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Perspectives for Europe

Historical Concepts and Future Challenges

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Foreword by the editor

This book is the result of the international conference "Ideas for the Future of Europe", which took place at the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences in 2019 in the run-up to the EU elections. In addition to the conference speakers, other experts were also invited to contribute to the book. Of course, no claim can be made to completeness, because history and the present are full of countless ideas and concepts about Europe. In this book, relevant aspects are picked out and discussed. These range from historical overview articles and theoretical debates to empirically detailed articles, concrete problems and strategic perspectives.

The authors come from different scientific disciplines and adopt different approaches. After an introductory historical overview by the editor, Alessandro Bresolin describes in detail the debates on the question of federalism as opposed to the principle of unionism. Nedzad Mocevic then considers the much-discussed relationship between Islam and Europe, using many historical references to their close connections. In the next article, Werner Weidenfeld reflects on ways to overcome the strategic crisis of the European Union and escape from the present lack of a strategic voice. Rut Bermejo then addresses burning issues of the European future with regard to migration and the relationship between Europe and Africa. In a further article, Zoe Lefkofridi analyses party political developments in Europe with regard to the danger of strengthening anti-European forces and a possible disintegration of the Union. Tamara Ehs shows how democratization of Europe can be achieved through the judicial system. Finally, I condlude the anthology with an article on polarisation and democratic innovations.

As editor, I would like to thank Mr Carsten Rehbein for supervising the volume on Nomos. Special thanks also go to the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, which is providing financial support for this publication.

It is my hope that the articles in this anthology will enrich the debate on the future of the European Union.

Prof Dr Markus Pausch

Inhalt

Historical Ideas about Europe

Markus Pausch

What is Europe? A continent? A world region? A cultural area or a political idea? And what does this idea comprise?

The question, "what is Europe," is not new. It stirs emotions and it polarizes, especially in those countries that count themselves as part of Europe and/or want to be counted as such by others. The answers vary depending on the temporal, spatial or ideological context. In this introductory article, anchor points of the discourse on Europe will be traced and analysed for their relevance to the future of the EU.

If we understand Europe only from a geographical perspective, it is relatively easy to define. Geologists regard it not as a continent but rather as an appendage to Asia or as a subcontinent that is bordered to the west by the Atlantic Ocean, to the south by the Mediterranean and the Bosporus, to the north by the Arctic Ocean and to the east by the Urals. According to this understanding, it does not matter whether or not a nation state lies within these geographical borders of Europe. Obviously, there are two large states that do not: Turkey and Russia. Geographically speaking, they belong to different parts of Asia and the subcontinent of Europe.

However, when looking at the most important European intergovernmental organisation, namely the Council of Europe, it is quickly apparent that several countries outside the geographical borders of Europe are members. In the Caucasus this applies to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. The island state of Cyprus – geographically part of Asia – is also a member of the European Union (Leuprecht 2008, 98 f.).

It is therefore clear that the geographical dimension is insufficient to define Europe and it is certainly not enough in order to understand the European Union and its territorial development prospects or identity. For this, we must draw on the political and cultural history of Europe, and in doing so we immediately encounter new questions that are difficult to answer. The first problem arises in the use of the two terms "political" and "cultural". To what extent are these two terms related with regard to Europe? Are they a unity or perhaps a contradiction? Are they more about politics and the shaping of the community by human interests and human will? Or are they about a common culture, however this is defined, which forms an in-

visible bond between certain groups of people and populations, which is not simply open to everyone to join? If this is the case, what should that bond be? If the question is "what is Europe?" then it is inevitably also a question of who belongs to this Europe, who is European and who is not, whether one is born within it or under certain circumstances can become part of it in the course of a lifetime.

The articles in this book will not be able to answer these questions unambiguously and conclusively but some of them offer scientifically sound alternative perspectives on ideas about Europe that are relevant for its future. I would like to explore three dimensions: religious-cultural, strategic-national and democratic-cosmopolitan. The first and the second are fed by looking into the long past of Europe and seeing the future as a prolongation of cultural, religious or national identities. The third is based on the idea of human and civil rights and it outlines the future of Europe as a democratic negotiation process between free citizens.

The religious-cultural idea of Europe

For some time now, the religious and cultural dimension of Europe has been particularly emphasized by certain political actors. Europe is Christian, some claim. Others add that it is the Judeo-Christian heritage that makes up Europe. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has emphasized this several times since 2015; in particular, he has emphasized the obligation of the EU Commission to "protect Europe's Judeo-Christian identity and the Enlightenment." (The Trumpet 2019). In view of the terrible cruelties that Christians have inflicted on the Jews over the centuries, the concept of "Judeo-Christian" seems very questionable.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, on the other hand, puts all his faith in Christianity, believing that Europe can be saved only by returning to Christianity. "We Europeans are Christians," he said in his Christmas address in 2019" (Remix 2019). This conviction is also firmly anchored in other European governing parties, such as Poland's national conservative PiS or Germany's CSU party as well as in large parts of the European People's Party (EPP). The candidate of the latter in the 2019 European Parliament (EP) elections, Manfred Weber, openly claims on Twitter: "Europe's identity is Christian" (Weber 2017) and politicians on the extreme right formulate this idea even more radically. Politicians such as Heinz Christian Strache also call for defence of the West with a crucifix in their hands (The Vienna Review 2009)

This approach is not new but, as the above quotes show, it is highly topical. The historical forerunners can be found among many conservative or right wing politicians of various European states. When a common constitution for the EU was to be worked out in a convention at the beginning of the millennium, the mention of God and Christianity was one of the points of contention. Even the Pope intervened in the debate and demanded that God and the Christian heritage be mentioned. In the final version, which was never accepted, this was waived, because some states and many parties were strictly against it (Norman 2003, 83 f.).

What is the scientific and historical view of the idea of a Christian Europe? There is no doubt that the influences of Christianity on European history are extremely diverse and profound. Europe is inconceivable without Christianity, although it would be going too far to list everything visible and tangible. Nevertheless, the idea of a purely Christian or even primarily Christian Europe is problematic for several reasons. Historically, Europe's history begins well before Christianity. In Greek mythology it is the father of the gods, Zeus, who – transformed into a bull – kidnapped the beautiful Europe from present-day Syria across the Mediterranean Sea to the island of Crete (Schwab 1993). This has nothing to do with Christianity; on the contrary, Christianity strictly rejects the ancient Greek polytheistic belief in many gods.

Greek high culture, which is considered the cradle of democracy and in so many aspects the point of reference for today's politicians, artists and scientists, originated long before Christianity and held positions that are completely contrary to those later written down in the Bible. It is not an insignificant detail of European history that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, Sophocles, Thucydides, Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius etc. were not Christians and that we, independently of this, refer to their great achievements in the sciences. Even the Roman culture, which is still rightly praised today for its unique legal system, strategic brilliance, infrastructure and cities, originated before Christianity. Worse: the Romans persecuted the early Christians bitterly and brutally before Constantine made the new religion the state religion in the late 4th century (Neupane 2019). A Christian Europe would ultimately have to reject all this as unchristian, pagan and lost, as an appropriation or fusion of the ancient Greek and Roman with Christian doctrine can hardly be argued seriously.

At best, Christian scholars could claim that they had rediscovered the ancient teachings in the Renaissance (Bisaha 2004). But there are at least three weighty arguments against this: firstly, these teachings were obviously little known and appreciated for many centuries during the Middle Ages and Christians were vehemently opposed to any form of polytheism; se-

condly, the tradition was mainly handed down by Muslim and Arab scholars in Al-Andalus, such that it was thanks not only to thinkers of Christianity but to a large extent to those of Islam that the Renaissance took place (Corm 2015); thirdly, Christian rulers acted with great brutality against the first humanists and burned many of them or persecuted them in the Inquisition. Under these circumstances, how could Europe or the European integration process be reduced to Christianity? Yet that is not all, as another important reference point of our Europe today is at odds with Christian doctrine and the divine order asserted for centuries: the Enlightenment that emerged from the Renaissance with all its political consequences. The most important proponents of Enlightened philosophy were rejected by the most important proponents of Christianity and declared as enemies (Flake 1988). Jean-Jacques Rousseau had to seek refuge from the Archbishop and Calvinists alike, because he strongly criticized religion in his book "Emile" (Rousseau 1998). Much of what the Church presented as dogmas was vehemently opposed by the Enlightenment, especially the divine right of kings. In his treatise on tolerance, Voltaire lamented the crimes of Christians (Arkush 1993), and the French Revolution culminated in a cult of the Supreme Being, which Robespierre and others considered a measure against Christianity (Flake 1988, 291 f.). Also, even if some Enlightenment philosophers were sympathetic to Christian doctrine, their endeavour was at least partially directed against the dominant religion and its earthly consequences.

The hardest cut into a Europe considered to be Christian, however, was made in the 19th century with the rise of socialism, the theory of evolution and the negation of the idea of God by philosophers such as Nietzsche and Marx (Osborn 2017). From a purely historical point of view, there is no doubt that from the second half of the 19th century Europe has been decisively shaped by forces that reject not only the divine grace and claims to power of Christianity but also the overall idea of God. The various branches of socialism tend towards atheism or agnosticism. Religion is considered to be the opium of the people. With the October Revolution and the emergence of the Soviet Union, half of Europe was soon ruled by regimes that renounced Christianity and any other religion. In the other half of Europe, which drifted into fascism and National Socialism from the 1920 s onwards, Christianity was partly fought and partly exploited (Steigmann-Gall 2003). From a purely historical perspective, however, it is clear that its dominance as a legitimation of the ruling classes ended at the latest with the First World War. Those who resort to the Christian idea of Europe today often do so because they want to distance themselves from these non-Christian (communist or fascist) regimes and rebuild the future on the ba-

sis of Christian values. Yet even this is an exclusive idea, which disregards the historical struggles of Europeans of different faith or non-believers for a free, democratic project based on human rights.

Therefore to define the identity of Europe as Christian is to close one's eyes not only to its history but also to all the other historical influences that have shaped the continent. Even more importantly, by reducing it to Christianity alone, a large part of the European population is excluded. Between 2006 and 2015, according to a study by the University of Lucerne (Liedhegener/Odermatt 2015), 66 % of EU citizens were formally regarded as Christian, 28.9 % without religion, 3 % Muslim and the rest in another religious community. More than a third of EU citizens are therefore non-Christian. In turn, Christians are divided into Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox or others, as well as those who formally belong but neither practise nor consider themselves religious (see Pollack 2018). To define the EU as Christian would therefore exclude at least one third of the population living in it and deprive some countries, such as Albania or Bosnia-Herzegovina, of any prospect of accession.

This would be like defining a state according to the majority ratio and marginalizing the minorities as inferior. This has happened often enough and frequently still does. For a democratically constituted Union and a pluralistic society, it would be the death blow. Conversely, it would be just as wrong to cite another religion or atheism as the basis of identity. A political entity that sees itself as democratic must be neutral in matters of faith. It is the right of all individuals living within the entity to follow their own ideological and religious models. To regard one as politically dominant is undemocratic. Europe's future as a democracy can therefore be founded neither on political Christianity nor on political Islam nor on political atheism etc.

Closely linked to the religious question, the cultural bond that holds Europe together is often invoked. Great artists from the European past are mentioned: from Mozart and Beethoven to Fyodor Dostoevsky and Victor Hugo, Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monnet or others (Europarat 1958). Their cultural achievements can neither be assigned to a religion nor are they suitable as a means of identity for a collective; they are grandiose, individual achievements but not political works in the narrower sense. Moreover, for the broad mass of the population, they often remain only very abstract points of reference, which are more accessible to a culturally educated elite. Finally, their works are a reflection of European history and its diversity of culture, ideology and political contradictions. Great authors come from conservative milieus as well as liberal or socialist ones; Dostoevsky was a fanatical Christian, Orwell a convinced socialist, and Victor

Hugo influenced by the Enlightenment. If cultural achievements are to be used as a bond for Europe, cultural diversity must also be accepted.

The strategic-national idea of Europe

A second idea of Europe, which is often linked to religious and cultural concepts of identity, is the strategic-national one. It is much younger, based on the theory of realism in international relations, and asserts that Europe as a political construct makes sense only if it brings strategic advantages or rational benefits to the nation states (Morgenthau 1951). These benefits may relate to security policy or economic issues. It is assumed that political entities are constituted first and foremost from a common identity. From this perspective, nations are relatively static and homogeneous units that are demarcated from the outside and in which a community of descent lives together on a concrete territory. Accordingly, cooperation with other states is meaningful only if it brings advantages to the nation-state in some form but at the same time generates no disadvantages (Brown 2001). Since supranationalisation always involves the transfer of competences and thus of sovereignty, it is viewed with scepticism.

The idea of a Europe fits in with this is therefore a purely governmental one. Europe is mainly understood as the sum of European nation states that cooperate with one another and perhaps even temporarily share competences as long as they benefit from them. As a unity, it is at best seen again in a religious-cultural sense when it comes to defence against other, non-European countries. The key phrase summarising this idea of Europe is the "Europe of fatherlands", after a phrase of Charles de Gaulle. In such a Europe, also called the "Europe of Nations", supporters can enter and leave according to their member states and each has a veto. De Gaulle demonstrated this in the 1960s with his "empty chair" policy and with the veto on admission of the British. The British, for their part, have always viewed the Union largely as an intergovernmental organisation, which would have no right to curtail their sovereignty. Under this model, cooperation in a community is considered acceptable only if there is a concrete benefit, such as higher economic growth or greater external security.

Historically, since the beginning of the unification process, Europe has faced the question of the extent to which this should take place. Should Europe become a federal state, a federation along the lines of the USA? Winston Churchill proposed this in a speech in Zurich in 1946 (Churchill 1946) and Jean Monnet, the mastermind of the first European communities in the 1950s, had envisaged overcoming nation states (Monnet

1963). Paul Henri Spaak, Altiero Spinelli and other representatives of the founding states hoped that it would represent an end to centuries of enmity between nations, an end to wars and the start of a new chapter in supranational cooperation (Spinelli/Rossi 1981/1941). However, the possible creation of the United States of Europe frightened too many politicians in the capitals. Despite several attempts, it was impossible to establish a federalist constitution. The method of small steps towards integration was adopted, angering many national conservatives and even more so the nationalists, who for a long time were a barely audible minority (Monnet 1963). For a number of years, there were many indications that, according to neo-functionalist logic, one integration step would follow another and that Europe would ultimately grow together into a federal state. The corresponding integration theories were provided by renowned scientists such as Ernst Haas (1958) and Philippe Schmitter (1969).

Nevertheless, the idea of a purely strategic partnership has been maintained by many member states. Charles de Gaulle, who hoped for a continental Europe under French leadership, did not want a federal community and also vetoed British accession, as he feared for French supremacy. Later, others put the brakes on. The British themselves, once they had joined, were the most vehemently opposed to excessive surrender of national sovereignty. Actually, the concept of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) would have suited them better, with no transfer of competence. But it did not promise the economic benefits that the European Community offered. Still other countries that joined the EU later, such as those from Central and Eastern Europe, hoped for longer-term, stable autonomy and independence for the first time in their history. These young nations were more attracted to the intergovernmental, strategic-national idea than to the federalist idea (Kopecky/Mudde 2002). Many remained true to the concept of strategic intergovernmental cooperation even without nationalist undertones. Analytically, the work of Andrew Moravcik (2008) and Giandomenico Majone (2005) showed that for a long time the legitimacy of the Union actually worked through its successes, its output. The member states began to doubt integration only when the benefits for themselves became smaller or could not be read so clearly in the economic indicators.

A distinction can be made between moderate strategic-national actors and nationalist actors. The former see the nation state as the central player in international politics and want to maintain this position in intergovernmental organisations. However, under certain circumstances they can imagine a transfer of competencies. The nationalist actors, on the other hand, tend to be against any cession of sovereignty. It is no wonder that the current EU, which has many supranational elements, is seen as deficient by

nationalist advocates of a nation-state strategic idea of Europe (Mudde 2012). According to them, it is undemocratic and inefficient, because it undermines the sovereignty of the member states. Consequently, the return of all decisions to nation-state level is seen as the only way to maintain or regain democratic legitimacy. Since they feel that the integration process has already progressed too far, renationalisation should now be sought, which should lead to the restoration of full national sovereignty.

Such renationalisation can theoretically take place in three different ways, namely through reform of the treaties, through withdrawal of one or more member states or through simple refusal of all contractual obligations by one or more member states. Renationalisation through treaty reform requires all current member states to decide, with the consent of the European Parliament, to transfer competences back to the member states. However, renationalisation of individual member states could also take place through their withdrawal, which has become legally possible with the Treaty of Lisbon and through which the United Kingdom has left the Union. A third variant consists of extra-legal and thus factual renationalisation of one, several or all member states by disregard for all obligations arising from EU membership. Following the approach adopted by Charles de Gaulle in the 1960 s, this can be described as an "empty chair policy," referring to the absence of national representatives at Council meetings and possibly also to the absence of MEPs or diplomats.

Nationalists or right-wing populists demand either the renationalisation of their own country by means of withdrawal or a completely different, renationalised form of European cooperation, for example with the slogan "Europe of fatherlands" in reference to Charles de Gaulle's vision, i.e. an intergovernmental Europe without relinquishing national sovereignty and with the possibility of national vetoes in all policy areas. The degree of renationalisation that right-wing populists have in mind is not precisely defined but remains somewhat vague for populist reasons (Pausch 2019). The right of veto of the nation states is, however, considered to be central.

The idea of a national-strategic Europe or of renationalisation poses a vague threat in the current European discourse. In fact, on closer examination, it becomes apparent that it is in danger of failing in itself. For, by insisting on national sovereignty, some EU states could endanger rather than secure their existence. It is obvious that the implementation of such steps would lead to conflicts and also place a heavy burden on an intergovernmental Europe. Conflicts could, for example, intensify in Belgium between the Flemish and Walloons, in the United Kingdom between England and Scotland, in Italy between north and south, in Spain between Catalonia and the Basque Country and the rest etc. The national sovereignty