system counter-balanced the opposed interests of the state, the corporation, and the citizen.

The transition to the post-industrial phase in Europe

National systems of social protection in Europe were largely constructed in the post-war period. Their socio-economic and political foundations lie in industrialisation and the class struggles that marked the first decades of the twentieth century, in the pre-war depression, the protectionist policies that ensued, and the war itself which left European economies relatively autarkic, compared with the period before World War I. Keynesian policies and Fordist production methods encouraged the development of national planning and investment with concomitant systems of social protection gradually emerging in the most industrialised countries of the European continent.

In the wage-earner society, i.e., in a society where most citizens work to make a living, social protection is a genuine social relation that brings together the family and the state. Looking at statistical data on public expenditure for

functions that are related to social protection we realise that if we also include education and culture, then social expenditure in European countries exceeds two-thirds of all recurrent public spending. It is not only the level of expenditure that counts, it is also the direction and type of services and allowances that it provides that contribute to the legitimacy of social protection and social assistance schemes. In other words, social protection has been one of the main functions of the modern democratic state in Europe.

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of high growth, increasing demand for workers, and substantial recruitment of foreign workers. Migration flows followed post-colonial as well as intra-European pathways: the UK recruited from Ireland and the New Commonwealth countries; France from Spain, Portugal, and North Africa; Germany from Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Turkey, and so on. Both native and migrant workers contributed to national welfare systems, which were managed through the 'holy trinity' of state, employers, and trade unions/workers. This period has been referred to as the 'golden age' of the European welfare state development that aimed at reconciling democracy and capitalism, allowing high growth and investment, while at the same time significantly reducing social risks. Full employment was an underlying objective, and welfare systems contributed to the legitimisation of the national state in the post-war era (Milward et al. 1993).

The situation changed after the oil price shocks of the early 1970s. The conjunction of rising inflation and slowing growth – what came to be known as 'stagflation' – called into question the prevailing economic orthodoxy, leading to what is sometimes referred to as neoliberalism. This was characterised by renewed reliance on market mechanisms, a belief in the need for smaller government, sound balancing of fiscal budgets, and the pursuit of low inflation, as well as a consistent questioning of public spending on social policies (Begg et al. 2015). Growing unemployment came with policies aimed at structural changes in labour markets and welfare state provisions began experiencing both decline and reorganisation. Perhaps the most obvious case is that of Margaret Thatcher's Britain even if the British welfare state had been under reform already during the preceding Labour governments. Changes took effect also in France, Germany, and other continental European countries. During this same period, migration within western Europe declined both because the northern countries put a stop to their recruitment policies but also because the southern European countries, like Greece, Portugal, or Spain, joined the EC and enjoyed a certain level of industrial development accompanied by a wide expansion of the service sector. These developments helped keep southern European citizens at home.

The 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century have been characterised by deeper integration of the world economy, further affecting the employment and social protection landscapes still organised mainly at the national level. Policies and agreements that took the form of international multilateral treaties such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) aimed to promote international trade and remove cross-country trade barriers. Organisations

like the World Trade Organisation (WTO) were set up to lay out the rules of international trade between member nations. As a result, global trade increased exponentially, thus globalising goods, services, and foreign investment. The share of emerging economies in manufactured product markets long dominated by advanced country suppliers also increased, exposing Europe's welfare states to hard choices (Sapir 2005). Embracing global market forces entailed the risk of exposing citizens to poverty and insecurity, reducing protection for those outside the labour market for the sake of 'flexible' adaptability. Resisting such forces, however, did not appear a feasible solution either. The transfer of production sites to developing countries where salaries and welfare costs were low and labour protection policy lax made goods produced in European countries often too expensive and hence less competitive in an integrated global trade environment. Thus, it was thought that to resist the flexibilisation trend would create unemployment and at the same time undermine the very foundations of national welfare systems. The collapse of socialism in eastern Europe served as a warning to the latter approach.

Globalisation reduced European governments' ability to sustain or reform welfare institutions. Both the more 'flexible', pro-globalisation regimes of the UK and Ireland and the more social protectionist regimes of France, Germany, the Netherlands, or Denmark came under pressure, while the welfare regimes of southern Europe were quite unprepared for the rapid pace of change, global competition, and technological innovation that changed business models, employment conditions, and production and consumption patterns.

The very preconditions of national social protection systems have been fundamentally altered in the last three decades. The industrial society that defined much of Europe's post-war economic model transformed into an 'information society' or even a 'network society' involving a radical transformation of the labour market and working conditions with the widespread diffusion of information technology, digital platforms, and the untethering of work and location (Lyon 1986; Castells 2000, 2009, 2011; Acemoglu and Restrepo 2016; Frey and Osborne 2017). In the old order, capital investments in factories lasted over decades and were as easy to control as the labour employed there. In the new order, capital became much more transient and much less tied to physical investments and the exchange value of goods. The labour force became much less substitutable and much more specialised, less homogeneous, and less hierarchically organised, with growing segmentation in labour markets. Trade unions lost their control over the supply of labour and governments lost much of their control of capital. Both the ideological and the technical means for sustaining desired economic behaviour changed in line with these shifts. First, and stemming from the United States, came an emphasis on citizens as self-responsible actors in the marketplace and hence as active, choosing agents in issues of both employment and welfare. Starting in the late 1970s and especially since the late 1990s, social investment became the new policy paradigm that took hold in Europe and developed into the foundation of a new social policy. European governments attempted to adapt

to the new global economic environment, including new patterns of working lives, new household and family structures, and new demographic balances (Hemerijck 2001, p. 159). This marked a progressive shift away from a 'reactive' welfare state focused on redistribution and passive transfers towards a 'proactive' one centred on elevating all groups' ability to achieve their potential – especially by helping them access and maintain high-quality jobs (Hemerijck and Patuzzi 2021). Changes in tax and benefits regimes aimed to improve incentives for low-paid employment, to promote part-time and temporary employment, and to reconcile work with family life. All this involved the transformation of ideas of social rights (Cox 1999), an emphasis on the responsibility to avoid burdening the taxpayer, and a new approach to implementation of enforcement (Jordan 1998) – all for the sake of 'flexibility'.

These new regimes were developed in northern Europe – in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Ireland as well as the UK. Although ideas like 'activation' have different meanings in southern European member states with respect to northern ones, there were common patterns between them. In either case, *mobility* played a key role in the search for better incentives and a more flexible workforce. The problem was partly one of getting workers who were socialised into expectations of security, fixed hours, and stable working conditions from the Fordist era to accept more fragmented and changeable patterns of work, less reliable (and often lower) earnings, and the need to retrain and move between different professions or labour market sectors.

In northern countries, welfare benefits in certain cases discouraged unemployed workers from seeking jobs that offered lower levels of security and even income. In southern countries, where benefits were too low or non-existent, the family provided the safety net for unemployed workers, and youth in particular, which discouraged them from being mobile or accepting flexible forms of labour. In the 1990s, governments across Europe were forced to recognise the limits to flexibility; new regimes, policies, and practices could not shift stubborn concentrations of unemployment, poverty, and deprivation either by bringing employment to the *banlieues* or to former industrial districts now in decline or by moving people out to occupy vacancies elsewhere. International immigration came to play a key role in offering plentiful, flexible, and cheap labour to meet temporary or seasonal demand and fill the shortages in specific labour market sectors, at both the lower and higher ends.

Mobility is, of course, intrinsic to globalisation. Transnational, multinational firms, and accelerated border crossings for the sake of business, governance, tourism, and study became the very stuff of the new integrated world economy. National systems of social protection rooted in a bounded membership appeared to be obsolete, impossible to sustain at the same level, and perhaps also less useful as they seemed unfit for the new world of work.

Globalisation and digitisation challenged the social contract. For European countries, welfare reform involved addressing new forms of labour, new types of employment relations, but also a much more individualised labour force. The

proliferation of a model of 'a nearly full part-time employment' (Hemerijck 2001, p. 158) came with a growing emphasis on the individual's autonomy and responsibility as a worker and as a citizen and a decreasing attention to social solidarity as a norm or as an institution. While the concept of social class in its Marxist version may have lost some of its meaning as it is no longer the relationship with the means of production that counts most, the notion of social inequality and social stratification acquires new emphasis as the distance between the winners and the losers of globalisation and Europeanisation has widened due to multiple layers of inequality, including socio-economic status, educational attainment, gender, ethnicity, race, and religion.

Diversity and welfare state legitimacy

Part of the flexibilisation shock to European labour markets was absorbed by increased international immigration. The European migration landscape was radically altered after the end of the Cold War, the implosion of the communist regimes, and the opening of borders with central eastern Europe. Indeed, east to west migratory flows defined the 1990s and 2000s. Southern European countries were converted to immigration hosts almost overnight (and it took them nearly two decades to acknowledge it), while northern and western European countries received new large flows of both skilled and unskilled workers from central and eastern Europe that came to fill shortages in the 3-D jobs (dirty, dangerous, and demanding), particularly in the 4-C sectors (care, cleaning, catering, and construction).

At the same time, political instability and ethnic or religious strife in Africa, central Asia, or former Yugoslavia contributed to increasing as well as diversifying the new migration flows. These flows were facilitated by improved access to intercontinental transport including low-cost air travel and the development of communication services. The new flows presented themselves to the authorities in the form of steeply rising applications for asylum and in undocumented immigrant workers occupying niches in European labour markets at a time when unemployment stood at a post-war high. In the 1990s, EU member states overhauled their asylum regimes, adopting more deterrent and restrictive – and less welfare-oriented – systems, as well as tightening external border controls at the periphery of Fortress Europe (King et al. 2000). These measures did not address the economic side-effects of economic globalisation and the international division of labour for Europe's economies that came with the rise of China.

These new flows have contributed to making virtually all European societies culturally diverse, even if to different degrees. Migrants account for more than five per cent of the population in countries like Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, but also Greece, Spain, Italy, and Cyprus, while their labour force participation is even higher as most migrants are in the working-age bracket.

This new workers' cohort contributed to European welfare systems but also challenged it deeply. Cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that came with immigration and the undocumented status of many immigrant workers or their work in the informal labour market or both, made their integration into the national welfare systems challenging. Their legitimacy as beneficiaries of national protection schemes was questioned as it was often assumed that migrants were meant to be 'here' only temporarily, that irregular migrants had not been 'invited' by the host society and were often considered to be culturally alien, holding values that are incompatible with the dominant culture and work ethic. In turn, immigration, particularly the speed of intra-EU immigration, seems to have had a negative impact on welfare state legitimacy for three interrelated reasons (Cappelen and Peeters 2018). First, if people indeed are sceptical towards the inclusion of those whom they do not consider to be part of the 'in-group', then they are also less inclined to include the out-group in their various social benefit schemes (Gibson 2002; Sniderman et al. 2004). Second, heterogeneity reduces trust, which again can lead to lower levels of solidarity, consequently weakening support for social policies (Burgoon 2014; Freeman 2009). Third, xenophobia directly reduces welfare state legitimacy because of the belief that redistribution disproportionately benefits ethnic minorities (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Gilens 1995) or because of stereotypes presenting ethnic minorities as undeserving claimants (see also Aarøe and Petersen 2014). These attitudes created welfare chauvinistic preferences, which ultimately can be satisfied only by wholesale welfare retrenchment.

An additional dimension in the relation between migration and the welfare state arose from the increased participation of migrant women in the labour market and its effects on receiving societies in Europe. The ties between female migration and social protection are multiple and influence in important ways the restructuring of welfare regimes in Europe today. Migrant women from central eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics were pushed to migrate due to the implosion of the communist regimes and their social protection and employment systems. They became unemployed and had no safety net to fall back on.

At the same time, there was a strong 'pull' effect from western and southern European societies where care needs have increased. Such care work was traditionally performed by women (in southern Europe) and to a certain extent by welfare services (in northern and western Europe). But as European societies have been rapidly ageing and the demand for caring and cleaning services has boomed, welfare services have been increasingly reduced or monetarised. Thus, a whole market for social services has emerged, particularly in countries like Britain or in southern Europe (Triandafyllidou and Marchetti 2014). The allowances paid to families were too low to enable them to hire a local worker and local skilled social workers were probably not prepared to work for private homes on an unstable and flexible work contract. Migrant women came to fill important gaps and to substitute childcare, elderly care, or long-term care services that would not have otherwise been as widely available, while at the same time enabling native women to take up paid work

outside the home. The 2009 European debt crisis and the further restructuring of welfare systems as well as the reduction of both services and cash allowances (most acute in southern Europe and Ireland, but also felt in northern and western European countries) made the need for an affordable domestic care labour force more necessary and sought after.

The tensions that cultural diversity brings to social equality have been described by Banting and Kymlicka (2006) as the 'progressive dilemma'; notably it concerns the renegotiation of principles for economic redistribution with the recognition of diversity. The 2009 economic and financial crisis in Europe further exacerbated these debates as it put under a magnifying lens the already stark contradiction between nationally framed welfare regimes (and the related fundamental principles of citizenship, democracy, and social solidarity) and post-national social and economic conditions.

Things took a very different turn, however, just a few years later: 2020 ushered in a major reappraisal of the European welfare state with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although responses differed across European countries – owing in part to the varied characteristics of their welfare models – to the immediate existential threat to human health and well-being, all reacted through swift and massive deficit spending and expansionary fiscal policy to protect incomes and jobs. Beyond the immediate concern of saving lives, the subsequent policy priority was to save livelihoods: the strengthening of social safety nets received near-unanimous support across the political spectrum throughout Europe.

These complex processes of social change have contrasted impacts on citizens' feelings of social solidarity within the national state: citizens are both in need of some solidity to hold on to (whether it be the health service or unemployment aid or indeed family allowances); and at the same time they are increasingly questioning the scope of social solidarity when one has trouble identifying with one's (national) community and when social stratification is no longer determined by national factors (the state, the stakeholders, the national market) but by transnational forces (international trade, global value chains, global competition, Europeanisation of social and economic policies, international mobility of goods, capitals, and people).

European social model(s)

From a historical perspective, different European countries have developed their understandings of social solidarity and their social protection systems in different ways. Thus, for instance, while in Germany it was the question of poverty and the need for social protection by the state that arose in the 1870s under Bismarck with an emphasis on the workers' question, in France it was more related to the enfranchisement of all male citizens above the age of 21 and hence with the political role of the people and the working class. Similarly, the most controversial issues in relation to social protection and welfare differ among European countries. In Britain, the quintessential institution seen to represent the British welfare system has been

the National Health Service (NHS), while in Germany it is more related to unemployment insurance and assistance; in Italy it has more to do with pensions and the same was true in Denmark, while in France it related strongly to both pensions and benefits such as unemployment allowances (Barbier 2013, pp. 24–25).

Indeed, social protection is nationally rooted in specific political and administrative cultures, and it is regulated primarily by national law. National law guarantees institutionalised solidarity and trust among people who do not know each other and will never know each other. Clear-cut definitions and rules are necessary to manage beneficiaries and expenditures and ensure that the system functions.

This national framing of social protection contrasts with the efforts taken at the EU level to construct a set of European social policies. There are two ways in which we can speak of a European social model(s). One is a comparative approach that looks at national social policies, compares welfare state institutions, public expenditure levels, and labour market regimes seeking to identify the special factors that have led to the formation of each specific national welfare system. A second approach treats Europe as a whole and looks at common socio-economic and political processes, common trends among the different countries, and interdependencies. While acknowledging that welfare systems are national, the latter pays more attention to the emergence of an EU social policy and seeks to identify what sort of capitalism European welfare capitalism is, conceiving it as a whole that is more than the sum of its parts (Hay and Wincott 2012).

In this chapter, we combine both perspectives. We first review the relevant literature on the different social models present in Europe, as these have been identified in the seminal work of Gosta Esping Andersen (1990). They were later developed and modified, in line with wider socio-economic and political changes, and extended to include social reform in central eastern Europe. Each national social protection system largely concerns the overall relationship between the state, the citizen, and the market. We then consider whether there is such a thing as a European social model or a European type of capitalism that is distinctive.

Social policy theorists have identified five ideal-typical social models: the southern rudimentary social model, the continental Romano-Germanic, the Nordic social democratic model, the Anglo-Saxon liberal individualist, and the central eastern European model (see also Adnett and Hardy 2005). These ideal types differ from one another not only in the types and degrees of social protection that they provide but also in their effects and in the type of social stratification that they actually (re)produce (Esping Andersen 1990: 23).

The liberal Anglo-Saxon model

The liberal individualist social model is also known as the Anglo-Saxon welfare regime as in Europe it is to be found mainly in the UK and Ireland but is also the model that prevails in the United States, Canada, and Australia. This

model adopts a view of the welfare state as a residual institution that covers what cannot be addressed by the self-regulation of the market. Social assistance is means-tested, available only to the poor. The idea is that this discourages welfare-dependency and pushes individuals to participate in the labour market. Welfare provisions are rather low; for instance, beneficiaries of unemployment benefits must show that they are actively seeking work. Family or home care allowances for the sick or the elderly are again means-tested. The pension system is two-tiered, including a universalistic coverage of the working population with a very low state pension combined with a whole market of private pension funds.

This system privileges a notion of individual autonomy and responsibility and a laissez-faire approach of the state to social protection. Being welfare-dependent carries a certain social stigma: it is only the poor and the unsuccessful who receive benefits. The state, in this welfare regime, encourages the market to complement the minimal public provisions with private welfare schemes. These last may be subsidised by the state through taxes. The system goes hand in hand with economic (neo-)liberalism and is meant to support a flexible labour market. It guarantees a minimal level of livelihood for all, but predominantly caters for the needs and desires of the middle strata who are invited to satisfy their demand for superior welfare services through the private sector (Esping Andersen 1990, p. 26). It is also in line with a common law system that privileges juries, independent judges, the supremacy of freedom of contract, and an emphasis upon judicial discretion rather than codes (Adnett and Hardy 2005, p. 22).

The liberal trend in the British welfare system materialised in the 1980s during the Thatcher years, which took Britain out of the orbit of a social democratic approach to universal flat rate benefits, national healthcare, and high levels of employment and into lean public spending, means-testing, and a two-tier system of public–cum–private in nearly all areas of social welfare.

While this system of flexible work, some social protection, and strong incentives for self-regulating one's own level of social protection and assistance might seem to fit best the globalisation context, the fragmented character of labour, the decline of trade unions, and the individualisation of employment patterns, it has two fundamental weaknesses. It fails to de-commodify labour: in other words, it fails to give the worker some degree of autonomy from labour market forces. For example, neoliberal labour activation policies have been unable to improve the overall employment situation for young people; and, it inherently erodes the support of the middle classes for welfare expansion because it is identified with a system that benefits the poor and the working class. It is also a system that provides minimal benefits that in any case would not satisfy the higher needs and expectations of the middle classes.

The neoliberal phase that was inaugurated by Margaret Thatcher drew the UK economy closer to American rather than European norms and practices; in his articulation of the Third Way, Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair built an ideological proximity with America and relied increasingly upon policy transfer from the United States rather than Europe. This translated into perceptions that

rising inequality was acceptable – perhaps even laudable – insofar as it contributed to overall economic growth. Indeed, increasing inequality was seen as part of a healthy competitive market economy providing incentives for increasing the economic activities of the 'haves' and the economic aspirations of the 'have-nots' (Nock and Corron 2015).

The impacts of the global financial crisis after 2008 led the UK to pursue radical cuts in public spending with a restructuring of most areas of public provision. This restructuring aimed to reduce costs, expand the role of non-state – especially for-profit – providers, increase local diversity of provision, tighten work incentives, and dismantle redistributive programmes to focus welfare on defined groups among the poor. Cuts affected non-pension benefits, including housing benefits and benefits for disabled people; they also affected services offered by local governments. Austerity-induced cuts to the welfare system since 2010 particularly affected those who were most reliant on the welfare state. In the 'left-behind' parts of the UK, benefit cuts led to marked increases in wider political dissatisfaction. Individuals became much more disaffected with the UK's political system, increasingly believing that 'public officials do not care', that 'they have no say in government policy', and that their vote does not matter. This essentially contributed to shoring up support for the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and Vote Leave (Fetzer 2019). By curtailing the welfare state, austerity activated a broad range of existing economic grievances that had developed over a long period of time, including job or wage losses due to increased trade, immigration, and automation. These grievances became channelled into a populist narrative of 'Taking Back Control', which was easily expressed in opposition to the EU and unleashed culture-wars politics set off by the Brexit referendum – which split the country between Leave and Remain, town and city, old and young (Leonard 2020).

While the healthcare system was not affected by direct cuts, the ageing population led to significant increases in demand for healthcare, worsening the quality and access for many and contributing to regular crises that brought the healthcare system to near collapse during seasonal demand peaks. The COVID-19 pandemic strained this system even further. It also strengthened demands for urgent reforms, not only of the welfare system but of the social contract overall to address inequalities associated with gender, race, and ethnicity; the deeply engrained unpredictability and precarity faced by lower socio-economic groups and youth due to the impact of the technological revolution on work and employment conditions; and the need to enable the transition towards a 'sustainable' future in which there are new forms of well-paid work and production within the boundaries of what the planet can support (Cottam 2019, 2020; Rodrik et al. 2018; Raworth 2017; Shafik 2021).

The continental Romano-Germanic model

The continental social model is dominant in most affluent European democracies with a relatively comprehensive welfare state. It includes strong social protection

and a statutory health insurance providing quasi–universal access to world–class health services. It is characterised by a robust corporatist organisation of work and welfare relations. The system's aim is to guarantee a certain level of social rights and social protection and assistance to all citizens so that they can be relatively protected from the ups and downs of the economy and the labour market. The continental social model includes a universalistic coverage of all citizens with, however, a modest level of coverage. The model does not involve means-testing though it includes a set of special schemes, programmes, and measures of complementary pension funds or health services that cater for specific professional categories, notably civil servants but also the liberal professions and other privileged groups of workers. The continental model provides for a safety net but does not lead to a significant redistribution of income; rather, it perpetuates status and class differences by providing for further privileges through public channels to the middle strata and minimal assistance to the poor.

The continental model leaves a lot of room for institutions other than the state – or rather actually counts on them to provide for the citizens' welfare and social protection. These include primarily the family and wider kinship network, and the (Catholic) church and its social support services. Thus, given the overall relative low level of social assistance, daycare for children, and healthcare for the sick and the elderly are either provided by relatives or bought (through the state's cash for care allowances) in a segmented labour market of care, where mostly migrant workers are employed (Triandafyllidou and Marchetti 2014). This model has important gendered effects as, overall, it discourages young mothers or generally women to take up paid employment as they have increased caring responsibilities within the home of both the elderly and the younger members of the family.

Of course, this is an ideal-typical model and there are important variations within the countries that are seen to conform to it. France, for instance, is characterised by a high level of social assistance to families and a wide network of childcare services that promote women's participation in the labour market and socialise the costs of familyhood. Germany and Italy, by contrast, offer means-tested and rather low family allowances; in addition, public childcare facilities are very limited. Dual wage families have to rely on the support of grandparents or other relatives or turn to the market (whether to private childcare facilities or to migrant women carers, if they can afford either) to cater for their family needs.

The continental model with its wide safety net and its corporatist structure is probably the archetypical welfare regime that comes to mind to many people when one speaks of a 'European social model', not least because it is the system prevailing in the major European continental countries like France, Germany, and Italy. In the past, this model has offered a high level of de-commodification of work by giving the state a central role in guaranteeing social protection. As such, it has been contrasted to the laissez-faire policy of the Anglo–Saxon model which gave primacy to market forces and individualism. The continental model reinforced a sense of national belonging as the welfare regime contributed to the legitimacy of the state. Its corporatist structure and the role of trade unions and

professional associations guaranteed that demands and protests would be challenged through these formal channels and be absorbed by the system. Indeed, security and stability were the main goals but also the main advantages that this system has offered in the post-war period yet was less fit for the changes of the early twenty-first century in Europe.

The continental model's centralised public character, its corporatist perspective, and its in-built gender bias in favour of male breadwinners are elements that do not address the new realities of flexible work and fragmented labour markets. With high levels of coverage increasingly difficult to afford – as global competition and international trade intensify, wages and welfare benefits are pushed downwards – the state's welfare provisions have tended to decrease. In addition, as new economic and political forces arise because of economic restructuring and social discontent, the privileges of some professional categories and groups are either scrapped because they are too expensive or contested because they are not legitimate anymore. The system's rigidity provides incentives for people to take up informal employment to evade tax contributions and employment legislation, while women are faced with a trade-off between work and family, eventually postponing family formation (Esping Andersen 1996, p. 82). In short, the main weakness of the continental system is probably its difficulty to keep up with current socio-economic transformation processes and effectively address them.

In recent decades, there has been a clear shift towards activation, more social assistance, and a greater emphasis on minimum income protection (Palier 2010). To a greater or lesser extent, over time, these Bismarckian systems incorporated elements of the Beveridge and the Nordic models and have been increasingly characterised by 'dualisation' and 'flexibilisation'. Labour market flexibilisation and growing pressures on unemployment benefits that came with globalisation and the digital revolution resulted in a growing division in social protection between workers with a permanent contract, on the one hand, and the long-term unemployed, flex workers, zero-hour contract holders, and the self-employed, on the other, with much less generous social protection. Since the 2000s, continental welfare states witnessed a dual transformation that retrenched earnings-related benefits for the long-term unemployed and atypically employed people and expanded social security to the so-called new social risks (i.e., the risks that people face in the course of their lives as a result of the labour market and family structure changes associated with the transition to a post-industrial society) and 'enabling' policies. Work- and family-related spending – such as in-work benefits and parental leave – increased, while the generosity of traditional 'passive' income support for the unemployed declined (Cantillon et al. 2021). In effect, policies were crafted aimed at interrupting the intergenerational transmission of poverty by investing in human capabilities from early childhood through old age, while improving career–life balance provisions for working families.

People living in the more inclusive, high-spending welfare states of northern and western Europe weathered the economic downturn that came with the

global financial crisis with fewer ill effects, especially when compared with the more segmented welfare states of southern Europe that were less successful both in terms of buffering shocks and in mitigating inequalities.

When the COVID-19 pandemic swept across Europe in 2020, the impact on employment, earnings, and consumption varied, depending on socio-economic status. Those with a slim financial buffer as well as those employed in flexible, atypical work – mainly women, young persons, and low-income earners – bore the brunt of the measures taken to limit contagion (Adams-Prassl et al. 2020; Bachas et al. 2020; Chetty et al. 2020). Continental welfare states responded by strengthening existing or developing new schemes of income support to sick workers and their families, income support to quarantined workers who could not work from home, income support to persons losing their jobs, or self-employment income. They also supported firms to adjust working hours and preserve jobs, offering financial support to firms affected by a drop in demand (Eurofound 2020; OECD 2020). In doing so, they repaired many of the restrictions that had been imposed on unemployment insurance in the recent past and provided additional protection mechanisms for non-typical workers who had often fallen by the wayside of social protection before the crisis (Cantillon et al. 2021). By protecting household income throughout the unprecedented measures taken in response to the pandemic, they prevented consumption from dropping too sharply, thus cushioning economic recession and saving jobs and skills. While not all performed equally well, the most deep-pocketed and inclusive ones – such as Austria, Germany, the Netherlands – similarly to the Nordic states (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) were able to protect people's livelihoods while at the same time stabilising national economies. Once again, the more segmented Mediterranean welfare states (i.e., regulating access to benefits based on membership in occupational or social groups rather than based on needs or rights) faced greater difficulties in doing so.

The southern European social model

The southern European model may be considered a variant of the continental Romano-Germanic social model presented above. It is characterised by a rudimentary level of intervention by the state to regulate labour market behaviour and redistribute income and wealth. It is rather the family, the church, and the local community that mitigated the effect of market forces on workers and provided for a safety net in case of ill health, unemployment, and care in old age. This system developed in economies characterised by a large agricultural sector and a low level of industrialisation.

As southern European countries (Greece, Spain, Portugal) developed socio-economically into a modest level of industrialisation and a stronger service economy passing on to the post-industrial phase, their welfare systems developed characteristics similar to those of continental European countries and Italy. They thus applied higher levels of social assistance and social protection (higher

unemployment benefits, expansion of family allowances, better pensions) even if these remained overall modest and were not means-tested (for instance, a family with two children might not receive any type of child support even if it lived in poverty).

In line with the continental social model, the southern European one is also pervasively characterised by two-tiered labour markets and levels of protection. One is universal and relatively weak; the other is much better developed but afforded only to special categories of workers such as civil servants or certain professions that have their own privileged health and pension funds, and inhibits both quality employment opportunities and adequate protection and services for educated women, youth, and single-parent households. These Mediterranean countries have tended to concentrate their social spending on old age. Their social welfare systems – contrary to the Nordic model discussed below – have been typically characterised by strict employment protection regulations, a rather low coverage of unemployment benefits, and early retirement provisions to exempt segments of the working-age population from participation in the labour market. The wage structure is, at least in the formal sector, covered by collective bargaining and strongly compressed (Sapir 2005). With comparatively lower levels of educational attainment (especially when compared to the Nordic or continental countries), the average risk of poverty is higher. In spite of their limitations, these Mediterranean countries significantly improved their health indicators thanks to the social and economic development of the last decades and the continuous improvement of healthcare.

The system is shaped by a profound mistrust between the citizen and the state and an appropriation of state power, including welfare services, by governing elites as a mechanism for distributing favours and in exchange securing citizens' support for them personally and legitimacy for the political system overall. In other words, the system does not respond to a formal logic of impersonal redistribution of income and wealth but rather to a highly personalised access to privileges and services regulated through complex networks of clientelistic power. Thus, the effects of social transfers, for instance, on reducing poverty and inequality were minimal even if a relatively wide level of social assistance has been provided (until before the Great Recession) to citizens through an extraordinarily extended system of public pensions that were secure even if quite low (see also Matsaganis 2013; Petmesidou 2013).

The severe sustainability constraints characterising the southern European models due to the multiple disincentives to work and to grow, as well as the comparative lack of competitiveness and inefficiency of their social protection and social investment, made the need for reforms even more pressing against the background of intensifying globalisation and technological innovation (Sapir 2005; Andersen et al. 2012). These vulnerabilities created inequalities both in the distribution of economic and social resources and in the access to health services. When the financial crisis of 2008 arrived in the southern European countries, it quickly became systemic (Laparra and Pérez Eransus 2012).

These countries' participation in the euro area and therefore in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) meant that they could not use economic and monetary instruments (such as the reduction of interest rates, currency devaluation, or public expenditure increases). This limited room for government manoeuvre was constrained even further as in return for financial assistance, Greece, Spain, and Portugal had to accept adjustment programmes and severe austerity rules supervised by supranational institutions – the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They saw their sovereignty curtailed in an unprecedented manner – in the case of Greece for over eight years between May 2010 and August 2018 – while these countries' economies and societies still bear the mark of the damage caused by austerity policies today. GDP shrunk, their economies plunged into deep recessions, investment dwindled. The social scarring included job destruction and increase in unemployment; precariousness, especially for younger groups; emigration flows of qualified workers; and the worsening of poverty, social exclusion, child poverty, and income inequalities (Serapioni and Hespanha 2019; Petmesidou 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic hit these countries and their welfare systems as they were coming out of a decade of difficulties, accelerating several labour market transformations – including teleworking and transition to digital services – which will impact some segments of the populations (women, young people) more drastically than others. It also generated a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty across all European societies, inspiring normative debate about 'social fairness' and the need for more resilient, inclusive, and effective welfare systems.

The social democratic Nordic model

The Nordic or social democratic model has a significantly different approach to social protection than the other European social models outlined above. This model is universalistic; it puts a lot of emphasis on providing social protection and social assistance to all and not only to those in need, to the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Everybody must contribute to the system equally and everybody should profit from it as equally as possible. In other words, the model does not compensate the 'losers' and punish the 'winners' but rather aims at promoting an equality of the highest standard rather than of minimal coverage.

The universalistic and equally generous coverage for all is based on employment and relatively high levels of taxation, but in compensation contributes to forging a strong sense of social solidarity. It emancipates the individual from both the market and the family network. In other words, the welfare state intervenes not when the family resources are exhausted, as would happen in the continental model, but pre-emptively by providing for the costs of raising children or caring for the sick and the elderly. The result is some of the highest employment rates overall, in particular for women, older workers, and third-country nationals, and some of the lowest risks of poverty worldwide and across Europe.

The model is based on

> a fusion of welfare and work. It is at once genuinely committed to a full
> employment guarantee and entirely dependent on its attainment. On the
> one side, the right to work has equal status to the right of income protec-
> tion. On the other side, the enormous costs of maintaining a solidaristic,
> universalistic, and de-commodifying welfare system means that it must
> minimise social problems and maximise revenue income. This is obviously
> best done with most people working and the fewest possible living off of
> social transfers.
>
> *(Esping Andersen 1990, p. 28)*

It is also based on wide redistribution effected via taxes and transfers.

The model thus encourages labour market participation but in an entirely
different way than what happens in the liberal individualist model as it is based
on a strong sense of social solidarity with an equally strong notion of individual
independence made possible through the guarantees of state-funded welfare. It
presents an exceptional combination of liberalism/individualism with socialism/
communitarianism.

This model was predominantly developed in the Scandinavian countries in
the post-war era. However, like all other social models described above, it has
undergone certain transformations with a view to responding to the changing
needs of society and the economy. It has aimed to not discourage the market but
rather simply tame its effects on the workers/citizens. The model distances itself
obviously from state socialism and the central European social model discussed
further below, but also from left-wing socialist models that aim at maximising
transfers from one social class to another (Rothstein and Steinmo 2013).

The Nordic countries categorised as having a social democratic welfare model
have also had to deal with the challenges of increasing cultural diversity and the
needs of a post-industrial economy. This has led to discussions over the need
to introduce reforms that would benefit the middle classes (i.e., highly skilled
workers, professionals, civil servants) while reducing benefits and assistance for
newcomers (i.e., immigrants). In addition, attention has been paid to gender
equality, environmental sustainability, and, of course, multiculturalism.

The fast-paced changing global context and changes in the economy brought
about by digitisation, globalisation, and migration created space for new political
forces, mainly on the populist right flank of the political spectrum. They gained
influence and proposed liberal individualistic visions of limited social solidarity.
Different Nordic countries reacted in different ways. Thus, while in Sweden
social democracy has been upheld and the multiculturalism approach has been
favoured as a basis for integrating newcomers, in Denmark these considerations
led to a partial overhaul of the welfare system through which migrants were inte-
grated into Danish society. In Sweden the primacy of individual social rights over
obligations was maintained, while in Denmark an obligation to contribute was

given precedence over the right to social assistance (Meret and Siim 2013). This context is useful in understanding the emphasis that the Scandinavian countries, and Sweden in particular, placed on the job training, skilling, and tools to facilitate the recognition of qualifications for migrants and refugees, especially after the 2015–2016 humanitarian and border crisis. Given that the Nordic welfare model is largely dependent on a high employment rate, policies were aimed at increasing immigrant labour market participation to speed up their contribution into the welfare state, thereby reducing the pressure on it both by reducing costs and increasing the taxes paid (Normann and Nørgaard 2018).

One of the main advantages of the Nordic model is that it upholds and further reinforces social solidarity within society, emancipates the citizen, and legitimises the state. It does not require a national monocultural framework to function even if cultural diversity does raise tensions within this model too. For instance, the question of women's participation in work outside the home can be a thorny issue. However, the model has shown a significant capacity to adapt to the differentiated demands of people for individualised choices and lifestyles without sacrificing a strong sense of trust, solidarity, and a high level of social cohesion. Supporters of the model argue that its success lies in its high-quality universal coverage which transforms the meaning of the welfare state from a general social institution to an assistance mechanism for the poor.

The transitional central and eastern European model

Central and eastern European countries have experienced a radical change in their social protection systems along with their overall socio-economic and political transition to democracy and free market capitalism. After several decades of communist rule with a universalistic, employment-related system of social protection where full employment was the norm, they transferred almost overnight to the world of residual, even if still universalistic, social protection and a partial privatisation of welfare services.

During the Soviet period, both employment and welfare were highly regulated. Wages were very low while social benefits were substantial. Even though there has never been a 'golden age' of social policy under the communist regimes, social benefits were secure and so was employment. There was a high and broad level of social security, and earning differentials were very modest. There was a monopolistic organisation of production and employment as well as of distribution of social services. The collapse of the economic system that supported social policy in the communist countries led to its radical reorganisation. First, the three major guarantees that the previous system offered to citizens were removed: guaranteed employment, social protection via subsidised prices, and enterprise-based social benefits. Indeed, unemployment grew dramatically but there was neither a Soviet-type nor a Western-type safety net to fall back on. Rampant unemployment thus led to widespread impoverishment and deprivation.

The effects and pace of the change differed among central eastern European countries. For instance, the Czech Republic showed considerable economic dynamism and experienced low levels of unemployment, while most of the other countries in the region – notably, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltic countries – experienced high unemployment rates and impoverishment of their populations. All countries gradually introduced basic schemes of unemployment protection and a universalistic pension scheme, albeit with high numbers of pensioners and low levels of pensions. Pension age was gradually raised to meet western European standards. What was harder to reform was health policy as these countries had had a universalistic healthcare system for a long time.

These countries faced significant pressures from international financial institutions to introduce a two-tier system with a minimal universal coverage for pensions and a third-tier voluntary pension, or for a minimal public health service and additional commercial private clinics. In addition to these changes, social assistance benefits such as child or family allowances became means-tested, and entitlements were overall tightened. Under pressure for market liberalisation and privatisation by the EU and the IMF, most of the central eastern European countries adopted a continental model approach in the sense that they provided for a minimal coverage for all and allowed for the development of corporatist status-preserving sets of privileged provisions (in the form of special health coverage or pension funds) for the middle classes. Social assistance schemes and unemployment benefits have been cut back significantly in these countries because of budgetary constraints. Variations exist, of course, within the countries. Poland and the Czech Republic have followed a 'European' social model path with relatively high social spending, broad coverage of social protection, and political support for welfare. The Baltic states tend to be considered as neoliberal, and Slovenia as a neo-corporatist regime (Nelson 2010; Greve 2021).

The development of these welfare states is intrinsically linked to the legacy of the triple transition to democracy, market, and state (Offe 1991) and to the Europeanisation process that was undertaken through the course of EU accession and later integration in the 2000s (Greve 2021). In fact, Krastev and Holmes (2018) have argued that the 30-year post-communist transition resembled an 'imitation imperative' that combined Westernisation, Europeanisation, Americanisation, democratisation, liberalisation, enlargement, integration, harmonisation, and globalisation. The expectation was that imitation would be unconditional rather than adapted to local traditions and realities, while the representatives of the 'imitated' countries – in other words, the older EU member states – would have a legitimate right to monitor and evaluate progress.

The 2008 financial crisis boosted right-wing populist and illiberal parties, which in turn significantly shaped welfare policies in central and eastern Europe. In Croatia, Poland, and Hungary this led to 'a hegemonic moral economy centred around social conservatism, re-patriachisation, heteronormative familialism, national and ethnicised demographic renewal and anti-immigrant sentiments'

(Stubbs and Lendvai–Baitons 2020). This agenda combined financial and institutional support for 'natives' and 'patriotic citizens' alongside a hostile environment towards 'outsiders', civil society, LGBT communities, and independent media; a rejection of democratic principles and the rule of law; a resentment towards 'gender' as a term and a support for 'family mainstreaming'; and a religionisation of social citizenship (Greve 2021). In Hungary, the government pursued radical welfare retrenchment, severe austerity and anti-poor policies, and a discourse critical towards the welfare state. Poland, on the contrary, combined its illiberal turn with the pursuit of a significant expansion of welfare spending that cut poverty through a generous child benefit programme, benefits for the elderly, affordable housing, and higher minimum wages. Thus, after three decades of transitions, austerity policies that followed the Great Recession contributed to a fundamental questioning of the desirability and political support for EU integration and even globalisation across central and eastern Europe.

The EU's social dimension

In principle, there exists a division of labour between the European 'project', which provides economic integration and fosters growth, and individual states, which provide social welfare and ensure that the benefits of higher growth are equitably distributed among different social groups (Jepsen and Serrano Pascual 2006; Barbier 2013; Begg et al. 2015). The reality is much more complex, as decisions made at the European level have an increasing impact on the national level, meaning that essentially the EU has fundamentally rearranged the social contract between member states and their citizens.

The idea of a social contract is a quintessentially European concept. It has its roots in Stoic philosophy and Roman Canon Law and was elaborated mainly by philosophers during the Enlightenment. Consent usually involves surrendering some rights in return for protection of the remaining rights and maintenance of the social order. The EU has increasingly positioned itself as the level of government most suited to help its member states deliver on their promise of welfare, prosperity, and growth towards their citizens.

Since its origins, and particularly since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, as the EU has widened, deepened, and transformed, so too the instruments for a 'Social Europe' have developed, aiming to combine economic growth, high living standards, and universal social protection (Prats-Monné 2022). The development of a social dimension to the EU has been deemed necessary to balance the effects of the completion of the single market to ensure that economic integration does not undermine the foundations of national social protection systems and to avoid social competition between member states. With its four freedoms of movement of goods, services, persons, and capital, the risk is real that the single market might trigger social and fiscal competition as well as 'welfare shopping' between the member states. Without appropriate measures, intensified intra-EU competition creates the risk of social dumping and

a 'race to the bottom', whereby the member states with lowest social standards become the most competitive in terms of production costs. Such developments would go against the founding principle of ensuring social progress in the EU (Monti 2010).

Support for a stronger social dimension from the EU also grew after the global financial crisis to counter the negative effects of the crisis and national austerity policies. Many questioned whether EU instruments were fit for safeguarding social progress – one of the main goals of European integration – and even more so, some viewed the EU as a cause rather than a solution of the degrading social situation many parts of Europe had experienced. In the space of a single generation, Europe, which used to be seen as a bulwark against globalisation, came to be perceived as a threat to national social models. The southern member states or the de-industrialising regions in the northern member states increasingly felt 'left behind' and right-wing populists and far-right politicians were able to tap into this disaffection and broaden their electoral bases (Berman and Snegovaya 2019; Lazar 2021).

Finally, a reinforced social dimension for the EU is perceived to be conducive to strengthening public support and democratic legitimacy of European integration (Fernandes and Maslauskaite 2013) – basically in sustaining the consent mentioned above. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has been quoted to have argued that 'the only remaining project for which political mobilisation is possible consists in protecting a "European way of life" against the pressures of globalisation'. However, he noted, citizens in many countries feel that 'the EU's (primarily economic) project has not been beneficial to them and that indeed it may be endangering the social standards they aspire to' (Vandenbroucke 2012).

During this past decade, alongside the major transformations brought about by demographic changes, digitisation, and the green transition, a crowd of crises have deeply tested these instruments of Social Europe. The global financial crisis after 2008, the humanitarian and border crisis of 2015–2016, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine that led over four million Ukrainians to seek refuge in the EU are the most striking crises that drew both public and political attention to the importance of competent welfare states and resilient healthcare systems. Under these pressures, welfare models in Europe have evolved and changed – and they have influenced and inspired one another through exchanging information and sharing good practices. These crises rekindled normative arguments about social fairness and forced more effective EU cooperation on issues such as health and safety, education and training, migrant integration and asylum policies, and fiscal solidarity.

Concluding remarks

It is difficult to speak of a European social model in the sense of a set of common features that bring the different countries or the different regions of Europe together.

The financial crisis fed a divergence as cultural and institutional specificities and national social and political forces managed the crisis in different ways. It is, however, feasible to speak of a European set of social models that have one feature in common: the formal upholding of social solidarity as a shared value, and of a national system of social protection as a state institution that may develop in different modes and configurations but that provides and upholds high levels of social protection and social assistance to their citizens and residents. These models are brought together by the common challenge that they face: notably to reform and reorganise constantly with a view to keeping up with the fast pace of economic change and globalisation, digitisation, demographic and societal transformations, and increasingly, the need to address the climate emergency and support the green transition.

Note

1 As hardly any country in the world, let alone in Europe, is a nation-state in the proper sense of the term – i.e., in the sense that its population belongs all to one single national group – we prefer to use the term 'national state'. This denotes that the country includes a large national majority that probably dominates the state apparatus and may think of the state as its 'property', and one or more minority groups that again may be autochthonous (i.e., established in that territory for several generations) or may be the result of recent migrations.

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9
GLOBAL EUROPE

Europe in world politics, from then to now

James Gillray's classic cartoon published in 1805 depicting William Pitt and Napoleon Bonaparte carving Europe and the world into spheres of influence is a perfect and straightforward representation of the role held by European powers in world politics for a long period. Through imperial adventurism and modern colonialism, Europe's military presence and economic dominance across most of the globe was unrivalled. From the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, when Spain and Portugal partitioned the 'New World' they were discovering until the end of decolonisation in the twentieth century, European powers exerted a massive influence over the rest of the world. Of course, the colonial empires and the individual colonies also massively influenced the historical development of their European mother countries, their institutions, their economy, their politics, and even their national identity. However, more than being about the interactions that Europe had with the rest of the world, for centuries Europeans explored, conquered, and exploited the natural and human resources of large parts of the globe. Although colonialism was eloquently self-legitimised as a 'civilising mission', spreading Christianity, progress, and modernity to the subject peoples, in essence, during this period of imperialism, Europeans were 'the aggressors in world society' (Giddens 2007, p. 228).

Europe's hegemony over the rest of the world ended in the twentieth century. A.J.P. Taylor (1971) has argued that what had been the centre of the world before World War I merely became 'the European question' after. World War I marked the end of European empires and the establishment of two new poles of power located outside the European continent and with global outreach, namely Washington and Moscow. World War II marked the end of European

colonialism and the restriction of Europe's influence over the rest of the world. However, the security shield offered by the United States during the Cold War period led to Europe largely living 'in oblivion of the rest of the world', as Zaki Laidi has quite simply put it (2008, p. 1) until the end of the Cold War.

The end of the Cold War brought about a new, ambitious enthusiasm about the role that Europe could carve for itself and an aspiration to 'lead by example' in international relations. Respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, along with tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development became the EU's flagship initiatives in its efforts to position itself as a global power at the turn of the twentieth century (Alston and Weiler 2000). The new realities of the twenty-first century, however, brought Europe into an ever less familiar and less comfortable world. Economic globalisation placed intense competition and pressures on European economies and their high labour standards, asymmetric security threats increased perceptions of insecurity within European public opinion, and the hallmarks of liberal internationalism and multilateralism have been challenged by the non-Western powers that have emerged (Ikenberry 2011; Majone 2009). The pressure on Europe intensified further in the 2010s–2020s as the scale of the digital economy, the far-reaching security implications of cyberspace, and the opportunities that the third industrial revolution – the digital revolution – presents for state and non-state actors to shape the international agenda profoundly led to tectonic shifts in world affairs.

Pushing forward the continent's economic and political integration was seen by some as the only way through which Europe could remain relevant in the global age. Against this background, in this chapter we examine the role of Europe in the world. We first consider the Cold War era and the different 'Europes' existing then: Eastern Europe and the role of the Warsaw Pact as an international political actor under the hegemony of the Soviet Union; Western Europe and its development into the European Economic Community and its efforts to distinguish itself from the US while maintaining the advantages of the transatlantic partnership. The core of this chapter focuses on the present role of Europe in the world and particularly on the normative, economic, and security dimensions.

We examine the different definitions of power that have been associated with the EEC/EU in the post-1989 and post-9/11 contexts. We discuss Europe's relationship with the United States as well as how the 'others' perceive Europe's global role. Finally, we conclude by examining the type of power the EU can be in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, polarised, and conflict-ridden twenty-first century.

The Cold War and the emergence of Europe

The end of World War II is a defining period for international relations as it ended Europe's dominance in world affairs and replaced it with the

division of the world between the United States and the USSR, and the decolonisation of the Third World. The pre-war multipolar system centred on Europe was replaced by a new bipolar one whose points of reference lay outside the continent.

During the first couple of decades of the post-war era, European countries were generally rather introverted, focusing mainly on their reconstruction. For the larger powers of Western Europe, this was also a period during which they had to come to terms with two new realities. The first involved digesting the loss of their remaining colonies (which was more or less violent, as the cases of India and Algeria suggest); the second involved coming to grips with their economic and security dependency upon the United States. As for the countries on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, their international presence and outreach was essentially channelled through the COMECON. As satellites of the USSR, however, what they promoted beyond their borders was basically the influence of Moscow and not that of any central or eastern European capital.

Until this period, the continent's relation with the rest of the world had been dynamic and multi-directional. What happened in Europe affected and influenced the rest of the world and what happened to the rest of the world was relevant for Europe. This was increasingly less the case during the first phase of the Cold War, where what was happening in Europe had very limited consequences for the rest of the world, whereas events outside the continent deeply impacted the Europeans and their integration project. For example, the Suez crisis led France to embark on a nuclear weapon production programme, contributed to the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 that created the EEC, and encouraged Britain to turn more towards the continent (McCormick 2007). Similarly, a few years later, the unilateral decisions of the US to go to war in Vietnam or to suspend the convertibility of the US dollar against gold and end the Bretton Woods system, undoubtedly contributed to British membership of the EEC and encouraged further economic integration in Western Europe.

The idea of Europe as a counterweight to American and Soviet power started to take shape from very early on during the Cold War. The level of destruction that characterised the continent after World War II, on the one hand, and the extent to which it was dependent on American economic assistance (mainly in the form of the Marshall Plan) and security guarantees, on the other, meant that there was little room for this idea to materialise. Indeed, the power potential of Europe was subverted by a combination of its own weaknesses and the relative American strength in the face of the Soviet threat (McCormick 2007, p. 52). Yet what did happen during the Cold War is that the nature of power changed.

Kenneth Waltz (1979) has defined power in the international system as the capacity of a state to affect the behaviour of other states while resisting unwelcome influence from those states. Traditionally, power has been associated with military capacity; in the late twentieth century, however, we observed a relative declining value of military power and a concurrent rise of other forms of power (economic or even cultural). Threats to international peace and security

increasingly came from sources that required primarily non-military solu-tions. Environmental degradation, international crime, terrorism, poverty, irregular migration, and pandemics raised the need to address these challenges through cooperation and collaboration, through sharing knowledge and pool-ing resources. In this context, the EEC/EU and its model of governance became increasingly relevant. The EEC has always had a foreign and security policy dimension, even before actually developing and institutionalising efforts towards a *common* foreign and security policy. The Preamble of the 1951 Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ESCS, predecessor to the EEC) defined its creation as a contribution to the safeguarding of world peace. The first phase of European integration was consciously focused on the elimination of old rivalries within western Europe rather than in world affairs. The external policies that the early EEC began to formulate were the result of its constitutive nature and the fact that it had to integrate the foreign policy patterns and priorities of the member states towards their former colonies.

Gunter Burghardt (1993) observed that the EEC's increasingly important international role was in part a by-product of its internal achievements and in part a necessity imposed upon it by the changes in the global system (p. 254). In short, the global role that the EU began to develop was the result of necessity but also aspiration.

The 1969 Hague Summit marks a high note on the EEC/EU's path towards developing a common position and framing its engagement in world affairs as more than the actions of the individual member states. By the 1970s, the EEC had developed into a trading power with a global outreach. It had also decided to embark upon an intergovernmental effort to coordinate the foreign policy agen-das of the member states through the launch of European Political Cooperation (EPC) and even to distinguish itself from the United States on certain foreign policy matters.

The core documents that set the foundation of the EPC (the 1970 Luxembourg Report, the 1973 Copenhagen Report, and the 1981 London Report) did not stipulate what the member states intended to do together through the EPC but rather laid out the modalities of cooperation, coordination, and possible col-lective action (Smith 2008, p. 4). The EPC was useful in terms of encouraging exchanges and links between the EEC member states and, along with the Single European Act (1987), in preparing the ground for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that was agreed at Maastricht in 1992. Aside from this, it was not able to counter the 'political insignificance' of Europe nor to frame coordinated European responses to the security crises that erupted as the Cold War ended.

The end of the Cold War brought the end of bipolarity. With the disappear-ance of the Soviet threat, the Transatlantic Alliance underwent a fundamental shift. Although the United States remained the only superpower, it encoun-tered increasing political resistance from Europe across several issues, including the Middle East and climate change. As the Gulf War broke out in 1990–1991,

Europeans realised that they lacked the institutional machinery and military force to act in unison. Shortly afterwards, with the disintegration of Yugoslavia leading to a full-scale war in the heart of Europe, the EEC/EU saw the dire limits of its diplomatic powers as well as its inability to formulate and implement a common foreign policy. Given that the EEC was fundamentally a peace project, the wars in the former Yugoslavia dampened its new-found enthusiasm as regards the role that 'Europe' could once again aspire to in global affairs.

The peace function has been consistently emphasised as an accomplishment of the EEC/ EU, core to its fundamental identity and the model of regional integration and cooperation that it wishes to project in international relations. Indeed, it is often asserted that peace on the European continent was rendered possible as a result of the role of the EEC/EU. Though undoubtedly fundamental, the roles of NATO and American political and military engagement have probably been much more significant, both during the Cold War period and in the years after the Soviet Union's demise. Where the EU has succeeded, without a doubt, is in developing and supporting institutions and frameworks within which the malign legacies of European history have been confronted and largely diffused through intergovernmental bargaining.

What sort of power is the EU?

Joseph Nye's (1990) classic distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' power and a country's ability to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion has been particularly influential in defining the sort of global power the EU has attempted to be in world politics. In Nye's understanding, soft power includes a range of non-military foreign policy instruments, particularly diplomacy and economic pressures, that yield results in international relations. Soft diplomacy has been defined as a diplomacy that resorts to economic, financial, legal, and institutional means to export values, norms, and rules and achieve long-term cultural influence. Soft diplomacy is not a 'soft imperialism' as the aim is not to impose values on others, but rather to propose a deliberation as to the sort of norms and rules that are necessary to bind the international community together in the globalised post-Cold War era. As such, it has been a useful contribution to the work of the United Nations to promote global governance (Petiteville 2003, p. 134).

Yet is the concept of 'soft power' suited to Europe's global role?

Robert Kagan (2002) extrapolated and interpreted this 'soft' power as weakness, arguing that the EU has no other option than to attempt to persuade other actors through multilateralism and negotiation because it lacks the military power and strength to do otherwise. This is undoubtedly a narrow understanding of power and how global actors project their influence, particularly in an era of globalisation and interdependence. But it does reflect a rather dominant view of the limitations that the EU faced and faces in projecting its influence beyond its borders.

Concerns about the limitations of the EU's global, and often too silent, role have intensely occupied the political realm. The following statement by the then-president of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, in 2002 is illustrative of such concerns:

> We cannot afford to remain an economic giant and a political dwarf. We must wield more authority in international affairs. Is it not time we spoke out for our values and matched words with action? More firmness is needed on many issues: human rights, the North–South gap, sustainable development, trade, energy, especially renewable sources of energy, the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court. If we are strong, we can do much in the world. But to be strong we must be united and speak with a single voice. And that calls for a more robust common foreign and security policy.
>
> *(Prodi 2002, Speech 02/600, 3 December 2002)*

However, it is necessary to elaborate on the concept of soft power a bit further because it does not in fact reflect the sort of power that the EU attempted to project in the early twenty-first century. Soft power is a normatively neutral term as economic and diplomatic pressure may be in principle used to promote 'selfish' interests, or even to oppress or dominate. Reading through the texts and declarations of EU officials who aimed to formulate the EU's global role, however, we see a very different intention. For instance, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy in a 2006 speech, defined the EU's soft power in these terms:

> Our soft power promotes stability, prosperity, democracy and human rights, delivering concrete results in the fight to eradicate poverty and in achieving sustainable development. The European Commission alone provides aid to more than 150 countries, territories and organisations around the world. We are a reliable partner over the long term, and as the world's biggest donor we help bring stability and prosperity to many parts of the world. And we are a champion of multilateralism, standing at the forefront of a rule-based international order.
>
> *(Ferrero-Waldner 2006, Speech 06/59, 2 February 2006)*

These are clearly normative priorities, making the description of Europe as a 'civilian power' well suited. In 1972, François Duchene was claiming that traditional military power was giving way to progressive civilian power as the means to exert influence in international relations, and that Europe represented a 'civilian power' that was long on economic power and relatively short on armed force. Civilian power involves the centrality of economic power to achieve national

goals, the primacy of diplomatic cooperation to solve international problems, and the willingness to use legally binding supranational institutions to achieve international progress (Manners 2002). This argument was refuted by Hedley Bull (1982), one of the most eminent representatives of the English school of international relations, who argued instead that the EEC (at the time) should seek to become self-sufficient in defence and security – a military power, in short. The question of the EEC assuming a military dimension was quite controversial during the Cold War and in fact it was only in 1991 with the Treaty on the European Union that the member states signalled the intent to move the Union beyond a civilian power (Whitman 1996; Manners 2002). For some, such as Jan Zielonka (1998), militarisation was unattractive as it would weaken the EU's distinct profile of having a civilian international identity. For others, it diverted the discussion to stalemated debates on the state-like attributes that the EU ought to or ought not to have. For others still, there was a lack of willingness to match its economic power with a military one. These challenges therefore rendered the notion of the EU as a 'normative power' more appealing, with the EU representing a normative power in world politics and a changer of norms in the international system (Manners 2002). The Union's historical evolution, its hybrid polity, and its constitutional configuration render its normative basis unique even today with the EU project having been challenged from within by the impacts of the global financial crisis, the UK's decision to leave the EU, and the rise of illiberalism among its member states.

The EU as a normative power

The EU's normative base, driven by a desire to establish greater legitimacy, has developed through declarations, treaties, policies, criteria, and conditions. These norms comprise peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights, and may also include (though more contested) social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance. Having a normative basis is not, however, sufficient to be considered a normative power; the ability to shape norm diffusion in international relations is also a requisite. The EU's international pursuit of the death penalty's abolition is an illustration of the EU's normative power, given that this objective is not instrumental nor does it bring any material rewards to the Union and its member states. Quite the contrary; it creates tensions in the EU's relations with the United States as Europe has sought to redefine international norms in its own image.

The EU has undoubtedly contributed to establishing and codifying certain global ethical standards in foreign policymaking and in international relations (Gropas 2006; Smith 2008); and it was an early champion of designing what developed into the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, commonly referred to as the SDGs (Kloke-Lesch 2018). Foreign and security policy have traditionally been considered a domain where support for 'more Europe' has been strong among public opinion in all member states (Peters 2014).

However, in practice, on the field, the EU's performance has tended to disappoint. Though assessments of its potential role as a global actor may be trapped in Christopher Hill's famous 'capabilities-expectations' gap, the reality is that the EU's influence in world politics has been 'weak' (Gnesotto 1999). Its foreign policy has been more uncommon than common (Gordon 1997), and it has certainly not played the peace-building role it had intended to play in the violent conflicts that followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Similarly, its influence in major Middle East questions has consistently been extremely limited even though it is the second-largest aid provider to the Middle East after the United States, has long trading relations with the countries of the region, and is the actor most strongly and directly affected by regional crises (such as in Lebanon, Libya, and Syria).

This is largely because the EU has not been able to act as a 'strategic actor' in the way the United States has, for instance, even though public support for a 'common' foreign policy has been strong since the 1990s (Peters 2014). However, the EU has managed to build up an institutional framework that is capable of mobilising the resources that a civilian power needs. Indeed, since the Maastricht Treaty entered into effect in 1993, foreign policy, which had only loosely been coordinated before, is now a core topic on the European Union's (EU) agenda; decisions with respect to many external matters can be made by a qualified majority; the Union has set up its own External Action Service and created the post of a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Consequently, national governments that are members of the EU no longer have exclusive control over foreign, security, and even defence policies. However, as a Union of states, they have lacked the ability to apply a strategic vision. The EU institutions have attempted to promote and enable common positions by trying to emphasise the common challenges that the individual member states face and the potential synergies that could be achieved through pooling resources in dealing with an ever-changing international context. They have attempted to strengthen their own presence in multilateral fora by underlining the European 'added value' – a concept that has spilled over into other policy areas from budgetary debates (see Rubio 2011; Medarova-Bergstrom et al. 2012; European Commission 2015; European Commission 2017) – and that can be brought about through common understandings of what is in the common 'European' interest in external relations. Basically, however, foreign policy and security have remained very much driven by national governments' focus on national, and often short-term, goals. As a result, both individually and in their 'common' (EU) approach, member states have tended to far overestimate their own national influence (which has been waning since the turn of the twenty-first century), as well as the EU's transformative power that has not been able to project the influence it has ambitiously declared (Dempsey 2015).

The realisation of the increasingly challenging global security environment for Europe as a result of geopolitical power shifts due to the rise of China, growing Russian aggression, hybrid threats, and the spill-over effects for Europe of

instability in the Middle East and fragile states such as migration, transnational crime, terrorism, and radicalisation, led Europe to focus its priorities and its increasingly limited resources as a result of the financial crisis and the austerity policies that followed (Mead 2014; Niblett 2017; Müller 2016; Raik and Rantanen 2013).

'Principled pragmatism' was the result of this stark wake-up call for Europe, when it realised its notably limited ability to diffuse human rights and democracy norms globally and in its neighbourhood despite eloquent and ambitious declarations. This realisation also came hand in hand with the realisation that Europe as a whole had come to have critical dependencies that severely limited its autonomy (most notably its energy dependency on Russia); and that Europe had been far overtaken by the United States and China in the digital sphere at a time when digitisation is restructuring every aspect of economic, social, and political life, reshaping security and defence and the global economy, and basically provoking tectonic shifts in global affairs with Europe no longer at the centre of global power and influence.

In 2016, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, presented a Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy reflecting a principled yet pragmatic approach to external relations. Unfortunately, while it was adopted by the European Heads of State and Government, it was essentially ignored as it came only days after the British referendum on 23 June 2016 that sealed the UK's departure from the EU (Techau 2016; Zandee 2016; Biscop 2016). It took a return to war on the continent for a Strategic Compass with a plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy to be adopted in 2022.

Europe as a security actor

From the outset, security was at the heart of the European integration project. It intended to protect its members from the Soviet Union and its ideological and military influence, and it also intended to peacefully integrate Germany into the post-war system. Throughout the Cold War, efforts to establish a common defence community in Western Europe quickly collapsed. Lack of political will to move forward on the security front, increasing opposition to military expenditure from a society that preferred to see funds channelled into social services, and Western Europe's reliance on NATO are the core reasons behind this perpetual postponement of the organisation of its security dimension. The Western European Union, founded in 1948, obliged all members to provide the necessary military and other aid and assistance if a member was attacked (Article 51, UN Charter). But, given the modest capabilities assigned to the WEU by the Europeans, this was more symbolic than substantial. It is NATO, essentially through the military power of the United States, that provided security to the western and southern flanks of Europe and that projected Europe's military might, as part of the Transatlantic Alliance, into the bipolar world; it

is NATO that projected western Europe's security in the international arena. A sort of division of labour may be considered to have taken place with security and defence assigned to NATO, and thus under the influence of the United States, and non-military aspects of foreign policy increasingly considered as an area for common positions among the countries of western Europe. It took the end of the Cold War and the prospect of unification of the divided continent to enable European security policy, as distinct from the Transatlantic Alliance, to develop (Van Eekelen 2013).

The eastern parts of Europe were also unable to project an autonomous security identity in international relations during the Cold War. The countries of central and eastern Europe joined the Warsaw Pact, which was created by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at a time of diminishing East–West tension and with the aim to eventually negotiate away both the Warsaw Pact and NATO to Moscow's advantage (Byrne 2013).

The Warsaw Pact did transform into the military counterpart of NATO, but it did not give the Soviet alliance or the Eastern European countries an important security function. Ideology often overrode realist and objective strategic planning, and the Pact was unable to achieve solid agreement among the members about the nature of the threats that they had to address together through it. Under Mikhail Gorbachev's reformist leadership, the Warsaw Pact managed to achieve a meaningful role in international security by providing the framework, along with NATO, through which the military confrontation apparatus between the two blocs in Europe was dismantled.

The Cold War finally provided the context for one of Europe's most influential and dynamic institutions on security matters, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The famous 'Helsinki effect' resulting from the Helsinki Process is considered to have transformed the agenda of East–West relations and provided a common platform around which opposition forces such as Solidarity (in Poland), Charter 77 (in Czechoslovakia), and other democratic movements in Eastern Europe could mobilise. It provided the political space for democratic opposition movements to emerge in the Eastern Bloc. The Final Act of the CSCE, signed in Helsinki in 1975, mainly due to the redefinition of security that the western European counterparts provided, essentially undermined the viability of one-party communist rule. It also developed a set of confidence-building measures and a comprehensive understanding of security beyond its military aspects that contributed to the largely peaceful transitions to democracy after 1989 (Thomas 2001; Wenger and Mockli 2013). The emergence of a common European identity based upon respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has been considered a key driver to the Helsinki Process that contributed to changing international relations during the bipolar era. In effect, it was the European Community that insisted on including human rights on the CSCE agenda over US and Soviet objections. This insistence on the part of the EC was a continuation of their 1973 Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity formalising the commitment of the member

states to human rights as central to the European identity. For the countries of Eastern Europe, it was economic motivation to establish closer relations with Western Europe that led them to accept respect for human rights as part of the 'package'.

So, how do these distinctive security dimensions relate to the sort of power that Europe represents in international relations? Has Europe, and more specifically the EU, developed into a civilian power? A proto-military power? Or a new kind of international actor?

The moves to establishing a common security policy in the post-Cold War era through the Eurocorps, the growing string of military engagements, or the Rapid Reaction Force suggest that the EU gradually began to edge away from being 'just' a civilian power. In effect, the Union rendered the WEU obsolete, set up its own rapid reaction force, created standing integrated military units that can be dispatched at short notice to crisis areas by Council decision, and carried out more than 20 civilian and military operations. There is some reticence to admitting that the EU is no longer a civilian power, and while some analyses consider the EU has retained its civilian qualities because questions of defence remain within NATO, other analyses consider that it is thanks to its militarisation that the EU can finally act as a 'real' civilian power able to promote democratic principles in global affairs.

The debate on what sort of military capabilities the EU ought to develop is long and elaborate. Opinions have differed as to whether the EU should develop a stronger military dimension (particularly given the high budget costs and low public support for defence expenditures until Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022) and as to how this military dimension can develop as complementary to the Atlantic Alliance – or, to put it more bluntly, as complementary to US military power, rather than to overlap or rival it.

The comparative advantages of the EU in development aid and humanitarian assistance and its skills in peacekeeping, monitoring, and providing technical assistance have long been put forward as reasons why the EU's security character should develop to complement the United States. However, the fact that the EU may have strategic values and objectives of its own (separate from the common transatlantic ones), and the divergence between the European and American, or between some European and some American, approaches to dealing with the current security challenges such as international terrorism, weapons proliferation, and failed states, have been cited as reasons for the EU to develop in part its own security identity and to continue promoting the importance of non-military aspects of security. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks showed the limitations of the United States' unipolar authority and unilateral use of its military might in the current global world. Given the economic interdependence that defines world affairs, until the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008 it was contended that the European model, based on multilateralism and interdependence, was more suited to the changing twenty-first century. The eurozone crisis that followed, however, saw the rise of

defensive nationalism and disintegration trends within the Union that severely challenged the assumption and hope for many that the EU was offering a softer, more inclusive model for international cooperation that would inspire interstate relations in the twenty-first century.

The invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 put these concerns to rest. At the Versailles Summit on 10–11 March 2022, the Heads of State and Government declared their decision to 'take more responsibility for our security and take further decisive steps towards building our European sovereignty, reducing our dependencies and designing a new growth and investment model for 2030' in response to growing instability, strategic competition, security threats, and notably, Russia's aggression (Versailles Declaration 2022). This decision to bolster Europe's defence capabilities and capacity to act autonomously from NATO includes a commitment to substantially invest in defence expenditures, strengthen the European industrial and technological base so as to be able to conduct the full range of missions and operations – including by investing in strategic enablers such as cybersecurity and space-based connectivity – and enhance military mobility throughout the EU. It also led to the decision to reduce Europe's energy dependencies (notably on Russian energy sources) and render its economic base more robust (through strategic alliances on critical raw material, semi-conductors, digital services, and health and food security).

The war in Ukraine, while still unravelling at the time of writing, seems to have radically impacted Europe. In a matter of weeks, Germany turned away from 75 years of relative pacifism. Although its re-militarisation was kick-started by the deep shock to trust in transatlantic relations provoked by the Trump administration, Russia's invasion left no room for doubt about its intentions towards Europe's security and quelled Germany's long-held belief in the power of economic interdependence to reshape geopolitics. As for the Baltic Sea and the High North, the deteriorating security situation led Finnish public opinion, for the first time in Finnish history, to support joining NATO (Forsberg and Moyer 2022); the Swedish parliament to vote in favour of the country's future accession to the Alliance (Ålander and Paul 2022); and Norway, which has always maintained a balance between deterrence through membership in NATO and reassurance towards Russia, to expand its transatlantic relationship. More broadly, the war has provided a new impetus for closer collaboration among most democracies, or what many analysts have described as the awakening of Europe from its post-Cold War slumber (Krastev 2022; Burrows and Manning 2022). While recent crises like the eurozone debt shock in the early 2010s or the 2015–2016 refugee emergency have taught us that political developments can shift dramatically within months, there is a sense that the 2010s marked the beginning of a new era in terms of what international relations experts used to call the post-post-Cold War period. The 2020s saw the reconceptualisation of security and geopolitics to include health, and the need for Europe overall, not just the EU, to defend the post-Cold War European security order and shift from a security

order largely shaped by soft power to one that is defined by the realpolitik of hard power.

The EU and global trade

The EU's international presence and influence goes well beyond its foreign and security policy. In the current globalisation era, traditional diplomacy and foreign policy is only part of the picture; economic policy, trade, development cooperation, and humanitarian assistance are the rest.

Trade has been a Community competence for decades and the EU's position as a major trader has ensured that it has been a significant actor in both the GATT and the WTO. No country has more trade agreements than the European Union (50 in force or provisionally applied in 2022), and it remains the only internal market in the world. As a dominant trade power, trade policy is naturally key to how the Union engages with the rest of the world and defines the kind of global actor it is. It has consistently favoured a stronger multilateral trading system precisely because it is a major exporter and also because of its nature. The challenges concerning its internal coordination across the wide range of trade areas and the complexity of the EU decision-making processes mean that the EU pursues multiple, and often contradictory, trade policies.

Young and Peterson (2014) have noted that, overall, the EU favours free trade and that in recent years there has been an alignment of European policymakers with neoliberal ideas in the economic field. Where economic interests are muted, foreign policy objectives may prevail, whereas the EU manifests a protectionist behaviour in areas where internal political dynamics demand more stringent social regulations and protective measures.

While the EU undoubtedly has significant trade power resources, the extent to which these resources translate into influence is contextually specific. As the global trade arena has undergone deep changes through the rise of the BRICS, and most notably China, there are increasing instances of the EU being sidelined in international negotiations.

Moreover, it is questionable to what extent the EU has used its global trade power as an expression of its declared desire to be a global, normative actor. EU trade agreements include a chapter upholding international conventions on environment, labour rights, and human rights. Yet its aspiration to reinforce democratic and human rights norms and values has not been reflected in a meaningful manner in its trade relations with China or Russia, for instance. Where action was taken, as in the case of Iran (or Belarus, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, countries with less geostrategic clout), this was after intense US pressure and stands out more as the exception than the rule in EU global trade behaviour (ibid., p. 224).

Similarly, its Everything But Arms (EBA) arrangement (adopted since 2001 for least-developed countries, LDCs), which grants duty-free, quota-free access to all products except for arms and ammunition, has had questionable results in these countries as a result of its inadequate safeguards and checks to prevent

abuses and the intensification rather than alleviation of economic injustice in the world's poorest countries. Furthermore, considering that it has been proving increasingly unable to promote its interests through multilateral negotiations in the face of opposition from the emerging countries, the EU has in practice been de-emphasising multilateralism through launching bilateral negotiations with some of its core trading partners.

This has led many analysts to conceptualise the EU more as a 'market power' than as a 'normative power'. The size of its market and its activist trade policy undoubtedly make it a global economic power, but one whose strength is retracting.

The rise of protectionism on behalf of the United States, particularly under the Trump administration (and continued with the Biden administration in the context of its intensifying trade war with China), led European countries to reassess trade policy and instruments. Europe, together with the United States, had promoted China's integration into the world economy since the 1980s, assuming that China would slowly transition towards a liberal free-market democracy and thus gradually resemble them. This outcome manifestly has not happened. Rather, Beijing combined authoritarianism and capitalism to create a new form of communism that has taken advantage of the rules-based trade regime, largely built by Europe and the United States, to grow while engaging in unfair competition on world markets through subsidies and state-owned enterprises. It is also developing its digital policy and its global infrastructure, known as the Belt and Road Initiative, to increase its influence in its near neighbourhood, in Africa, and throughout Europe. In this unsettling global context, both the UK (after Brexit) and the EU have sought to strengthen their 'autonomy' through trade defence instruments, such as retaliatory tariffs, anti-coercion tools, or bans on products made in an environmentally unsustainable way (House of Lords 2021; Freymann 2021; Malmström 2022). In the case of the EU, the member states have also chosen to strategically invest in their own infrastructure initiative, the Global Gateway, which basically aims to counter Chinese influence by offering a European alternative based on sustainability, good governance, fairness, and transparency principles (European Commission 2021).

And how do others see Europe as a global actor?

In spite of the deep challenges that it currently faces, the EU has become a significant, and rather distinctive, international actor. But to have the entire picture of the sort of global actor it is, it is important to also understand what sort of global actor it is perceived to be. Europe's relation with the 'others' has been a constant theme running through all dimensions of Europe. The question we explore here is how (some of these) 'others' see the EU in world politics and the role that it has been trying to shape for itself.

Why does this matter? First, because the expectations, perceptions, concerns, and even prejudices that the other actors on the global scene have of 'Europe',

and specifically of the EU, contribute to our understanding of the sort of presence that Europe has in world affairs. Second, because the sort of power that other actors perceive it to be may also influence their behaviour towards it and, consequently, may also influence the effectiveness of EU policies and initiatives, but also the scope of action that the EU may have on specific issues and policy areas. Third, because external images, the representations that others have of an actor, affect and shape their identity. As already explored in previous chapters on European identity and Europe as culture, labelling and tracing the contours of the 'others' contributes to identity formation; so, considering the dynamic nature of Europe's global role and identity, it is interesting to examine how others perceive Europe.

The EU's global role and its identity in world affairs have largely been shaped through self-representation. While it is important to be clear and understand what the EU 'says about itself', it is equally relevant to understand what the world 'thinks' of the EU in order to do a 'reality check' between perceptions and realities.

Research has suggested that the EU's political and social image is fragmented in the perceptions of non-Europeans. When they do have an opinion about the EU's purpose, it is often perceived as ineffective; even if they do feel a political and cultural affinity with Europe, the perception is that it is largely irrelevant in their regional politics. Israeli perceptions of the EU are particularly telling here, where even though they describe a cultural closeness, they consider the EU to be a non-factor in the Middle East Peace Process. The Palestinians also view the EU as a marginal actor in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict despite the fact that the EU is the largest donor to Palestinian state-building efforts (Lucarelli and Fioramonti 2010). Other common themes in non-Europeans' perceptions vis-à-vis the EU are its lack of internal unity and its persistent Eurocentrism, which appears to inhibit the EU from being a full-fledged actor in world affairs, while it often endorses a subordinate position with regard to the United States. This is the case across most of the Middle East. In short, the EU's economic relevance is readily acknowledged but not its strategic influence, and there has been consistent criticism about a lack of coherence between trade and development policies and its selective and inconsistent conditionality approach. The EU is simply not regarded as a global power that 'calls the shots'.

A similarly disconcerting perception is also shared by stakeholders in international institutions such as the UN. The core challenges are lack of unity among the EU member states and the lowest-common denominator approach, combined with a complicated bureaucracy on foreign policy matters that is perceived as producing ineffective and unreliable decisions in the international arena. How the normative dimension is perceived is also of particular importance. The EU's approach to democracy promotion is acknowledged and, in fact, its emphasis on political dialogue is contrasted with the more 'aggressive' US approach – this was particularly the case during the Trump administration (2017–2021). However, talk of values can ring hollow to the countries still struggling with the structural

remains of colonialism (Giddens 2007). Political conditionality attached to development aid and trade agreements – the EU has typically conditioned loans, development aid, and financial assistance to reforms aiming at democracy promotion, good governance, and corruption reduction – has been challenged by African partners in particular, especially as the rise of China or Turkey facilitated access to financing and investment with few or no visible strings attached.

Historical and cultural variables unavoidably frame the way each actor is perceived by the rest of the international community and how its policies and actions are labelled. It comes as no surprise, then, that conditionality risks being interpreted within a historical context as profoundly affected by colonialism and dependency in certain cases, or that specific alliances may be framed in terms of strategic partnerships and historical bonds between countries and communities.

It is also interesting to consider perceptions towards Europe in Central Asia – specifically Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are a part of the world that Europe had more limited contact with mainly due to the Soviet Union and the continued political influence of Russia after the USSR's demise, as well as the growing economic presence of China. Interest in Central Asian countries by Europe was first conditioned by 9/11 and the subsequent international campaign in Afghanistan and then by the EU's enlargements of 2004 and 2007 and the establishment of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) that brought it closer to Central Asia. Central Asia was no longer a distant region, rather it had become 'the neighbours' neighbour'. It subsequently became an area of interest for the EU to potentially diversify energy sources in the wake of the gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine in the mid-2000s (Matveeva 2006). Across Central Asia, while levels of anti-Americanism and Sinophobia have tended to be high, Europe has tended to benefit from positive perceptions. Europe's cultural history is often romanticised and seen as attractive and inspiring, and until the global financial crisis and Brexit, the European Union was perceived as a unique example of interstate collaboration referred to in positive ways. The unfolding of the eurozone financial crisis, the humanitarian emergency of 2015–2016, and Brexit appear to have contributed to a substantial scepticism in these countries, and most notably Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, towards Europe (Arynov 2018; Schatz 2008).

An image of a 'dying Europe' has emerged throughout Central Asian countries, compounded by a growing narrative of demographic decline and 'moral decadence' of *Gayropa* propagated by Russian media and political narratives since Vladimir Putin's special address to the Russian Federal Assembly in 2012. The widespread protests in Moscow that followed the Russian parliamentary elections in 2011 and the presidential election in 2012 were seen by the Kremlin as being part of a Western-backed plot to bring about regime change in Russia, in much the same fashion as the so-called colour revolutions had done elsewhere in the post-Soviet space within the previous decade. In response, Vladimir Putin initiated several policies to crack down domestically on Western influence and promote Russia as a defender of conservative values. '*Gayropa*' appeared as a key

geopolitical signifier of difference between Russia and the EU, increasingly criticised for promoting Western values – and the defence of the LGBT community, in particular – as universal standards, and for imposing them on Russia (Tuyshka 2022; Foxall 2019; Arynov 2018). A very similar narrative also developed by autocrats and populist illiberal elites in eastern, central, and south-eastern EU member states (Frear 2021; Cooley 2019; Mihai and Buzogány 2021).

Concluding remarks

Europe's presence in global matters and world politics goes far beyond the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the foreign and diplomatic policies of its 28, and since 2016, its 27 member states. It represents more than the aggregate of the EU's policies across all sectors of activity. As the EU has been growing as an institutionalised polity and through enlargement, so too has its presence in the world naturally increased.

At the same time, Europe remains a (regularly expanding) community of sovereign states, making it difficult at times to extract the common themes that it represents. As such, wide generalisations have been made to identify specific traits characterising Europe's global power. For instance, it is generally assumed that since the late twentieth century Europeans have become resistant to using military options for the pursuit of their foreign policy goals, and yet the UK, France, and many other European countries from Poland to Portugal have engaged in multiple military conflicts in recent decades. One trait that undoubtedly characterises Europe's global power is its belief in its 'transformative power', which involves attracting and inviting the 'other' to become a partner and voluntarily adopt many of its ways, values, policies, and principles. The past decade, however, has shown clear signs that the EU is facing relative economic decline, a lack of strategic orientation, declining legitimacy, and a loss of attractiveness both inside and outside Europe (for instance in Turkey). In this current state, it needs to revitalise the European project; if it does not, then analysts and public opinion question its added value beyond the mere preservation of past achievements and its ability to defy the risks of gradual marginalisation and global irrelevance.

The EU has been regarded as a uniquely cosmopolitan and internationalist power. Defined as a 'liberal superpower', it has been considered particularly well-equipped for navigating through a post-modern international system. The EU has even been referred to as the world's most committed and effective promoter of liberal political rights, collective security, and multilateralism. As regards its approach to security, it is considered one of promoting global public goods with an 'international civilian agenda'. The case has also been made that the EU is essentially the 'engine' driving the global system towards a rules-based multilateralism that underpins its own integration (see McCormick 2007; Telo 2007; Smith 2008; Youngs 2010; Emmanouilidis 2012; Tsoukalis and Emmanouilidis 2011). EU foreign policy is considered to be based on a series of normative principles, generally acknowledged within the UN system as being universally applicable. In

short, the EU has been associated with post-modern values of peace, multilateralism, internationalism, soft power, and civilian means for dealing with conflicts. And on economic matters, the emphasis has been on sustainable development and countering climate change, quality of life, and protection of a just welfare state. But to what extent do these actually translate into a global role for Europe?

In 2007, Anthony Giddens argued that Europe can, and should, aim to be a developed regional power, with 'some considerable clout in the world affairs'. In 2009, Giandomenico Majone described Europe, essentially referring to the EU, as the 'Would-be World Power'. This description captures rather neatly the essence of the EU's efforts to become a global power at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In other words, despite over half a century of cooperation in the field of external relations and a background of rich legacies of diplomatic outreach of its member states, the EU has been 'punching below its weight' as regards its global presence. The current global changes require that the European Union persuades, once again, the anxious, and even distrustful, public as to what its role in the world and in their everyday life is. The democratic peace thesis was relevant and meaningful in pulling the EU through the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. But it has been challenged as insufficient for a while now, and particularly since the EU's poor management of Yugoslavia's disintegration. Rebuilding a zone of peace within and around the EU remains a prime task, as does its role in minimising the risks that stem from climate change, global terrorism, pandemics, and international crime. In the present conjuncture, its powers of persuasion find themselves in rocky waters.

International developments have long pointed to the fact that Europe is no longer the main pivot of global concerns. Some, such as historian Niall Ferguson (2007), declared the EU an entity on the brink of decline and destruction. Others, such as policy analyst Marc Leonard, have spoken of the twenty-first century as a New European Century not because they expect Europe to run the world as an empire, but because the European way of doing things will have become the world's (2005). The EU's global role or the values that it has tried to project in global politics have raised much scepticism. The EU has often been derided for lacking international vision and for eschewing power; and while some critics have derided the emphasis on liberal values as naive, self-defeating, and harmfully utopian, risking ideological overstretch, others have increasingly criticised the EU for tilting away from liberal internationalism. In response, there have been calls for a more pragmatic approach. More than a decade ago, Richard Youngs (2010) proposed that 'a cosmopolitan European foreign policy should be built on sobriety rather than missionary zeal. A form of "realistic Wilsonianism" … European cosmopolitanism should be pragmatic, but neither indeterminate nor inconstant' (p. 138).

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10
EUROPE IS …

There are two answers to the question 'What is Europe?' The short answer is that Europe is a space and a place defined by geography and imbued with specific social, cultural, and economic connotations. Throughout history, and still today, scholars writing on Europe and politicians involved in national or European politics often disagree on the geographic limits of this space and the defining elements of Europe.

The long answer is that Europe is first and foremost a concept that takes different shapes and meanings depending on the realm of life on which it is applied and the historical period that we are looking at. At a given point in time, depending on the perspective we adopt and the situation in which we find ourselves, Europe may represent very different things. Thus, we should better talk about *Europes* in the plural.

An additional feature of our longer and more nuanced answer about what Europe is, consists of accepting that there is no absolute truth to be found, there is no definitive answer to be given to this question. Europe is in the eye of the beholder. Indeed, it is this dynamic and constructed aspect of the definition of Europe that this book has tried to highlight. Our aim has been to provide the tools and the elements for the interested reader to dig further and make up their own mind as to what Europe has meant in the past, in different spheres of social, cultural, political, and economic life, what it means today, and what it can possibly signify in the future.

The size and ambition of the project – to review the concept of Europe from different perspectives and seek to answer the question in a comprehensive, social-scientific, and yet accessible manner – made some compromises necessary. In each chapter we have adopted and reviewed some theoretical arguments and neglected others; we have selected some views and topics and ommitted some thinkers or questions; we have dug deeper into some challenges and referenced

others only briefly. This book is the product of critical scientific inquiry but it does not claim to offer an objective view of what Europe is. It offers a critical, albeit partial, perspective – our perspective – on what Europe is.

Reviewing the different definitions of Europe and its shape in different historical periods, we have organised our inquiry into eight dimensions, as if it were a scale on which to answer, step by step, the 'What is Europe?' question.

The historical viewpoint

We first surveyed the concept of Europe and its evolution through history. We argue that the concept of Europe has been rather unimportant for a good part of the last 2,500 years. Even if the cradle of Europe is presumed to be Classical Greece, we find that Europe as a concept hardly existed at the time. In addition, until the nineteenth century a belief in Europe as a culture, community, civilisation, or centre of political power had been rather weak. It was never a driving force of historical events. The concept also significantly changed in content and geographical location, shifting west and north. The points of reference moved from Classical Greece to ancient Rome to Christianity and its reformation in the north-west part of the continent, and then it went global through the exploratory missions of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Hellenic Europe, geographically located in the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean and the area that largely comprises today's Middle East, provides the mythical foundation of today's concept of Europe. This early reference to Europe was the centre of opposition between the Hellenes and the Barbarians, or between Greeks and non-Greeks. Some Classical thinkers indeed identified Greece with Europe and Persia (the Barbarians) with Asia. These proto-conceptions of Europe point to a cultural idea and are inextricably linked to the Classical Greek heritage. At the same time, what Europe meant then has been reconstructed through the lens of what Europe and the 'European civilisation' signify today, hence emphasising ancient Hellas as being its intellectual cradle.

While the concept of Europe emerged through Hellenistic times and the Roman Empire, it acquired some currency after the division of the Roman Empire into western and eastern. In the centuries that followed, Europe became westernised, while the eastern part of the empire became orientalised, as Delanty (1995, p. 20) concisely put it. Although Costantinople was greeted as the new Rome, the Byzantine Empire was increasingly orientalised and Europe moved westwards. It was in Christianity's organisation into a single powerful Catholic Church in much of the European continent that Europe found a new cultural content and a reinforced unity.

Christianity and the community of Christians, Christendom, became vehicles for the concept of Europe to survive and gradually also acquire some geopolitical meaning. After the birth of Islam in AD 700 and the spread of the new religion across North Africa and in the Iberian Peninsula, Europe found in the Moors and in the Muslim religion a suitable threatening 'Other'. The old Persian

cultural 'other' was now transformed into an actual military and political threat – that of the Arab conquerors. Christianity unified, as a cultural glue, the peoples and cultures of the former Western Roman empire and its more northern territories, including also the Barbarian tribes that had come from the north and had been converted to Christianity. Germanic Europe emerged in the tenth century, which, along with the Papacy in Italy, made Europe into a suitable cultural, political, and geopolitical signifier that distinguished the continent from the Arabs and the Muslim world, and from the Byzantine Empire and its own eastern version of Christianity.

During the Middle Ages the concept of Europe remained largely unimportant, subjugated to the much stronger cultural and political element of Christianity. It was in the era of the great discoveries in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries that Europe emerged as a self-conscious concept. The kings and princes of Europe who went to discover the new lands, and later to 'civilise' the indigenous peoples that they 'discovered' there, were now considered 'Europeans'. While the motivations behind these discoveries and colonial expansion were economic and military, their justification was cultural and political, covered by the name and symbol of a Christian Europe.

Throughout this period, the racial profile of Europe as 'White' became more visible. This racial connotation was further reinforced by opposition to the Arabs, the Moors, and the Turks. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also marked by the religious wars and divisions within Europe. Anti-Roman Catholicism culminated in the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, the notion of Europe bears in those times the seeds of its disunity: it was by incorporating but also silencing internal divisions among Christians and the Jewish traditions of Christianity that Europe managed to emerge as some sort of common cultural concept, although with limited, if any, political and geopolitical purchase.

The notion of Europe acquires importance in modern times as the nation-state emerges as the predominant form of geopolitical power. It is in the universalism of the particular, in the celebration of the nation-state and the conflicts and wars that nationalism brings, that the necessity for unity and peace and the potential of an overarching cultural and political as well as geopolitical concept of Europe emerges. The tragedies of World War I and particularly World War II led to the most developed project of unifying and celebrating Europe.

Perhaps one element that can be retained from the historical excursus over the meanings of the term 'Europe' is that it is when it is most contested that Europe emerges as important – a bit like collective identity in general: it is by its absence or crisis that it becomes most visible and felt.

The 2015 referendum where Greeks were invited to decide whether Greece should accept the bailout conditions in the country's government-debt crisis proposed jointly by the European Commission (EC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Central Bank (ECB), and the 2016 referendum that led to the decision of British voters for the UK to leave the EU are two critical moments when references to Europe became culturally, politically, and

geopolitically important, even existential for some (Triandafyllidou et al. 2013). While neither are mono-causal events, and many variables including age, social class, postcode, education level, and political allegiance explain the way the publics in Greece and Britain eventually voted, perceptions of what 'Europe' signified, what it represented, were deeply defining. In the case of the UK for example, Brexit has been seen as the culmination of decades of a process of 'othering', whereby 'Europe' – and European migrants to the UK in particular – are represented as an 'Other' that was somehow alien and even a threat to the UK, its history, culture, and values (van der Zwet et al. 2020; Hobolt 2016). For others, the UK has been consistently resistant to European integration quite simply because there has been a suspicion that the EU is really about the Germans and the French (Hirsch 2018). For others still, the Leave campaign secured its victory by politicising Englishness and bringing together two contradictory but interlocking visions: on the one hand, an imperial longing to restore Britain's place in the world without coming to terms with the corrosive legacies of colonial conquest and racist subjugation, and on the other an insular, Powellite narrative of island retreat from a 'globalising' world, one that is no longer recognisably 'British' (Satnam and McGeever 2018).

What we learn from this brief review of the evolution of the concept of Europe in different periods and in different realms of life is that it is fluidity, historicity, and the need to adopt a critical self-reflective mode that should guide us in thinking about Europe.

Projects and visions of Europe

Indeed, this critical and self-reflective approach is our guide for the second grid, which looks at how Europe has been transformed from a rather weak and ambivalent concept to a project – or rather a set of different political projects put forward in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by statespersons, intellectuals, and politicians with a view to uniting Europe. Our analysis shows that these projects differed greatly among themselves in terms of their political and socio-economic aspirations as well as their cultural content.

Napoleon's initial conception of Europe in the early nineteenth century involved conquering the continent and attempting to unite it politically, administratively, economically, and culturally but failed because it was a conquest rather than a union that he forged. Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, took the baton after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, seeking to reinstall the pre–French Revolution conservative status quo, but obviously this was no longer possible as the Spring of Nations had begun. The Holy Alliance between Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Russian Tsar could no longer offer a dominant narrative, and France, Britain, Spain, and Portugal stood out as liberal powers seeking to have their say on pan-European matters.

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by the parallel disintegration of the former empires and the difficult birth of several of the

largest European nation-states (Germany and Italy). Nation-states also started emerging in the south-eastern part of the continent through the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, even if this process took well into the twentieth century before it was completed. While some of the positive political reforms of this period, notably democratisation, parliamentarisation, and expansion of franchise, can be characterised as common European traits of these socio-political processes, at the close of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century Europe was more divided than ever, marked by aggressive nationalism, opposed state powers and spheres of influence, and a 'boiling' working class that mobilised for its rights (see Marx and Engels's reference to the spectre of communism haunting Europe, 1888, p. 2).

It is no wonder, then, that the second decade of the twentieth century brought with it World War I and a magnitude of destruction and loss of human life that had never been imagined before. It signalled the beginning of the era of 'total war'. It is in the aftermath of such destruction that several unifying projects emerged. One of the best known is that of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and his Pan-Europe movement, with its dream of a United States of Europe. However, the quest for unity in Europe was to be hijacked by the fascist and Nazi projects for an ethnically cleansed totalitarian Europe. Their project, fortunately, failed and through the ashes of World War II the contemporary project of a united Europe emerged.

However, this project was fundamentally flawed by the internal political division between Western and Eastern Europe, between free market liberal democracies and communist regimes. Furthermore, there were also the peripheral divisions of Nordic Europe, which sought to stay outside the risky power balance of the Cold War and the dictatorial regimes of Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal that managed to remain in power well into the 1970s. The unification of Europe and its French (Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman) and Italian (Altiero Spinelli) architects was thus limp. However, the overall climate of the post-war decades was characterised by a strong pro-European movement carried forward by well-known federalists such as Henri Spaak, Fernand Dehouse, Alcide de Gasperi, and André Philip. While the emphasis at the time was on peace and prosperity, the cultural, and later political, elements of a European unity started to be forged. It was from this perspective that the southern European countries were incorporated into the EEC in the 1980s.

Of course it was only after 1989 and the reconnection of Eastern and Western Europe and the gradual incorporation of the Nordic countries that we have reached the level of unity and internal contestation and discontent that we experience today in European politics.

Reviewing critically the different projects of uniting Europe that developed in the last two centuries, we could summarise the idea of Europe as one that has essentially taken three core approaches. The first is fundamentally one seeking Europe's regeneration through its past grandeurs. These visions have looked into the past, often recreating or reinterpreting it, emphasising the common roots of

Europe's culture and identity, or its distinctive characteristics whose integrity had to be maintained. The second approach is one of preservation in the face of contemporary challenges from within and from the global arena. The third peers into the future and involves the generation of a new, different tomorrow; Europe frames a condition to aspire to, a political goal to be accomplished in order to break from the past or from conditions of degeneration, decline, and weakness. In all the forms that the idea of Europe has taken, Europe has been the 'self' and the 'other' bound into one. Although each of its constituent parts (countries and peoples) considers itself European and rightfully claims shared ownership of Europe's history, values, and civilisation, this identity is simultaneously an elusive one because the centre of power is often seen, with a certain anxiety, as being 'elsewhere'.

The cultural dimension of Europe

Our third reading grid as to what Europe is has been that of culture and values. In recent decades, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and philosophers have taken a strong interest in exploring Europe's cultural dimensions and the signifiers of European culture, European heritage, the cultural identity of Europe, and the extent to which it is different from or similar to 'Western' culture, as well as how it is perceived by Europeans in the eastern and western, northern and southern parts of the continent. For some, the idea of a European culture and set of values has been a socially constructed discourse that has transformed through time, responding to changing socio-economic and political conditions. Others have emphasised ruptures and disagreements within such historical discourses on European culture and values, pointing to the impossibility of speaking of a single European culture or set of values. Our perspective focuses on a *parcours culturel* that seeks to uncover the dominant, the alternative, and the dissenting definitions of the term 'European culture'.

We thus discuss European culture as a set of cleavages along which the European cultural elements and currents can be organised. The first cleavage or tension in the European cultural path is that of racism versus anti-racism and equality. The enlightened modern Europe after the tragedy of the Holocaust builds its culture on the basis of a condemnation of racism in all its forms. Nonetheless, not only is there an inherent sense of 'superiority' in the construction of a European culture (seen as the 'mother' of all cultures, the archetype of modernity and progress) but racism, while in theory eradicated, still persists against specific groups, particularly in the form of a latent (or more pronounced) anti-Semitism and racism against Black people, as discrimination against the Roma (who, being the only pan-European minority, are constructed as non-European and non-adaptable to modernity because of their special cultural traditions), and Muslimophobia that views Islam as incompatible with Europe's culture and values.

The second cleavage that permeates a notion of European culture is that of religion versus secularism and the appropriate degrees of the latter for

liberal democratic societies in Europe. Thus, while Europe has gradually grown unchurched, the relations between church and state and the role of religion in public life remain contested matters. The tensions in this domain are manifold; they include tension between the Islamic and the Christian religions, but also among the Protestant, the Catholic, and the Orthodox Christian currents, and between the atheist and religious views.

A third cleavage that marks European culture is predominantly ideological between the left and the right, between a view that privileges liberalism, individual autonomy, competition, and the pursuit of freedom at all costs, and one that favours a sense of solidarity, community rights, social justice, and social protection. While the distinction may take its more pronounced form in politics, it has important cultural ramifications as it defines social and personal relations, quality of life choices, and views of what a good life is.

We argue that, overall, the plurality within the European culture (or European civilisation) develops at two levels. First, Europe can be conceived as an 'intra-civilisational constellation', composed of a number of civilisations, which, interestingly, all appear in pairs. We thus speak of the Greco-Roman or the Judeo-Christian, the Byzantine and the Slavic-Orthodox or Slavic and Orthodox traditions. Another version of European culture includes the Jewish diasporic tradition, the plural realities of the Ottoman Empire, and the encounters with contemporary European Islam. Second, Europe includes a transcontinental dimension of inter-civilisational encounters. This approach highlights the influence of the non-European world on the construction of a European culture through opposition or the 'mirror' effect. From trade to violent exchanges, colonisation, imperialism, and travel there has been a mixing, an exchange and learning between European and North American, Asian, African, or Latin American civilisations.

Interestingly, this plurality of cultural traditions perhaps offers the potential (but not necessarily the reality) of an open constellation that can accommodate past differences and new minorities or new populations and their own cultural traits, contributing to a new synthesis of the European culture and carrying forward the European *parcours culturel*.

A European identity or an identification with Europe

The fourth dimension addressed in this book refers to the ever-present discussion over the (non-)existence of a strong European identity. It is our contention that European identity is, like all collective identities, in the eye of the beholder: it is shaped by the socio-economic, national, subjective, and objective circumstances of the subject it expresses. It can be enacted or simply articulated through discourses. It is one among many collective identities that people have, and is in constant evolution.

There is no essence of a European identity that has always existed and that remains immutable. European identity is part of a multiple set of identity features

that may form part of an individual's identity. Its salience varies not only among individuals but in line with a given context and situation.

The question arises for many people whether European identity is like national identity, notably a primary political identity forged on a set of common cultural and civic features shared by all Europeans, or whether it is an umbrella type of higher-order identity, compatible with the citizen's primary loyalty to the nation. We argue that while both cultural and civic elements are present in the constellation of a sense of European identity (and in its varied expressions), it cannot actually be considered a primary identity that would replace the national one. It rather emerges either as a higher level of identity that encompasses the national or is an intertwined level that offers a new lens through which to look at national belonging but also gives the possibility of nationally framing what Europe is. Indeed, the conflictive model in which national and European identities are understood to be in an antagonistic or zero-sum relationship risks actually misunderstanding and misrepresenting the question of what kind of a European identity exists or may further develop.

The question of whether European identity is primarily political or cultural can be answered only with reference to a specific historical moment. Thus, today, European identity is predominantly cultural in character and not political. It goes hand in hand – sometimes in tension, other times in mutual support – with different national identities, but it is nowhere near substituting them. Actually, it is its cultural connotations that make European identity today compatible with strong national identities. European identity is also stratified in terms of class, educational attainment, and ethnicity. The possible emergence of a collective European identity appears stronger among middle class and educated people who have the opportunity to travel and be exposed to realities other than their own. At the same time, while European identity is pretty much forged on the basis of the 'unity in diversity' slogan, this diversity is actually ethnically and religiously circumscribed. Migrant communities or minority religions often experience European identity as an exclusionary and discriminatory concept that makes them stand out as different. The limits of what kind of diversity is included in the 'unity' has been emphasised through events of recent decades, particularly with reference to Muslim communities. While the question of how much and what kind of diversity can fit in European unity and identity is far from settled and has no easy, ready-made answer; the ways in which different minorities (ethnic, religious, linguistic) experience their 'Europeanness' remains particularly important.

Ideological and geographical borders

A discussion of Europe's cultural and identity dimensions raises the question of borders and boundaries. Defining what Europe is also involves setting its boundaries, determining where Europe starts and where it ends. Borders are integral to all visions of Europe.

The first question that arises here is where does Europe end? Or rather where does it start? On the west, the boundary is often assumed as clear: it is defined by the Atlantic Ocean and by the North Sea. It is the eastern border that generates greater preoccupation: what belongs to Europe in its eastern outermost corner or its southern periphery remains contested.

At the risk of developing a circular argument, we argue that the question of where Europe's boundaries lie has significantly defined Europe's history and identity and cannot be answered in an objective way. A geographical demarcation of Europe cannot be free of cultural and geopolitical elements that are, in turn, historical – they are historically situated and change in time.

Perhaps what is most relevant to retain from a discussion of Europe's borders is that their importance has varied; we may speak of the rise and fall of borders and bordering. While at the time of empires borders were fuzzy in general and Europe's borders were also moving and fluid, borders have hardened with the advent of nation-states. The requirement for hard and neat borders between countries has also created the necessity of defining in a hard and fast way where Europe starts and ends.

However, this clearly has been a matter of power: the power of those who can decide which country belongs to Europe and which does not, and the power of those outside Europe asking to be part of it (symbolically or, today with the EU, politically). The entire twentieth century was certainly an active bordering period with the redesigning of borders as an outcome of each of the two world wars. In addition, borders were quintessential in the Cold War world order. They were also heavily militarised. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there was a relaxation of borders as the European Union kept expanding and embracing new territories and also engaging in a 'neighbourhood' policy to forge close cooperative relations with those 'beyond the border'.

This is of course also a period of high debate and contestation about those 'borderlands' (Turkey, Ukraine) that might be on the inside or the outside of the border. It is in these discourses where one realises how much borders are a social and political – as well as economic, military, and geostrategic – construction rather than geographical givens.

European borders today coincide with EU territorial borders. They are 'hard' and securitised with a view to controlling the mobility of people, while capital and goods are allowed to flow smoothly in either direction. Following Brexit, the Channel crossing has become deadlier as irregular migrants have attempted to cross over from France, and the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland has stirred more than political and legal issues as it has complicated the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace and security to the island. This shift of Europe's edges from being frontiers and boundaries to becoming highly controlled borders is in opposition to the trends in European culture and identity outlined in this chapter which emphasise internal diversity, plurality, and different forms of engagement and exchange with the 'other(s)'.

The European political landscape

A sixth dimension through which we can define Europe is the political. Politics in Europe have been predominantly territorial, framed within the nation-state. Any political dimension of Europe has had more to do with a sum of the national political dimensions rather than with a proper European transnational political dimension. Within this national framing, political mobilisation and confrontation within European societies have been characterised by cleavages, as defined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). We have the classic core tensions between centre–periphery and between church and state, the sectoral tension between a declining agricultural sector and a developing industrial sector and their respective interests, and, of course, the class cleavage. In the late twentieth century, a post-materialist turn in politics with the rise of the peace and environmental movements in the 1970s, has reframed many of the issues. But economic interests and social concerns have taken a back seat in the early twenty-first century with the emergence of the cleavage between the winners and losers of globalisation and European integration – what Kriesi et al. (2012) have called the integration versus demarcation cleavage. Indeed, this cleavage, while apparently socio-economic, is also motivated by cultural concerns about a loss of autonomy and authenticity. These cleavages are European in character to the extent that they are common, even if with varying degrees of importance, across most European countries.

While politics in Europe remain remarkably tied to the national framework, there is a strong interaction and mutual influence (whether positive or negative) among European societies. It is our contention that national politics in Europe are organised along a common European political map that has shaped national political structures and political ideologies. This common European political map unfolds along two main ideological axes that interact in complex ways. The first concerns the historic opposition between authoritarian and libertarian values, which was most distinctively expressed in the nineteenth century by attitudes to the French Revolution and the liberal and democratic movements that followed it across the continent. Second, there exists a value cleavage between individualism and collectivism, where the former is wary of big government and strong social institutions whereas the latter stresses the need for cooperation and collective institutions that further common interests. These two axes organise politics in Europe and shape answers to three fundamental political questions. What is the role of the state in managing the economy and the means of production? How should we manage and address social inequalities? And, how can different political identities coexist?

Against this background, we identify the following political currents that have marked political life in contemporary Europe: liberalism, socialism and social democracy, communism, conservatism, Christian Democracy, the extreme right, and the greens. What is perhaps common and European in these political currents is the liberal democratic tradition and its opposite, notably

authoritarianism. After all, contemporary European political history is charac-
terised by the struggle between authoritarian/totalitarian and democratic forces
and currents. Indeed, the politics of the twentieth century are marked by fascism
and Nazism but also by the dictatorial regimes in southern Europe until the
1970s, and of course the totalitarian regimes in central and eastern Europe until
1989. From this struggle between the two forces – which is not yet settled if we
look at how radical right-wing parties have gained influence in several European
countries and illiberal governments have been repeatedly re-elected – a strong,
even if not unproblematic, adherence to the principles of liberal democracy
emerges as typically European. Indeed, what is special about European democ-
racy, alongside its political features of liberalism and moderate secularism, is its
social dimension.

If the opposition between democratic and authoritarian currents and lega-
cies in Europe remains alive and kicking, we cannot of course ignore the main
political feature of the end of the twentieth century, notably the dismantling of
left- and right-wing ideologies as we knew them and their realignment – most
forcefully during the recent global and specifically European financial crisis. As
Gianfranco Pasquino (2002) argued, we are not witnessing the end of ideology
but the end of ideological commitment as well as a growing disaffection of citi-
zens with politics and a decline in electoral participation. This ideological defla-
tion does not make the winners and losers disappear or merge with one another.
It rather reinforces the integration–demarcation cleavage.

Alongside this challenge of increasing inequality and ideological flattening,
we witness a constant rebalancing of politics between the national and the supra-
national. This shift to the supranational is not one of changing allegiances of the
citizens; it is rather about greater interdependence among states to address com-
plex transnational challenges such as those of climate change and the COVID-19
pandemic, or ensuring security or tackling the new range of security and safety
challenges resulting from the digital revolution. This shift towards the global is
partly mediated by the European, not only in institutional terms through the
European Union institutions but also in symbolic terms, through a sense of being
part of a bigger whole that shares some common political structures and val-
ues distinct from the other centres of global power, notably the United States,
China, and Russia, and from which it seeks its strategic autonomy, most notably
as regards security, digital technologies, and energy.

A European social model

The social dimension refers to policies that aim at taking care of the most vulner-
able populations in society, and the most vulnerable moments in a person's life,
on the basis of a shared notion of social solidarity. The social dimension is about
conceptions of equality and inequality, solidarity, and community, or indeed
responsibility and autonomy; it is about the rights and obligations of citizens
towards the state and of the state towards its citizens. The social dimension is

fundamentally about what we consider a 'good' society and lies at the heart of the functioning of democracy and citizenship.

Even if the exact breadth and depth of this social solidarity may differ among European countries and so may influence the welfare systems that each supports, European countries have put great emphasis on their systems of social protection in the post-war era in particular. This has created a distinct European model (or, indeed, a set of European models, i.e. the southern rudimentary social model, the continental Romano-Germanic, the Nordic social democratic model, the Anglo-Saxon liberal individualist, and the central eastern European model) that share some common attributes and differ from what happens in other parts of the Western world or in other continents.

Though there is no single European social model, EU social policies have emerged since the mid-1980s with a view to emphasising the welfare dimension of European capitalism and designating it as an alternative to the North American form of pure market capitalism. Europe's welfare systems developed during a period when the region's demographic profile could support extensive social spending and when solid economic growth made it affordable. The situation in Europe has since profoundly changed. Today, Europe's social models are brought together by the common challenge they face: the need to reform and reorganise constantly with a view to keeping up with the fast pace of economic change and globalisation, digitisation, demographic and societal transformations, and increasingly, the need to address the climate emergency and support the green transition.

Geopolitical Europe

Our eighth and final dimension concerns what or who Europe is in global politics. Indeed, the role of Europe as a global power can be read as the rise and fall of empires throughout Hellenic antiquity, the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Middle Ages, the colonialist expansion, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War era. A contemporary account of Europe in global politics may start by saying that Europe's hegemony over the rest of the world ended in the twentieth century. World War I led to the disintegration of the European empires and the emergence of two new poles of power located outside the European continent and with global influence, notably the United States and the Soviet Union. The end of colonialism was further precipitated by World War II, which further limited Europe's influence over the rest of the world, while the Cold War provincialised Europe in global politics as the continent was under the protective shield of the United States.

However, while Europe lived in the straitjacket of the nuclear threat and in a militarised peace, important transformations were happening across the world that contributed to the transcendence of the Cold War logic. Climate change, international crime, terrorism, pandemics, and food security required a level of cooperation and pooling of resources through regional governance structures. Thus, while under the shadow of American economic assistance (through the

Marshall Plan) and military protection (through NATO), the idea of Europe as a new global actor timidly emerged.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in the post–Cold War era new ambition and enthusiasm emerged about the role that the reunited Europe could carve for itself as a regional actor that 'leads by example' in international relations. Respect for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, along with leadership in environmental issues and sustainable development policies, became flagship initiatives of the European Union (representing Europe united) to position itself as a global power at the turn of the century.

Considering the role of Europe in the world today one has to replace 'Europe' with the European Union. There are three main features of the EU as a global actor. First, the EU is a soft power on the global scene: soft in the sense that it exercises its ability to persuade other actors without force or coercion through diplomacy and economic means. However, its softness is normatively informed. The EU has clear normative priorities that it seeks to implement, such as promoting multilateralism, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and prosperity. It therefore has better been described as a civilian rather than simply as a soft power. Yet this too is in flux, particularly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The EU has tended to use its military forces for peace-building and peace-keeping purposes in a growing number of operations around the world; it has been expanding the security and defence dimensions of its external relations, making it less 'civilian' in the strict sense of the term but far from a strategic military global power, even though two European countries are nuclear powers. This leads to the second feature, that of the EU as a security actor, albeit a reluctant one. The EU's internal diversity, the different past political and military experiences of its western and central eastern parts, and the reluctance of member states to develop a common defence policy have so far trumped EU efforts to develop as a clear security actor in the world. Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa since the Arab Spring and in Ukraine, as well as China's increased militarisation and assertiveness, have led to a growing security mindset, albeit still with limited ability to act as a single entity. A third element in the EU's role in the world is economic. As a superpower in trade with the only real internal market in the world of nearly 500 million consumers, the European Union possesses a negotiating asset that it is trying to use more strategically, including as a lever to project its values and standards in the world.

On balance, Europe and the EU are best described by Giandomenico Majone's (2009) expression of 'Would-be World Power'. There is a lot of disunity, inability to act, and scepticism, but there is also a lot of promise, ambition, and hope.

Concluding remarks

Defining 'Europe' is an ongoing story, an incessant effort to revisit core existentialist questions. Throughout the course of the continent's history, politicians,

political elites, academics, and thinkers have been tackling and returning to these questions in elaborate, critical, simplistic, and populist ways. In this book, we highlight the historical and ambivalent character of the term and offer alternative views of Europe by putting current developments in perspective. We adopt a critical viewpoint with regard to social and political developments in Europe today and, more generally, in the post-war period. We seek to give readers the main tools for elaborating and answering the questions themselves. Europe is a construct of knowledge, it is a subject of inquiry; but Europe is also a dispositif, a device for constructing knowledge. As a construct of knowledge, Europe has taken on different forms and shapes through the centuries and, of course, with different degrees of visibility and importance. As a device, it becomes a lens through which to understand the world and position ourselves in it. This book remains distinctively European in that it tries to be self-reflexive, providing the tools for the reader to come up with their own answers rather than providing ready-made 'truths': it is the beginning of an ongoing discussion.

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