Explaining European Integration: The contribution from Historians

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Normally historians are not expected to develop theories. Their purview is the facts, the details, the particular course of events, the many deviations from the norm. Detractors assert that historians merely have to go into the archives in order to find evidence for the theories of political scientists; this, so they claim, is the appropriate division of labour between the disciplines. If one wants to put it less problematically, one could say that historians are to pursue detailed case studies and upon this foundation the actual social scientists then erect their explanatory theories.[1] Making use of available information on developments and decision-making processes, historians take upon themselves the review of theories, and it is one of the secret pleasures of their profession to cause mighty theoretical edifices to tumble in the face of incontrovertible facts.

At the same time, there are also productive links between historians and theory discussions in a double sense: on the one hand, historians continually work with theories, attempting to search among the full range of facts for the essential ones and establish links between them. The selection of what is essential to consider as well as the reconstruction of links depend on theoretical presuppositions – independently of whether the historian is aware of them or not. Thus, even those historians who are outspokenly opposed to theory in their works are themselves influenced by theory.[2] Even more important is the fact that the results reached by historians not only disprove theoretical presuppositions but also offer explanations themselves. These explanations focus above all on the individual case being investigated but they can also be generalized, approaching theoretical pronouncements more closely as the subject of the investigation is more fully grasped. The willingness to undertake such comprehensive presentations varies among historians, as does the ability to do so successfully. The tendency of historians' work is toward comprehensive pronouncements, however.[3]

1. This is the tendency of the contributions in P.G. LAUREN (ed.), *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy*, Free Press, New York, 1979; and M.G. FRY*, History and International Studies*, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Washington, DC, 1987. For an organized dialogue between diplomatic historians and political scientists, see C. ELMAN, M.F. ELMAN, *Diplomatic History and International Relations Theory. Respecting Difference and Crossing Boundaries*, in: *International Security*, 1(Summer 1997), pp.5-21; as well as the subsequent contributions to the debate by J.S. LEVY, St.H. HABER, D.M. KENNEDY, St.D. KRASNER, A.L. GEORGE, Ed. INGRAM, P.W. SCHROEDER, and J.L. GADDIS, pp.22-85.
2. Cf. the articles in: J. KOCKA, Th. NIPPERDEY (eds.), *Theorie und Erzählung in der Geschichte*, Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, München, 1979.
3. The history of European integration can be regarded as a part of the field of "international history." On that field, cf. W. LOTH, J. OSTERHAMMEL (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte. Themen - Ergebnisse - Aussichten*, Oldenbourg, München, 2000.

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The Development of Integration Historiography

Historians have been dealing with European integration for some time and continue to do so to an increasing extent. The beginnings of European integration historiography reach back to the 1960s. These efforts were strongly characterized by a focus on intellectual history and, to an extent, on universal history as well; the interest focussed on the development from the European idea to the United States of Europe as a new epoch in the history of the old continent after the catastrophes of two world wars. At the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, researchers began taking a diplomatic history approach as well with the opening of state archives, which in the member states of the European Union normally occurs after thirty years' time; this thirty-year-rule applies also to EU organs and most other European institutions.[4] In the analysis of government records, research was primarily directed toward the foreign policy of the individual member states. The interest of historians in the European theme grew to the extent that this national foreign policy evolved towards a European integration policy after the Second World War. Since the late 1980s, there have also been approaches based on social history and the history of mentalities. These contribute to broaden the chronological and perspective frameworks of research emphasized by diplomatic history, and in a certain sense, they link up with the early universal history approaches developed by Geoffrey Barraclough, Rolf Hellmut Foerster, Helmut Gollwitzer and others.[5]

In the process, historical research on integration has become Europeanized and internationalized. Given the national composition of the historians' guild and its close links to national history, this development was by no means an obvious one; for that reason, we need to point out the moderating function of the European Liaison Committee of Historians, which publishes the *Journal of European Integration History.* After preliminary work undertaken by Walter Lipgens as the first professor for integration history at the European University Institute in Florence from 1976 to 1979, this committee was created in 1982 at a conference in

4. Initial overviews of publications of records and archival collections are offered by W. LIPGENS (ed.), *Sources for the History of European Integration (1945-1955). A Guide to Archives in the Countries of the Community*, Springer Verlag Leiden, 1980; and M. PETER, H.-J. SCHRÖDER, *Einführung in das Studium der Zeitgeschichte*, UTB, Paderborn, 1994, pp.205-254. Regarding opportunities to use archives: *Archivführer der Außenministerien der Mitgliedsstaaten und der Institutionen der Europäischen Union*, *2. Auflage*, Amt für Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Gemeinschaften, Luxemburg, 1997.

5. See H. DUCHARDT, *et al.* (eds.), *Europa-Historiker. Ein biographisches Handbuch*, 3 vols., Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2006-2007. For an overview of the development of integration historiography up to the beginning of the 1990s, see the contributions in: *Lettre d'Information des Historiens de l'Europe Contemporaine*, 1-2(June 1992); and C. WURM, *Early European Integration as a Research Field: Perspectives, Debates, Problems*, in: C. WURM (ed.), *Western Europe and Germany. The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960*, Berg Publisher, Oxford and Washington, DC, 1995, pp.9-26; P. GERBET, *La France et l'intégration européenne. Essai d'historiographie*, Peter Lang, Berlin, 1995; A. VARSORI, *La storiografia sull'integrazione europea*, in: *Europa 10*, 1(2001), pp.69-93.

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Luxemburg as an association of leading integration historians from the member states of the European Community who worked with the European Commission in Brussels while maintaining their scholarly independence.

The members of this Liaison Committee regard it as their task to coordinate research into the history of European integration, to make the results of research known beyond national borders, to encourage the examination of source materials, to call attention to gaps in research, and to promote exchanges among historians working on integration. To these ends, they regularly hold international conferences gathering and advancing research on a particular time period in integration history. The first conference, which took place in November 1984 in Strasbourg, dealt with the beginnings of European integration from 1948 to 1950;[6] the tenth conference in October of 2005 in Groningen dealt with the breakthrough towards a "second Europe", from The Hague Summit in December of 1969 to the Paris Summit Meeting in December of 1974.[7] At an eleventh conference in Rome in March of 2007, an assessment was made of research on integration history up to the present.[8]

No hegemonic claims are associated with the activity of the Liaison Committee. Its composition is pluralistic and seeks to be as representative as possible of the historians dealing with integration history. Its members have included Walter Lipgens as well as scholars such as René Girault, Hans-Peter Schwarz, and Raymond Poidevin. The number of members has grown as the European Union has grown; there are currently fourteen historians on the committee.

The activities of the Liaison Committee are supplemented by a series of other networks. Especially worthy to be mentioned is the research group "European Identity in the Twentieth Century", initiated in 1988 by René Girault and currently led by Robert Frank, who holds the chair in the history of international relations at the University of Paris I. This organization links together a large number of historians who examine the development of the mentalities of Europeans in the twentieth century. No fewer than 180 historians have so far participated in work

6. Cf. R. POIDEVIN (ed.), *Histoire des débuts de la construction européenne (mars 1948-mai 1950)*, Bruylant/Nomos, Bruxelles/Baden-Baden, 1986.
7. Cf. J. VAN DER HARST (ed.), *Beyond the Customs Union. The European Community's Quest for Completion, Deepening and Enlargement, 1969-1975*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2007. Further conference volumes are K. SCHWABE (ed.), *Die Anfänge des Schuman-Plans 1950/51*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 1988; E. SERRA (ed.), *Il rilancio dell'Europa e i trattati di Roma*, Giuffrè, Milano, 1989; G. TRAUSCH (ed.), *Die Europäische Integration vom Schuman-Plan bis zu den Verträgen von Rom*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 1993; M. DUMOULIN (ed.), *Plans des temps de guerre pour l'Europe d'après-guerre 1940-1947*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 1995; G. TRAUSCH (ed.), *Le rôle et la place des petits pays en Europe au XX^{e} siècle*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2005; A. DEIGHTON, A.S. MILWARD (eds.), *Widening, Deepening and Acceleration: The European Economic Community 1957-1963*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 1999; W. LOTH (ed.), *Crises and Compromises: The European Project 1963-1969*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2000, M.-Th. BISCH, G. BOSSUAT (eds.), *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique. De l'idée d'Eurafrique à la Convention de Lomé I*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2005; A. VARSORI (ed.), *Inside the European Community. Actors and Policies in European integration, 1957-1972*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2006.
8. Work is currently underway on the publication of the papers of this colloquium.

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groups and international colloquia in order to share their research on the development of Europeans' mentalities and perceptions.[9] Additionally, the integration history research seminar at the European University Institute in Florence has been and continues to be important for the formation of a "European" school of integration historians. This seminar has at various times been led by Walter Lipgens, Richard Griffith, Alan Milward, and Pascaline Winand. Lastly, doctoral candidates dealing with the history of European integration have come together in their own networks: the History of European Integration Research Society (HEIRS) and the Réseau International des jeunes Chercheurs en Histoire de l'Intégration Européenne (RICHIE).[10] Most historians are linked together by several of these networks.

Thus, historical research has become "European" in its study of the history of integration - at least in the sense that there is cooperation beyond national borders and that there are no distinct "national" schools of historical writing on Europe. Due to language barriers, mutual familiarity with research in various countries still fails to come up to expectations; the discussions are, however, carried on internationally with the inclusion of some American specialists but centred on a British-French-German triangle. There are signs too that people are learning from one another with regard to methods and the framing of questions. Thus, cooperation among historians of Europe has had effects on the field of history in general. It plays a key role in the Europeanization of contemporary history and contributes to the rise of a "Europe of historians".[11]

Paradigms and Controversies

When seeking paradigms which have developed into integration research, the works of Lipgens and of Milward are usually contrasted.[12] Walter Lipgens, my teacher, along with Pierre Gerbet, the Nestors of historical writing on Europe so to speak,[13] viewed European unification as a world historical process stemming from

9. An overview of the results of the first phase of the project is given by R. GIRAULT (ed.), *Identité et conscience européennes au XX^e siècle*, Hachette, Paris, 1994. For the second phase, cf. R. FRANK (ed.), *Les identités européennes au XX^e siècle*, Ed de la Sorbonne, Paris, 2004.
10. The contributions to the gatherings in Paris and Copenhagen are found in: L. WARLOUZET, K. RÜCKER (eds.), *Quelle Europe? / Which Europe?: Nouvelles Approches en Histoire de l'Intégration Européenne*, Peter Lang, Bruxelles, 2006; M. RASMUSSEN, A.-Ch. KNUDSEN, J. POULSEN (eds.), *The Road to a United Europe - Interpretations of the Process of European Integration*, Peter Lang, Bruxelles, 2007.
11. Cf. R. GIRAULT, *Das Europa der Historiker*, in: R. HUDEMANN, H. KAELBLE, K. SCHWABE (eds.), *Europa im Blick der Historiker* (*Historische Zeitschrift,* Beiheft 21), Oldenbourg, München, 1995, pp.55-90.
12. See, for example, the presentation in: C. WURM, op.cit.
13. After some contemporary analyses, the latter published a comprehensive history of European unification in 1983, which is now in its fourth edition: Pierre Gerbet, *La construction de l'Europe*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2007.

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the weaknesses of the nation-state and the catastrophes they had unleashed, a process which was to lead to a new home "for the European cultural realm",[14] presuming the Europeans realized what was called for and acted accordingly. Lipgens saw "the magnitude of technical and political power having grown beyond units the size of European nation-states"[15] with a generally expanding nationalism having accelerated the "demise of Europe" still further. People became especially aware of this demise during and after the catastrophes of both the First and Second World Wars and complementarily to this growing awareness the first European institutions were created.

Lipgens thus started from a universal history perspective in his engagement with ideas and concepts. He sought to depict the "consciousness" of the Europeans in the crisis of the nation-state, its extent, and also its boundaries. This led him to detect European unification plans in the most diverse political movements, among publicists and men and women of great insight, economic leaders and politicians since the First World War, to trace plans for Europe in the resistance movement against the National Socialist *imperium* in Europe, which he regarded as very significant, to investigate the early history of European pressure groups, especially the federalists, and, lastly, to the discussion of "European" convictions among the "founding fathers" of the European Communities.[16] It remained somewhat unclear, however, how political reality had emerged from all these plans and ideas. Lipgens conceived the European institutions as having resulted from a confrontation between the political will for unification and forces of persistence in the nation-states but did not go any further into the question of how the power relations between the one and the other had developed.[17]

In contrast, Alan Milward presented the European integration policies of the 1940s and 1950s in a consciously provocative manner as European policies of nation-states and national governments. "The founding of the European Communities", he asserts, was "the work of nation-states, that expressly created them in order to preserve and strengthen themselves".[18] European integration policy was an "integral part of the reassertion of the nation-state as an

14. W. LIPGENS, *Der Zusammenschluß Westeuropas. Leitlinien für den historischen Unterricht*, in: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 34(1983), pp.345-372, here p.347.
15. W. LIPGENS, *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik 1945-1950*, Bd.I: *1945-1947*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1977, p.2.
16. Along with his incomplete major work (W. LIPGENS, *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik* …, op.cit.; English edition under the title *A History of European Integration*, vol.1: *1945-1947*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982), see also idem. (ed.), *Europa-Föderationspläne der Widerstandsbewegungen 1940-1945*, Oldenbourg, München, 1968; idem. (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol.1: *Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, De Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 1985; vol.2: *Plans for European Union in Great Britain and in Exile, 1939-1945*, de Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 1986; idem. (ed.), *45 Jahre Ringen um die Europäische Verfassung. Dokumente 1939-1984*, Europa Union Verlag, Bonn, 1986.
17. On the categorizing of Walter Lipgens cf. W. LOTH, *Walter Lipgens (1925-1984)*, in: H. DUCHARDT, *et al*. (eds.), *Europa-Historiker* …, op.cit., vol.1, pp.317-336.
18. A.S. MILWARD, *Der historische Revisionismus zur Einigungsgeschichte Westeuropas. Neue historische Erkenntnisse statt überholter Schulweisheiten*, in: *Integration*, 10(1987), pp.100-106.

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organizational concept".[19] European integration constituted "a new form of agreed international framework created by the nation-states to advance particular sets of national domestic policies which could not be pursued, or not be pursued successfully, through the already existing international framework of cooperation between interdependent states, or by renouncing international interdependence".[20] After the collapse of the European nation-states from 1929 to 1945, economic prosperity and the expansion of the social welfare state could only be achieved by means of integration; they secured new legitimacy and citizen loyalty for the nation-state after the shock of the Great Depression, National Socialist expansion, and wartime destruction. Hence, the European Communities were and remain the "buttress" of the nation-state, "an indispensable part of the nation-state's postwar construction".[21]

Given this position, Milward is often understood as being anti-Lipgens, as a demythologizer who detects tangible national interests behind the alleged European idealism and who destroys the fond dreams of a united Europe by pointing to the continued reality of the nation-states. Especially adherents of the "realist" school of foreign policy analysts like to hear this message eagerly and embrace it - figures such as Andrew Moravscsik, whose collection of case studies from the origins of the Treaties of Rome to the Maastricht Treaty is subsumed under the thesis that European integration is based on "a series of rational choices by national leaders" who "responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of international institutions in bolstering the credibility of interstate commitments".[22]

Diplomatic historians who have traditionally stood close to the "realist" school have scoured national archives in search of national interests in the formulation of European policy. Given that policy within national institutions must always be articulated in terms of the nation, evidence can be found. Hence, we now have a whole series of studies describing European integration policy as national interest policy. Along with economic interests and the expansion of the social welfare state emphasized by Milward, foreign policy and defence policy considerations have also become objects of investigation. Thus, for example, Raymond Poidevin highlights the French interest in defence against Germany,[23] while Hans-Peter Schwarz points to the desire of the young Federal Republic to regain its

19. A.S. MILWARD, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, Routledge, London, 1992, p.3.
20. A.S. MILWARD, F.M.B. LYNCH, R. RANIERI, F. ROMERO, V. SØRENSEN, *The Frontier of National Sovereignty. History and Theory 1945-1992*, Routledge, London, 1993, p.182.
21. A.S. MILWARD, *The European Rescue …*, op.cit., p.3. Cf. also idem., *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51*, Routledge, London, 1984; idem., *Allegiance. The Past and the Future*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 1(1995), pp.7-20.
22. A. MORAVSCIK, *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, UCL Press Taylor & Francis Group, London, 1999, p.18. See also M. PINE's contribution in this issue.
23. R. POIDEVIN, *Robert Schuman - homme d'Etat 1886-1993*, Imp. nationale, Paris, 1986.

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sovereignty,[24] and Georges-Henri Soutou emphasized the national goals of de Gaulle's European policy.[25]

Such works neglect the fact that the definition of national interests can also be based on "European" insights. Likewise, they do not take into account the structural change in the international system which occurred along with integration. Gains in explaining the success of specific European solutions by emphasizing national interests in the actions of politicians are exchanged for a distortion of the process as a whole. European integration policy appears as a slightly adapted resumption of the showdown between sovereign nation-states in a new way.

Milward was not completely innocent of this "national" and static interpretation of his approach because he represented himself as a critic of Lipgens' conception. On closer examination, however, it can be seen that the two views were not so far apart after all. Milward too saw functional deficits in the nation-state unleashed by technological development; he even spoke of a genuine "collapse" of the nation-states in the Second World War.[26] Integration was necessary in order to overcome this situation. Without integration, the nation-state would not have been able to offer its citizens the amount of security and affluence which would make its survival possible. Likewise, Milward saw that integration implied the reduction of national sovereignty and that this went hand in hand with the development of a second loyalty, that of the citizen toward the European Community. And in his most recent works, he also stresses that this process of transferring sovereignty and legitimacy can go further - if the nature of national political decisions allows it:

> "There is an inherent force within the developed modern nation-state which can tend to integration […]. But whether that force does actually tend in that direction depends absolutely on the nature of domestic policy choices and thus on national politics".[27]

The contrast between Lipgens and Milward is thereby reduced to the nature of the description: whereas Milward speaks abstractly of states reacting to the needs of their citizens, Lipgens focuses on the citizens acting themselves having made the same kind of experience in the respective nation-states and their institutions. The process described by both scholars is identical in structure: functional deficits of European nation-states in the age of modern industrial societies led to the establishment of international structures. Lipgens and Milward also agree in regarding the outcome of this process as essentially open: what the former considers to be necessary insight into what historically is called for - something that can also fail – is referred to by the other as a "political choice". If it is lacking, then the process stagnates or even moves backwards.

24. H.-P. SCHWARZ, *Adenauer und Europa*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 27(1979), pp.472-523; idem., *Adenauer. Der Aufstieg: 1876-1952*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1986; idem., *Adenauer. Der Staatsmann: 1952-1967*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1991.
25. G.-H. SOUTOU, *L'alliance incertaine. Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands*, 1954-1996, Fayard, Paris, 1996.
26. A.S. MILWARD, *The European Rescue* …, op.cit., p.4.
27. Ibid., p.447.

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The opposition between the two views appears greater than it actually is essentially because of specific weaknesses in each of them: in Lipgens' work, there is no differentiation among various conceptions of European unity and no investigation of the various special motivations, so that the unification movement seems essentially stronger, more unified, and more effective than it actually was. For his part, Milward reduces the spectrum of possible motivations for unification to the economic sphere and does not formulate things clearly in that realm either, so that it remains uncertain why states with similar economic and social interests react differently to the issue of integration (one may think, for example, of the contrast between Belgium and Denmark or between France and Great Britain). Beyond this, Milward on occasion posits a persistence of the nation-state that contradicts his own theoretical construct; there is no discussion of how change, statehood, governance, and the international system are experienced in integration.

In addition, there are also differences in the subject matter examined by the concrete historical research of each scholar: Lipgens emphasized work in archives of the European associations in the first post-war years; moreover, his early death in 1984 prevented him from working with government sources. Conversely, Milward and his adherents have from the beginning concentrated on government actions, which gained greater relevance with the implementation of the Marshall Plan in 1947-48. The development of public opinion is not taken into account. The exchange of arguments between the two authors was unable to advance beyond its beginnings due to the death of Lipgens. In reality, the two scholars' findings reinforce one another more than they contradict one another.[28]

The Model of the Four Driving Forces

In my own work[29] I have gradually developed a concept which seeks to overcome the weaknesses of the approaches taken by Lipgens and Milward.[30] It is

28. Likewise G. THIEMEYER, *Vom "Pool Vert" zur Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft. Europäische Integration, Kalter Krieg und die Anfänge der Gemeinsamen Europäischen Agrarpolitik 1950-1957*, Oldenbourg, München, 1999, p.7.

29. Cf. W. LOTH, *Sozialismus und Internationalismus. Die französischen Sozialisten und die Nachkriegsordnung Europas 1940-1950*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, 1977; W. LIPGENS and W. LOTH (eds.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol.3: *The Struggle for European Union by Political Parties and Pressure Groups in Western European Countries, 1945-1950*, De Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 1988; vol.4: *Transnational Organizations of Political Parties and Pressure Groups in the Struggle for European Union, 1945-1950*, De Gruyter, Berlin/New York, 1990; W. LOTH, *Der Weg nach Europa. Geschichte der europäischen Integration 1939-1957*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1990, 3rd ed.: 1996.

30. Formulated for the first time in: W. LOTH, *Der Prozeß der europäischen Integration: Antriebskräfte, Entscheidungen, Perspektiven*, in: *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, 46(1995), pp.703-714; an updated version in: *Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte*, 1(2000), pp.17-30. Cf. idem., *Identity and Statehood in the Process of European Integration*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 1(2000), pp.19-31.

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characterized by the view that regarding the functional deficit of nation-states which have led to the steps toward integration, there are several problem areas to be distinguished, which, firstly, can be of different degrees of urgency and, secondly, can also call for different solutions. It seems sensible to me to distinguish among four types of problems from which there result driving forces for European integration. Two of them are old and have acquired new urgency due to technological development in the twentieth century; the other two emerge directly from this development.

The first problem is that of preserving peace among sovereign states - or in other words, the problem of overcoming anarchy among states. This constitutes the essential motive of the European unification plans of earlier centuries, from Dante to Immanuel Kant and Victor Hugo. The urgency of this problem has grown dramatically due to the development of modern military technology in the twentieth century. The vast increase in the number of casualties, the amount of human suffering, and economic destruction has strengthened calls for institutions capable of securing peace, especially during and after the catastrophes of the two world wars. Thereafter, the danger of nuclear destruction and self destruction and the emergence of new nationalisms after the end of the East-West Bloc structure have accentuated this problem in new ways.

Secondly, the German question must be seen as a special aspect of the preservation of peace. This problem too is older than the twentieth century but has become more pressing with the development of industrial society in Europe. For reasons of population and economic power, a German nation-state in the centre of Europe constituted and constitutes a latent threat to the independence of its neighbours. This resulted in a vicious circle of encirclement and expansion, which could only be broken by integrating the Germans together with their neighbours into a larger community. To have understood this after two calamitous turns of that vicious circle is undoubtedly one of the great achievements of the Europeans in the second half of the twentieth century.

Economics in a narrower sense can be characterized as the third functional deficit: it became increasingly clear that the national markets in Europe were too small for rational production methods. Their mutual walling-off was only sensible on a temporary basis and depending on the specific production sector; in the long term, this threatened to result in a loss of productivity and consequently also a loss of the state's legitimacy.

This was linked, fourthly, to a loss of power and competitiveness vis-à-vis larger state units, as the US in economic and political terms, and as the Soviet Union in military terms. Thus, self-assertion in the face of the new world powers became an additional motive of European unification policies. Depending on one's perception, it was either defence against American hegemony or against Soviet expansion that stood in the foreground. It was often the case that both were pursued simultaneously: the preservation of the Europeans' freedom of action in an alliance with the US.

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These four motives have not always been equally strong, and they have not always worked in the same direction. Hence, it was the case that the need for self-assertion and the unresolved German question made an association of Western Europe after the Second World War seem quite appropriate; regarding the goal of preserving peace, however, it became problematic. The common necessity for unification stood against very different sensitivities and needs of the participating states, the overarching interest in a common market contrasted the very different economic needs of individual states as well as different interests of individual production sectors. European policy thus could not be a unified policy; it always was embedded and continues to be embedded in conflicts among different conceptions of order and interests at the European level.

Thus my model is complex to a certain extent. It does, however, also have the advantage of being able to explain an integration process which is also complex. From the development of these driving forces, we can explain both the timing of specific integration initiatives as well as the decision for specific types of integration, which are themselves at the same time always decisions not to proceed with other conceivable forms of integration.

Steps towards Integration and their Consequences

The German question in the context of the Cold War reveals itself as decisive for the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the core of supranational community building in Europe in 1950-51. This motive was augmented by a certain amount of self-assertion and reinsurance towards the US as the leading power - both in the context of the growing significance of economic potential for one's international power position, which Guido Thiemeyer has also pointed out in his study of the beginnings of European agricultural policy.[31] After worries about a split between East and West had initially prevented many Europeans from promoting unification plans restricted to the Western hemisphere, such plans seemed to be an indispensable prerequisite for winning back freedom of action after the Soviets rejected the Marshall aid in the summer of 1947. At the same time, a framework was needed for the long-term inclusion of the West Germans, who became indispensable allies now. The French initiative in the summer of 1948 that led to the founding of the Council of Europe intended indeed such a structure. This was clearly not successful due to British hesitancy, and so a second attempt became necessary. What was actually new in Robert Schuman's proposal of 9th May 1950 for a coal and steel union was his willingness to begin

31. Likewise G. THIEMEYER, op.cit.

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supranational unification without the participation of Great Britain; he thereby secured the success of the second French attempt at pursuing European policy.[32]

The European Defence Community (EDC), another integration project which was proposed even before the end of the negotiations over the coal and steel union, failed due to the impossibility of reconciling the respective goals of the participants. The Netherlands wanted the creation of a common market as a condition for the initiative, but the French said themselves unprepared for that. Thus, the idea of giving the EDC a strong supranational framework - the European Political Community - disintegrated; the French public thereby saw itself confronted with an amount of German resurgence, which was very difficult to accept. The integration framework as a means of controlling the German contribution to defence then gave way to the American presence in Europe and the prospect of a French nuclear force; integration into NATO took the place of a projected European integration.[33]

Given this background, the Treaties of Rome signed on 25th March 1957 constituted an attempt to salvage what was possible of the European project after the debacle of the European Defence Community - by means of concentrating on a compromise acceptable to all participants *in extremis*. It rested on France's acceptance of the economic community demanded by the Netherlands - admittedly, only in the distant future and to be achieved in numerous stages – while France's European partners swallowed the idea of creating a European nuclear community, a prospect which no one besides French technocrats found attractive. Decisive for the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) was the lasting conviction that there was a need to integrate the Germans better and to have greater autonomy vis-à-vis the Americans. This led Guy Mollet on the French side and Konrad Adenauer on the German side to make compromises which in the light of their respective economic interests could hardly be justified. The European Economic Community was thus primarily a political construction, even if that was hardly ever stated publicly.[34]

32. Cf. W. LOTH, *Sozialismus und Internationalismus …*, op.cit.; R. POIDEVIN (ed.), *Histoire des débuts …*, op.cit.; idem., *Robert Schuman …*, op.cit.; K. SCHWABE (ed.), *Die Anfänge …*, op.cit.; U. LAPPENKÜPER, *Der Schuman-Plan. Mühsamer Durchbruch zur deutsch-französischen Verständigung*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 42(1994), pp.403-445; A. WILKENS (ed.), *Le Plan Schuman dans l'Histoire. Intérêts nationaux et projet européen*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2004. On Jean Monnet as "father of the Schuman Plan", see E. ROUSSEL, *Jean Monnet*, Fayard, Paris, 1996; and G. BOSSUAT, A. WILKENS (eds.), *Jean Monnet, l'Europe et les chemins de la Paix*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 1999.
33. G. TRAUSCH, *Europäische Integration …*, op.cit.; W. LOTH, *Die EVG und das Projekt der Europäischen Politischen Gemeinschaft*, in: R. HUDEMANN, H. KAELBLE, K. SCHWABE (eds.), *Europa im Blick …*, op.cit., pp.191-201; R. MAGAGNOLI, *Italien und die Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft. Zwischen europäischem Credo und nationaler Machtpolitik*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1999; D. PREDA, *Alcide De Gasperi, federalista europeo*, Mulino, Bologna, 2004.
34. E. SERRA (ed.), *Il rilancio …*, op.cit.; W. LOTH, *Deutsche und französische Interessen auf dem Weg zu EWG und Euratom*, in: A. WILKENS (ed.), *Die deutsch-französischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen 1945-1960*, Thorbecke, Sigmaringen, 1991, pp.178-187; G. THIEMEYER, op.cit.

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The fact that the Community of the Six was able to prove itself and expand is therefore largely due to its growing economic attractiveness. Even in its rudimentary beginnings with the Six, the Common Market demonstrated that it was an instrument of socially acceptable increase of productivity, something, which soon seemed indispensable and which became attractive for an increasing number of candidates for membership. It was economics more than the interest in European self-assertion that compelled Great Britain to enter; approval of its accession after long resistance was the price France had to pay for the completion of the agricultural market and the prospect of deepening the Community.[35] With the entry of Britain, Ireland, and Denmark in 1973, the Common Market further increased in economic significance and weight. At the same time, more and more domains of economic activity wound up in the realm of common regulation. Even if one may not speak of a direct and irreversible development toward ever stronger integration - as the functionalist theory of integration would like to suggest - it is a fact that more and more political and social actors have made use of the European dimension to pursue their various goals.

This process was disrupted by a lack of agreement on the political goals that lay behind the development of the Community. With regard to the role that the European Community was to play within the Western Alliance, views diverged greatly; only a few were prepared to accept Charles de Gaulle's conception of a European defence community armed with nuclear weapons within the framework of the Western Alliance.[36] Severe crises resulted from this, which could only be overcome with great effort.[37] Divergent political interests and waning awareness of the political dimension of European construction finished by reducing the willingness to compromise on contentious economic issues as well. The search for compromise thereby became an arduous business, and the Community repeatedly failed to develop into a world political actor. The political artistry of a Willy Brandt and a Georges Pompidou was sufficient to get the "Europe of the Nine" underway; the ability to act in the political realm was not achieved, however - essentially due to French mistrust of German efforts toward reunification.[38] Valéry Giscard

35. Cf. N.P. LUDLOW, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s. Negotiating the Gaullist Challenge*, Routledge, London and New York, 2006.
36. Along with G.-H. SOUTOU, *L'alliance incertaine* …, op.cit., cf. also W. LOTH, *De Gaulle und Europa. Eine Revision*, in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 253(1991), pp.629-660; M. VAÏSSE, *La grandeur. Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle 1958-1969*, Fayard, Paris, 1998.
37. Cf. A. DEIGHTON, A.S. MILWARD, *Widening* …, op.cit.; W. LOTH, *Crises* …, op.cit.; M. KOOPMANN, *Das schwierige Bündnis. Die deutsch-französischen Beziehungen und die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1958-1965*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2000. On the "empty chair crisis" of 1965, see also W. LOTH, W. WALLACE, W. WESSELS (eds.), *Walter Hallstein: The Forgotten European?* Europa Union, London/New York, 1998; J.-M. PALAYRET, H. WALLACE, P. WINAND (eds.), *Visions, Votes and Vetoes. The Empty Chair Crisis and the Luxembourg Compromise Forty Years on*, Peter Lang, Bruxelles, 2006; N.P. LUDLOW, *The European Community* …, op.cit., pp.40-124.
38. Cf. C. HIEPEL, *Willy Brandt – Georges Pompidou et la gouvernance européenne*, in: W. LOTH (ed.), *La gouvernance supranationale dans la construction européenne*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2005, pp.163-183.

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d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt had to content themselves with pragmatic steps toward further development of the Community.[39]

Behind the impetus toward integration initiated in 1985-86 by the Single European Act (SEA), there stood - as far as François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl were concerned - the old political goals which had brought together Schuman and Adenauer: integration of the Germans and self-assertion in world politics.[40] The idea of constructing a political Community was clearly still very foreign to the newcomers of 1973, Britain, Denmark, and Ireland; they only signed the compromise because they hoped to improve the performance of the European economies in the face of Japanese competition. Additionally, Margaret Thatcher aspired to overcome vested rights in the social welfare state which could not be directly eliminated at the national level[41] through deregulation on the European level.

The European Community was nevertheless relatively well equipped when new tasks fell to it in the wake of the end of the East-West conflict and the collapse of the Soviet empire. It was able to - or had to - take over functions to ensure order on the European continent that had previously been the purview of the superpowers and their blocs. Among these were intensified efforts to bind the Germans after Germany had been reunified and the Four-Power responsibilities for the country had ended. There was also the fact that the Community suddenly became partly responsible for the restructuring of the former Eastern Bloc countries. At the same time, the political barriers which had formerly kept the neutral countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) from joining a body more effective for the pursuit of economic modernization now faded away.

The new tasks can explain why, with the end of the Cold War, the Community not only did not break apart - as was feared by many who had too one-sidedly identified the Soviet threat as the main reason for the association's existence - but instead actually took further significant steps towards integratation. The spillover effect played only a limited role in the completion of the internal market, the introduction of the common currency, and the commitment to enter new political realms; decisive in each case for the implementation of all this was insight into the whole political context. The acceptance of new integrative steps was made easier because, with the end of the East-West division, the ambivalence of the European project regarding the peace question disappeared.[42]

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39. Cf. E. GUASCONI, *L'Europa tra continuità e cambiamento: Il vertice dell'Aja del 1969 e il rilancio della costruzione europea*, Edizioni Polistampa, Firenze, 2004; F. KNIPPING, M. SCHÖNWALD (eds.), *Aufbruch zum Europa der zweiten Generation. Die europäische Einigung 1969-1984*, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, Trier, 2004; M. WEINACHTER, *Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et l'Allemagne. Le double rêve inachevé*, Harmattan, Paris, 2004.
40. Cf. E. GADDUM, *Die deutsche Europapolitik in den 80er Jahren. Interessen, Konflikte und Entscheidungen der Regierung Kohl*, Schöningh, Paderborn, 1994; G. SAUNIER, *Le tandem François Mitterrand – Helmut Kohl. Une gouvernance franco-allemande symbolique?*, in: W. LOTH, *Gouvernance …*, op.cit., pp.239-254.
41. Cf. H. YOUNG, *One of Us. A Biography of Margaret Thatcher*, Macmillan, London, 1989; idem., *The Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe From Churchill to Blair*, Humanities Press, London, 1998.

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The Way to a European Society

Reference to the different driving forces of European integration also explains why certain methods of integration have been successful whereas others did not work. In the light of the different ways to consider a united Europe, there was always a broad majority amongst the member states of the Community of the Six for a fundamental commitment to a united Europe; at the same time, however, there was never unambiguous support for any form of European unification which was actually feasible. A similar situation may well apply to the larger European Union; in any event, this must be more fully investigated. The discrepancy between what is desired and what is actually achievable in European integration explains first of all the outstanding significance of individual personalities in the European integration policy decision process, from Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer to Jacques Delors and Helmut Kohl. Given the ambivalence of public opinion, strong leaders could set the course, bypass the routine of the bureaucratic apparatus via a direct contact with partners, and commit majorities to their projects. Secondly, these figures explain why with the coal and steel union and the Treaties of Rome, a form of integration could succeed that put little value on citizen participation and withdrew integrated political spheres from public discussion. Only by allowing the implications to remain unclear was it possible to avoid having negative coalitions derail the always controversial steps on integration.

Thirdly, it becomes clear in this context why the so-called democratic deficit has in the meantime emerged as the most pressing problem of the European Community: in the light of the expansion of the Community's competence and the resulting increase in regulation, majority decisions in the twilight of various ministerial council formations, negotiations within Coreper, and the low democratic legitimacy of the Commission are no longer acceptable in the eyes of citizens, independently of the pronouncements of constitutional jurists on the subject who refer to the nation-state model. The technocratic detour to Europe, first embarked upon by Jean Monnet in 1950 and successfully continued over many years, most recently once again in the launching of the Maastricht programme, doesn't work any longer, as the fierce public debates about the Maastricht Treaty and the difficulties at the moment of its ratification have made clear. With the

42. Historians have not systematically investigated developments since 1989-90, however. For initial analyses upon which I base my theses here, cf. W. KOWALSKY, *Projekt Europa. Die Zukunft der europäischen Integration*, Leske & Budrich, Opladen, 1997; D. ROMETSCH, *Die Rolle und Funktionsweise der Europäischen Kommission in der Ära Delors*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1999; K. DYSON, *The Road to Maastricht: Negotiating Economic and Monetary Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999; W. WOYKE, *Deutsch-französische Beziehungen seit der Wiedervereinigung. Das Tandem faßt wieder Tritt*, Leske & Budrich, Opladen, 2000; P. LUDLOW, *The Making of the New Europe: the European Councils in Brussels and Copenhagen 2002*, Eurocomment, Brussels, 2005; M. RAMBOUR, *Les réformes institutionnelles dans l'Union Européenne avant et après Nice*, in: W. LOTH, *Gouvernance* …, op.cit., pp.283-308.

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blocking of the treaty on a European constitution, this has become completely evident.[43]

The findings on the societal dimension of European integration are supported by the observations on the European social structure compiled by Hartmut Kaelble. According to Kaelble, European societies in the twentieth century feature many commonalities "in which they differentiate themselves very clearly from American, Japanese, and Soviet society".[44] Among these factors are family structure, employment structure, company structure, social mobility, social inequality, urban development, social security, and regulation of work conflicts. In all these spheres, European societies have become increasingly similar, especially since the Second World War and also beyond the crisis years of the European Community. At the same time, a "gradual reorientation of the Western Europeans" has taken place: "away from exclusively national perspectives toward more consciousness of the whole European situation and identity".[45]

Recently, Kaelble has extended his observations to the subjective dimension of social integration in Europe. He reports on a discourse about European civilization developed since the late eighteenth century and which since the 1960s has been characterized by a new European self-confidence that lacks the earlier claims of superiority. At the same time, he outlines the gradual development – or better, structural change – of a European public sphere. He differentiates between three phases: the classical era of the public sphere that consisted of small intellectual and liberal circles in the age of Enlightenment, which included lively exchanges among intellectuals and scholars across national borders; the era of a national mass public sphere accompanied by exchanges among experts at international congresses and by international political movements; and lastly, since the Second World War, the period of changes ushered in by mass media, supranational institutions, an intensified debate about European themes since the 1980s, as well as the gradual strengthening of the European Parliament and European civil rights.[46]

43. Cf. Wilfried LOTH, "Mise en perspective historique de la constitution européenne", in: idem., *Gouvernance* (fn. 38), pp. 339-371; idem., "Die Verfassung für Europa in historischer Perspektive," in: idem. (ed.), *Europäische Gesellschaft. Grundlagen und Perspektiven*, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2005, pp.244-264.
44. H. KAELBLE, *Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gesellschaft. Eine Sozialgeschichte Westeuropas 1880-1980*, C.H. Beck, München, 1987, p.149.
45. Ibid., p.157. Cf. too the detailed findings on the Franco-German relationship in: H. KAELBLE, *Nachbarn am Rhein. Entfremdung und Annäherung der französischen und deutschen Gesellschaft seit 1880*, C.H. Beck, München, 1991; idem., *Europäische Vielfalt und der Weg zu einer europäischen Gesellschaft*, in: S. HRADIL, S. IMMERFALL (eds.), *Die westeuropäischen Gesellschaften im Vergleich*, Leske & Budrich, Opladen, 1997, pp.27-68; idem., *Sozialgeschichte Europas*, C.H. Beck, München, 2007.
46. H. KAELBLE, *Europäer über Europa. Die Entstehung des modernen europäischen Selbstverständnisses im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Campus, Frankfurt am Main/New York, 2001; idem., *Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten im 20. Jahrhundert*, Campus, Frankfurt am Main/New York, 2002.

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Studies under the auspices of the identity project led by René Girault and Robert Frank signal a strengthening of the consensus regarding Europeans' conception of political values. Since the middle of the 1980s, the European Community has been understood more and more as a community of values committed to pluralism and democratic freedoms, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities. To that extent, a common constitutional inheritance has arisen from the discussions of recent decades and has resulted in a constitutional patriotism at the European level.[47] This European patriotism, which is based on a commitment to a system of values rather than on an emotional affinity, is compatible with national patriotism. In times of dynamic change, it even contributes to the stabilizing of national patriotisms, informed as they are by different historical experiences, different languages, and different cultures. In this regard, one can certainly speak of European identity in the singular. This is certainly not a particularistic conception of identity but instead a universal one which respects national identities and national achievements.[48]

The results of research on the history of mentalities and social history correspond very well with the implicit consensus which I see in research on political history. It must be acknowledged, however, that the work done thus far on social integration and the development of European identity is not more than a preliminary sketch, having developed into a substantial picture only at a few points.[49] Research on European integration policy and "la construction européenne", as my French colleagues aptly term it, based on archival evidence has progressed in detail only up to the mid-1970s. We know only very little about decision-making processes since that time; we can only speculate as to how they fit with the societal and mental shifts mentioned above.

Prospects for Integration Research

Indications as to where the emphasis in future historical research will lie are beginning to become clearer. In my view, special attention should be paid to the

47. See V. CONSTANINESCO, *Le rôle du Conseil européen dans la formation d'une identité européenne*, in: M.-Th. BITSCH, W. LOTH, R. POIDEVIN (eds.), *Institutions européennes et identités européennes*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 1998, pp.435-447; J. GERKRATH, *La Cour de Justice des Communautés européennes, la constitutionnalisation du traité de Rome et son impact sur l'émergence d'une identité européenne*, ibid., pp.451-474; idem., *L'émergence d'un droit constitutionnel dans l'Europe. Modes de formation et sources d'inspiration des Communautés et de l'Union européenne*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 1997.
48. Cf. W. LOTH, *Nationale Interessen, Supranationalität und europäische Identität in historischer Perspektive*, in: Ch. GAITANIDES, S. KADELBACH, and G.C. RODRIGUEZ IGLESIAS (eds.), *Europa und seine Verfassung. Festschrift für Martin Zuleeg*, Nomos, Baden-Baden, 2005, pp.59-71.
49. Cf. M.-Th. BITSCH, W. LOTH, Ch. BARTHEL (eds.), *Cultures politiques, opinions publiques et intégration européenne*, Bruylant, Bruxelles, 2007.

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role of personalities, not only of the founding fathers but also of the many figures who have not been at the centre of public interest up to this point: Sicco Mansholt, Maurice Faure,[50] Guy Mollet,[51] Walter Hallstein, Edward Heath, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Helmut Schmidt, and François Mitterrand[52] to name just a few.[53] Likewise, we need a more systematic examination of the various conceptions of Europe, their respective weights, and their development, especially beyond the original core Community.[54] Then there is also the necessity to analyze the effects of the actual existing Community on conceptions of Europe and Europe policy — not in the sense of a functionalist spillover, for which there is only limited historical evidence, but rather in regard to changes in the conceptualization of problems resulting from those effects. The public sphere, identities, and methods of government have changed with the expansion of the European Union; all that must be systematically examined as well. It is my hope that the model of the four driving forces can be made dynamic in this way and thus also become somewhat more systematized.

What do I expect from other disciplines?[55] First of all, I would like to advise political science and jurisprudence to free themselves from all static models of integration. Neither the presumably realist emphasis on the nation-state nor the focus on the technocratic phase of the European Community observable in the regime and governance discussion are able to come to terms with the actual process of change in European statehood accompanying integration. Historiography contributes to describing and explaining it and clearly needs efforts toward making constantly changing relations more conceptually precise. Thus, historiography expects from political science and from jurisprudence that change, the dynamic element, be kept in focus in systematic analyses – an avowedly difficult undertaking, which perhaps can be accomplished in dialogue between the disciplines.

With regard to sociology, it seems to me that what is needed is cooperation rather than dialogue. The transitions are fluid between analyses of historical and contemporary social structures, likewise those between the history of ideas and contemporary sociology of culture. Perhaps social historians and historians of

50. Cf. B. RIONDEL, *Itinéraire d'un fédéraliste: Maurice Faure*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 2(1997), pp.69-82.
51. Cf. F. LAFON, *Guy Mollet. Itinéraire d'un socialiste controversé (1905-1975)*, Fayard, Paris, 2006.
52. Cf. Frédéric BOZO, *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande. De Yalta à Maastricht*, Odile Jacob, Paris, 2005.
53. Important contributions to integration history are to be found in the biography of Paul-Henri Spaak: M. DUMOULIN, *Spaak*, Ed. Racine, Bruxelles, 1999.
54. As a research program for this, H. KAELBLE, *Europabewußtsein, Gesellschaft und Geschichte. Forschungsstand und Forschungschancen*, in: R. HUDEMANN, H. KAELBLE, K. SCHWABE (eds.), *Europa im Blick …*, op.cit., pp.1-29.
55. On the European discussion in other disciplines, see W. LOTH and W. WESSELS (eds.), *Theorien europäischer Integration*, Leske & Budrich, Opladen, 2001; A. WIENER, Th. DIEZ (eds.), *Theories of European Integration: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004.

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culture could be supported by sociologists in the sharpening of their concepts, and sociologists strengthened in their historical thinking by historians. With their analyses, historians always contribute to make clear what differentiates the present from the past. To that extent, the analysis of contemporary circumstances becomes more exact the more it consciously takes into account the most recent transformations. The development of identities and the transformation of societal structures under conditions of globalization present themes which perforce affect historians and sociologists alike.

What I would expect from economics above all is pronouncements as to how the choice of certain management instruments has influenced economic activity. They would be prerequisite for determining the effects of the actual existing European Community and a central source for comprehending its legitimization more precisely. The economic history of the European Communities – not the history of its economic policies, which after the work of Gerold Ambrosius and others is known in its basic outlines[56] – still has largely to be written; to do so, one would need to incorporate the continually produced short-term analyses by economists. Key concepts for understanding the integration process are productivity and social acceptability, thoroughly viewed as being in latent tension with one another. Besides, the process of harmonizing or restructuring economic relations in the member states of the Community is important too.

From the findings of the historians, the relationship between democratic legitimacy and efficiency in political decision-making will be in my opinion the central issue for future integration research. What possibility is there to democratize the European Union more thoroughly without simultaneously hindering its ability to act? The future of the European Union will depend to a decisive degree on whether that looming dilemma can be successfully resolved.[57] This question concerns primarily jurists and political scientists. In formulating answers, however, they should consider that things are in constant flux, that nothing remains as it was, and therefore the possible is not only that which has so far been possible. This could at the same time be called the core of the message which historians can contribute to the theoretical discussion of European integration. If it is not taken into account, then European integration may become in the long term a topic studied only by historians. Certainly, no one would want that.

56. G. AMBROSIUS, *Wirtschaftsraum Europa. Vom Ende der Nationalökonomien*, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1996.
57. Cf. W. Merkel, *Die Europäische Integration und das Elend der Theorie*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 25(1999), pp.302-338.

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A Theoretical Vacuum: European Integration and Historical Research Today

John R. GILLINGHAM

In the lead article of this journal's inaugural issue, "Allegiance. The Past and the Future", which was published over a decade ago, Alan S. Milward, a giant in the study of the political economy of Europe since 1945, proclaimed the intellectual liberation of historical integration research from bondage to American social science and, at the same time, heralded "the beginning of a new period […] where history has its own theories and a research agenda which derives from them". Nothing of real importance has, sadly, ever come of this bold initiative. Now, as then, most historians of European integration resemble, in Milward's harsh judgment, "children on a crowded beach, building separate small sand castles", lacking theoretical foundations or structural support, "all of which look very vulnerable to the incoming tide".[1]

Integration history, a quasi-official field of study, remains bound by a conventional wisdom that posits the inevitable development of the EU into a federal European state, an end which – as now abundantly evident – is neither likely or desirable. Without a new historical theory of integration, it will be impossible to determine how the integration process has advanced, or failed to do so, and where it has gone wrong as well as right. In the absence of theory, historical literature on the subject will either drift off into irrelevance or be swept away in a tidal wave of change by history itself.

Historical integration theory still remains, in the words of the British Marxist Perry Anderson, "under the sign of the interim". Because it has not driven, or even much influenced, the research agenda, the relevant literature continues to be dominated, according to Johnny Laursen, by "*histoire événementielle*, closely related to its near cousin, diplomatic history".[2] Research remains in its infancy. The existing literature deals chiefly with origins and neglects institutions; few descriptions of how they actually function, either alone or together, are to be found. Historians have also largely left the economics of integration to others. The study of the last thirty years – surely the most consequential in the EU's history – has furthermore barely begun, and the significance these crucial decades for the interpretation of earlier periods remains unexamined. The Big Questions overhanging the future of the EU are still unaddressed. The stale air of antiquarianism overhangs the historical field.

1. A.S. MILWARD, *Allegiance: The Past and the Future*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 1(1995), pp.7-19.
2. P. ANDERSON, *Under the Sign of the Interim*, in: P. GOWAN, P. ANDERSON (eds.), *The Question of Europe*, Verso Books, London, 1997, pp.51-76; J. LAURSEN, *Towards a Supranational History*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 1(2002), p.5.

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