

## PHD Theses – Thèses de doctorat – Doktorarbeiten

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**Ane Maritdatter ALTERHAUG, *Bridging the Divide: The Role of the Commission in European Political Cooperation, 1969-1976*** – Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim

**Supervisors:** Lise RYE, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Hans Otto FRØLAND, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

**Jury:** Piers LUDLOW, London School of Economics and Political Science; Gabriele CLEMENS, Hamburg University

**Date of the defence:** 13.04.2016

**Field:** History, European Studies

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This thesis investigates the European Commission's approach to European Political Cooperation (EPC) from 1969 to 1976. Based on material from EU and state archives, the analysis demonstrates the resilience of supranational institutions in a period often claimed to be marked by the supremacy of intergovernmentalism following the 1965-66 empty chair crisis. By doing so, it sheds new light on the history of EPC and the history of European integration. The thesis also contributes to a wider theoretical debate on the role of supranational institutions in the integration project between neo-functionalists on the one hand and intergovernmentalists on the other.

In the period in question, the supranational features of the European Community (EC) were challenged. At the summit of The Hague in 1969, the Member States of the EC initiated an intergovernmental structure, an initiative that became the EPC structure from 1970. This structure, separate from the EC, was established in order to further cooperation between the Member States in the areas of foreign policy, and designed to prevent Commission involvement.

Based on in-depth studies of two cases, the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Euro-Arab Dialogue, the thesis establishes that the Commission nevertheless managed to acquire a role in the EPC. Therefore the thesis challenges previous findings on the strict separation of the EC and EPC in this period. The thesis argues that the European Commission was far from being a weak and inconsequential supranational institution, wing-clipped due to the first generation Commission's prior "violation" of the Member States' sense of national sovereignty. Rather, a rational actor emerged, characterized by a pragmatic approach that to a certain extent gave the results it sought after, an actor that can be labelled a distinct second generation Commission.

**Una BERGMANE, *French and US reactions facing the disintegration of the USSR: the case of the Baltic states 1989-1991*** – Sciences Po, Paris

**Supervisors:** Anne DE TINGUY, Institut national de langues et civilisation orientales; Maurice VAISSE, Institut d'études politiques de Paris

**Jury:** Frédéric BOZO, Université Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle; Andres KASEKAMP, University of Tartu; Kristina SPOHR, London School of Economics and Political Science

**Date of the exam:** 07.06.2016

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This PhD research is a comparative study, devoted to six different countries, based on extensive work in eleven different archives and interviews in the EU, the US and the Russian Federation.

The study uses the case of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian relations with both France and the US to analyze a neglected aspect of the disintegration of the Soviet Union: the impact that Western direct contacts with Soviet republics had on the so-called Soviet Nationality problem. The dissertation follows the French and the US foreign policy-making processes, tracing the internal and the external factors that influenced the French and US positions regarding the Baltic claims for independence and discusses the role of perceptions and images in international relations. This study analyzes foreign policy not as the product of the decisions/thinking of one leader or the abstract entity of "state", but as the result of interactions between different institutions and individuals involved in foreign policy-making. By choosing this approach the thesis aims to achieve a more complete understanding of not only what the policy of different countries was toward the disintegration of the USSR, but also how this policy was conceived.

At the same time important attention is paid to the dynamics in the Baltic republics and the USSR: the thesis discusses the causes behind the rise of the Baltic independence movements, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuania cooperation, their relations with Michael Gorbachev, their alliance with Boris Yeltsin and the tactics Balts employed to obtain international support and recognition. Special attention is paid to the role of the Baltic diaspora and its influence in the US Congress.

The comparison between French and the US foreign policy making process allows to highlight the importance of the US Congress in the shaping of the US Baltic policy and the influence of Germany over French decision-making regarding the Baltic problem. The interplay of various factors (congressional pressures, tensions between French Presidency and the Foreign Ministry, interpretations of the international law, perception of the past, changing power dynamics in the USSR etc.) led both the US and France to perceiving the Baltic states as a special case in the Soviet context and embrace Baltic independence despite their continuous support for Gorbachev.

Una Bergmane concludes that while both US and France stayed prudent in their support for Baltic independence, they contributed to it by dissuading Soviet power elites from the use of force in the region.

**Alessio SACCHI, *Europe in Hard Times. Driving Institutional Change during the Eurozone Crisis*** – IMT Institute for Advanced Studies, Lucca

**Supervisor:** Adrienne HERITIER, European University Institute

**Jury:** Brigid LAFFAN, European University Institute; Mark GILBERT, Johns Hopkins SAIS; Lucia BONFRESCHI, LUISS Guido Carli

**Field:** Political History

**Date of the exam:** 10.03.2016

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The thesis sheds light on the dynamics of institutional change that occurred in the EU during the Eurozone crisis (2010-2014). It has two main goals: first, it aims at demonstrating the counter-intuitive argument according to which the crisis, far from strengthening the intergovernmental dimension of the EU, triggered a deepening of the European integration, reflected by relevant shifts of power from the national to the supranational level. Second, it aims at explaining the patterns of institutional change, assessing the role of functional enablers played by the crisis and by existent institutional rules (i.e. decision-making processes) in affecting policy outcomes. In order to assess these issues, the thesis analyses three different economic and financial-related policies: namely, the progressive strengthening of the rules of fiscal discipline, the creation of the financial instruments to support member States in need and the progressive setup of a banking union. For each policy, a careful empirical reconstruction of events was carried out, based on official documents and reports of both national and European institutional bodies, Member States' civil servants and media coverage. Moreover, the thesis applies an original index to measure the "rate of supranationalism" of different aspects of the policy, in order to provide an assessment of any eventual supranationalization of each single policy.

Findings offer a substantive empirical validation of the leading hypotheses. Namely, the thesis suggests that over the last years the European integration underwent a deepening process, resulting in a widening of the scope of supranational policies, an intensification of EU institutions' powers as well as different forms of authority delegation to supranational bodies. These patterns of supranationalization were mainly driven by the pressure of financial markets and by the necessity of over-

coming the institutional deadlocks engendered by intergovernmental negotiations, demonstrating that the Eurozone crisis has represented a political momentum for transformative institutional changes in the EU.

**Mano TOTH, *Dealing with Conflicting Visions of the Past: The Case of European Memory*** – St Catharine’s College, University of Cambridge

**Supervisors:** Harald WYDRA, University of Cambridge; Duncan BELL, University of Cambridge

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The aim of this dissertation is to understand and critically evaluate how the idea of European memory has been conceptualised by different actors at the European level and to develop a novel, radically pluralist conception. Attempting to ground European integration and the attachment to Europe in historical narratives has become increasingly important for the EU since the loss of its main ideological “Other”, the Soviet Union. The projects adopted in this vein often have the explicit goal to address the “legitimacy problem” and the “democratic deficit” by promoting European identity. In the EU politics-academia nexus, where most of the related debate takes place, the buzzword “European memory” has become very fashionable in the last decade.

The dissertation analyses the publicly accessible documents of five fora where the idea of European memory has been discussed: the European Parliament, three projects that are closely related to it (the Reconciliation of European Histories Group, the Platform of European Memory and Conscience and the House of European History), and the Europe for Citizens programme of the European Commission. The research finds that the idea has been conceptualised in a variety of ways in these institutions and projects, but most of these conceptualisations are characterised by teleological frameworks and problem-solving thinking. It thus presents a critique of the most prominent previous understandings of European memory and outlines a new conception that builds on the idea of radical democracy. In this vision of the European mythical space, conflicting visions of the past are not regarded as an anomaly that needs to be overcome by rational consensus or as an asset that can be harvested in order to bolster the legitimacy of certain political bodies. This vision takes difference to be an inevitable condition of social life, and instead of trying to overcome conflict, it argues for its nature to be changed so that competitive antagonistic relationships can become more peaceful agonistic ones through dialogue and education.

On the one hand, the dissertation contributes to the field of memory studies with a comprehensive radically pluralist approach to myth. On the other hand, it contributes to European studies, and more specifically to the academic discussion about European memory, when it contextualises the theory of myth in the contemporary European politics of the past.