The Saga of Europeanisation

On the Narrative Construction of a European Society

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Abstract

Within the European studies community, the notion of Europeanisation is variably applied to investigate long-term historical transformation, a change of political culture and identities, or the impact of European law and policies. Apart from its analytical use, there is a narrative element in academic accounts of Europeanisation as a story of social change and integration. From this latter perspective, Europeanisation research is about ways of imagining a transnational European society. The paper develops a discursive approach to Europeanisation. It explores variants of Europeanisation as a form of social imagination of the unity and diversity of a European society. Europeanisation as social imagination relates to all kinds of processes of interpretation and justification that provide us with explanations of how Europe came into being as a meaningful social entity, how it is sustained over time and contested, and how it should look in the future. More specifically, the paper examines four interrelated processes in the narrative construction of European society: 1) Triumphant Europeanism: affirmation of the extraordinary (sacralisation), 2) Banal Europeanism: affirmations of everyday life (banalisation), 3) Euroscepticism: disruptions of the extraordinary (de-sacralisation), 4) Political crisis: disruptions of everyday life (crisis).

Keywords

EU – Europeanisation – Discourse – Integration – Legitimacy

Introduction

Europeanisation has become a fashionable term used by scholars from various disciplines. Within the European studies community, the notion of Europeanisation is variably applied to investigate long-term historical transformation, a change of political culture and identities, or the impact of European law and policies. Apart from its analytical use, there is a narrative element in academic accounts of Europeanisation as a story of social change and integration. From this latter perspective, Europeanisation research is about ways of imagining a transnational European society. To understand how the academic and common sense use of the notion of Europeanisation is narratively embedded in accounts of the social integration of European society, the particular storylines along which Europeanisation research unfolds need to be unravelled. Narratives are used as collective imaginations of the social bonds that bind people together and tell how society constitutes itself (Eder 2006; 2010; 2013). Narratives of European society-building compete with existing narratives that imagine the social bonds of national societies or postulate the bonds of a global or world society. Accounts of Europeanisation, therefore, typically navigate between the local, the national, the European, and the global. They interpret our diverse pasts, propose specific balances of a 'unity in diversity' of contemporary culture, politics and society, and design paths for our common future.

In the following, I develop a discursive approach to Europeanisation that considers scientific accounts as intrinsically related to the narrative construction of a Europe as a meaningful social entity: a European society. Instead of looking at Europeanisation from a political science perspective in terms of shifting power relations and causal impacts, I explore variants of Europeanisation as a form of social imagination of the unity and diversity of a European society. Europeanisation as social imagination relates to all kinds of processes of interpretation and justification that provide us with explanations of how Europe came into being as a meaningful social entity, how it is sustained over time and contested, and how it should look in the future.
More specifically, I will examine four interrelated processes in the narrative construction of European society.

1. Triumphant Europeanism: affirmation of the extraordinary (sacralisation)
2. Banal Europeanism: affirmations of everyday life (banalisation)
3. Euroscepticism: disruptions of the extraordinary (de-sacralisation)
4. Political crisis: disruptions of everyday life (crisis)

The first two variants are success stories based on the alleged integrative effects of Europeanisation on the emergence of a European society. The latter two variants are stories of decay testing out the disintegrative effects of Europeanisation on society. Narratives of Europeanisation are, then, about how social bonds among the Europeans are either maintained or corrupted. All four stories further relate to social situations in which fiction is either highlighted (glorified or demystified) or remains unobserved. In the first case, narratives of Europeanisation can be discussed in relation to 'triumph' and 'trauma' (Giesen 2004): either the affirmation of the value of European integration and the emphasis of the extraordinary achievements of Europe or the profanation of the value of European integration as manifested in Euroscepticism and crisis. In the second case, there is little effort to narrate the story of Europeanisation, to make Europe salient, or to reflect on its merits. Europeanisation rather operates as a mechanism at the subconscious level. In the remaining part of the paper, I will look for evidence of these processes. I will reconstruct how what is extraordinary about Europe is defended and contested, and I will collect evidence for how Europe is rooted in everyday life and how it might be put at risk in situations of crisis.

Europeanisation: diffuse but popular

The meaning attributed to Europeanisation is wide–ranging, including long-term historical transformations (Conway et al. 2010), the dynamics of societal change and the advancement of modernity (Delanty and Rumford 2005), the convergence of political cultures, the public sphere and collective identities (Koopmans and Statham 2010; Risse 2010), and more confined political science analyses of the processes of adaptation of member state law, policies or administration (Heritier 2007). Like modernisation or globalisation, Europeanisation also refers to large-scale processes of transformation of contemporary politics and society that are experienced by large groups of people and collectively interpreted. It affects not only economics and politics but also society, which is involved in its interpretation.

In all these uses, Europeanisation is introduced as a generic concept of shared relevance for researchers who look for commonalities beyond particular cases. As a concept for interdisciplinary research, the term invites dialogue and a broader understanding in the social sciences and humanities. Scholars who explore causalities in terms of the policy impact of the European Union on the law and administration of nation-states and scholars who are interested in multiple structural configurations of the European social and political space might not necessarily share the same epistemic presuppositions. By reference to Europeanisation, they put away their disputes and try to agree on a joint

research agenda.[1] As part of such routine references to Europeanisation, the research community is also united in its complaints about the deficiencies of the term and its imprecise or ambivalent theoretical and empirical focus. In an article about the 'many faces of Europeanization', Johan P. Olsen (2002) asked: 'Europeanization: A fashionable term, but is it useful?'

At the most generic level, Europeanisation is often conceived either as a form of *institutionalisation* (in terms of the development of the market, the public sector, and government) or *socialisation* (in terms of the development of individual life chances and orientations). Most researchers discuss Europeanisation in relation to larger processes of cultural, social, and political embedding but also in terms of the commitment of smaller units to larger systems. There is a hidden Durkheimian agenda in Europeanisation research that is linked to the evolution of shared practices, routines, and rules of enduring cooperation and collective problem-solving (Swedberg 1994). Europeanisation research provides a broader map for the investigation of the expected spill-overs from market to polity and society. Functionalism and (new) institutionalism are the main intellectual inspirations of Europeanisation scholars, who engage in new and broader research agendas in the study of European culture, values, and identities. Europeanisation is re-interpreted here as a social experience that includes the people of Europe and, thus, expands from institutions to society at large. The enthusiasm with the term Europeanisation is, thus, partly related to the self-understanding of the European studies research community as the explorers of a new polity, a new system, or even a new society (Eigmüller and Mau 2010).

More specifically, Europeanisation can be related to processes of vertical integration and to processes of the horizontal integration of society. From the first perspective, Europeanisation is about shifting power relations. It is about how Europeanisation affects the exercise of political authority and control. The exercise of political power is a good element for building drama; but, depending on the social situation, it can be also routinised and integrated into everyday life experiences. The processes of both dramatisation and normalisation are relevant to understand how Europeanisation unfolds through vertical integration and impact. From the second perspective, Europeanisation is about shifting loyalties. It is about how Europeanisation affects people's lives, social networks, and forms of mobility. It constitutes

[1] These qualities of bridge-building might also explain the popularity of the concept of Europeanisation for the formulation of research policies and the building of interdisciplinary programmes. Research programmes and centres also frequently propose an exploration of the link between 'Europeanisation and globalisation' and, thus, successfully exploit two generic terms.

horizontal relations among the people of Europe, which again are collectively interpreted and used as elements of life histories. With regard to the exercise of political power, identities can become salient, mobilised, or contested or they remain under the surface. In light of the difficulties in accounting for the core content of what is called a 'strong' European identity, Europeanisation research has focused around the emergence of a 'European identity light' (Risse 2010). As such, Europeanisation is seen as unfolding through horizontal integration and the slow but steady socialisation of European citizens. It is about living across the Øresund in Sweden and commuting to Copenhagen, about going for shopping tours to Germany, about using Ryanair for weekend trips, about paying with the same currency in several European countries, about studying abroad, meeting a partner from other countries, entering a European association, all these interesting new opportunities that people use to make profits, to expand the radius of their professional work, to plan their free time, and so on (Favell 2008).

Johan P. Olsen's tentative answer to the question of whether these different 'uses' of the term Europeanisation also warrant its 'usefulness' was 'yes' but less as an explanatory concept than as an 'attention directing device' (Olsen 2002: 942). The challenge is, therefore, not primarily to insist on conceptual clarity and to agree on an analytically sharp definition of Europeanisation. To the contrary, the differentiated use of the term captures rather well the complexity of the European integration processes and the mechanisms of change that are associated with it. From this perspective, the many scholars (especially within political science) who start their books and articles with a note of caution about how poorly defined and diffuse the term Europeanisation is in the literature (and how this particular publication intends to make a difference) did not really get the point. It is, of course, possible that the popularity and even the usefulness of the term Europeanisation as part of academic writing and 'storytelling' is dependent on some element of conceptual vagueness and confusion. References to Europeanisation are meant to capture a complex process of societal, political, economic, and cultural transformation and not causal inferences between analytically confined variables. In the remaining part of the paper, I will further explore this theme and suggest that Europeanisation can be approached as part of academic storytelling. I will first outline core elements of the story that informs the self-understanding of the European studies community. Within this template, it will be possible to distinguish four narratives for the social imagination of Europe that contain elements of triumph and success but also of drama, failure, and trauma.

Europeanisation as scientific storytelling

Discourse analytical approaches have been applied in European integration studies to emphasize how meaning is attributed to political processes and how the interests and identities of the participating actors are derived from an ideational context (Diez 2001a; 2001b). Europeanisation has come to 'provide a cognitive filter, frame or conceptual lens or paradigm through which social, political and economic developments might be ordered, narrated and rendered intelligible' (Hay and Rosamond 2002: 151). To identify 'stories of Europeanisation' is, then, to reconstruct the discursive repertoire of ideas, knowledge, narratives, and understandings at the disposal of the Europeans.

From a discourse theoretical perspective, we can say that an important element of the scientific story consists in the attribution of causal relations. One relevant data source for discourse analysis of Europeanisation is found in texts that are used and produced by the European studies research community. For legal and public administration scholars, Europeanisation is about the implementation of EU regulation and the direct and indirect effects of European policymaking in the domestic realm (Börzel 1999: 574; Vink 2003). Yet, the attribution of causalities is not only an analytical operation of empirical science; it is also used as a defining element of the underlying concept. The notion of Europeanisation operates through underlying causalities, which *attribute* processes of change and adaptation of national institutions and practices to European integration. Sociology speaks of attributions of causality as part of the semantic structure of modern society, not only in the sense that people willingly attribute meaning and actively interpret the social world but that these attributes are inscribed in our social world and form part of the semantic structures through which we interpret society (Luhmann 1997). Europeanisation suggests continuity and 'ordered' change; it synchronises and historicises contingent processes that could as well be perceived as asynchronous and disordered. It is the concept itself that allows the ordered view of society and its transformation. This is precisely the function of a narrative. It is from here that I propose in the following to reconstruct Europeanisation as storytelling.

Europeanisation relates to stories or narratives through which we can describe the contours of European societies in the plural and European society in the singular. Europeanisation confronts us with societal differentiation and with societal integration. The European Union even provides us with a symbolic formula to express this: the unity in diversity of Europe. *United in diversity*, which was proposed in the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union to become the motto of the EU, can be considered as the meta-narrative from which different academic and popular storylines departed to enter a new

imagination of society. Cornelius Castoriadis (1998[1975]) referred to this as a social instituting imaginary. Europe elaborates a particular imaginary – in this case, the motto of a unity in diversity through which it can be experienced as a unitary social form and as something different. Europeanisation as social imagination relates to all kinds of processes of interpretation and justification that provide us with explanations of how Europe came into being as a meaningful social entity, how it is sustained over time, and how it should look in the future.

A basic distinction in textual interpretation is the underlying genre. The genre that best applies to tell the story of Europeanisation is the ancient form of the *saga*. A *saga* refers to 'what is said' in common. This is not so much explicitly in the form of officially approved and valid stories but, rather, implicitly in the everyday use of language. There is, thus, an inbuilt ambivalence in the tale that makes it difficult to distinguish what is real and what is fiction. The accuracy of the saga is often hotly disputed among those who share it. There is a dispute about the fictive and the real elements in the story of Europeanisation that not only drives the 'science' of European studies but is a defining element and driving force in the narrative construction of Europe.

From this last perspective, Europeanisation research could be used to programme a cultural sociology of European integration that analyses precisely these processes of construction and diffusion of meaning and interpretations of Europe. The object of analysis could be, on one hand, the so-called 'high culture' of Europe. European studies scholars within the humanities, for instance, look at different cultural products, at processes of articulating culture, and at the media for the diffusion of culture. The common market as a space for 'cultural Europeanisation' operates through the products of 'high culture' as potential vehicles "to spread norms, ideas and identities; and the European Union clearly has the ambition to foster a 'sense of Europeanness' and a 'European identity', as well as an awareness and appreciation of Europe's national cultures" via the European-wide distribution of its cultural products (de Smaele 2009: 17). On the other hand, a cultural sociology of European integration could be programmed in a way to analyse the changing social practices through which people experience transnationalism and ascribe meaning to it. We would not, then, primarily be interested in the active production of culture and its interpretation but, rather, in the effects of Europeanisation on people's everyday life. The former is contained in what I will reconstruct as 'triumphant Europeanism' while the latter relates to what I will call 'affirmation of everyday life', or 'banal Europeanism'.

The saga of Europeanisation can, thus, embrace the extraordinary and emphasise 'high culture', but it can also tell popular stories, reflect routines and common practices. The validity of the underlying stories can further be emphatically confirmed or it can be rejected. Europeanisation can be supported, or it can meet resistance. Along these two dimensions of extraordinary/routine and affirmation/disruption, we arrive at the following matrix of genre distinction:

Table 1: Narratives of Europeanisation

Europeanisation	Affirmation	Disruption
The extraordinary (heroic)	1) Triumph	3) Trauma
The ordinary (banal)	2) Routine	4) Crisis

Following the first and the third variants, Europeanisation affects the world of ideas and collective identities. The first narrative relates Europeanisation to the affirmation of what is extraordinary about Europe. Europeanisation is value-driven and goal-oriented. The negative template of this optimistic narrative is found in the third variant of Europeanisation, which is interpreted as unsettling or negating what is extraordinary about the national. The triumph of Europe is turned into the trauma of Europe, which is feared and perceived as a threat to traditional values and identity. Following the second and fourth variants, Europeanisation affects material life chances. The second variant is linked to the concrete life experiences of the Europeans and their ordinary co-existence. The negative template of this second narrative is the crisis narrative in which the routine is disrupted and material life is threatened. The social basis of the carriers of the stories changes from the elites as the narrators of triumph to the subversive challengers of Europe (the Eurosceptics) to the 'ordinary people' as those who either profit from opportunities or suffer from crisis.

Europeanisation as triumph

The original plot of the saga of Europeanisation is based on a success story. This is what I will call the heroic account of Europeanisation. In macro-social terms, Europeanisation is understood as social progress that combines individual and social learning and leads to more aggregate levels of social integration. From a long-term historical perspective, it is anchored in European modernity, the rise of Europe and its continuous expansion. Narrowed down to the postwar history of European integration, we encounter the heroic epic of the founding fathers, their rescue of the shared heritage of

European enlightenment, their true beliefs and firm convictions: the life and teaching of the European saints as Alan Milward (2000) famously put it. Other accounts inspired by political science tell the parallel story of a deepening and widening and the *telos* of an ever more closely integrated Union, which is even written down in the Treaties.

The triumphal Europe reflects classical optimistic thinking at the time of industrialisation, the spread of Europe as civilization:

> The mood was triumphalist and optimistic: change was taken to be synonymous with betterment, improvement, amelioration of human condition. It was grasped by the concepts of evolution, growth and development: inevitable and irreversible unravelling of inherent potentialities of society. Change was raised to the level of autotelic value, it was seen as always good […] and cherished for its own sake.
>
> (Sztompka 2000: 5)

In this spirit, the promoters of a pan-European union in the interwar and immediate postwar period developed a vision of a united Europe of civilization and peace that would triumph over the divided Europe of nationalism and violence (Klausen and Tilly 1997). This 'triumph of Europe' was very much promoted as an intellectual project that was given expression mainly by poets, philosophers, and artists. As such, it continues to inspire intellectual discourse, typically appealing to higher moral and aesthetic values and rejecting the utilitarian play of power and interests. Turned into a credo, the vision of the triumph of Europe contains some element of holiness, representing the sacred realm of Europe as distinguished from the profane realm of national politics (Swedberg 1994: 383).

This emphasis on the main postwar achievements of European integration – the overcoming of the historical divide of Europe, the banning of fascism and aggressive nationalism – continues to be a central credo of the promoters of European integration. European studies scholars who are connected through the EU-funded Jean Monnet Programme are devoted to the spread and enhancement of knowledge about European integration.[2] They often join the chorus of public intellectuals to promote European integration as the vehicle for wealth, peace, justice, and democracy.

[2] See Schulz-Forberg and Stråth (2010: 138-151) on the role of academic value producers and the 'eloquence of optimism' of the European studies community.

Banal Europeanisation

The heroic beginning and the unfolding drama of Europe is also the template for telling the story of postwar normalisation and institutional settlement. The observation that Europe has become part of our everyday life and has facilitated close interactions among the Europeans has been sold to this day as the greatest success of Europe. European integration has been successful because it has become ordinary. The treaty settlement of the European communities and the everyday functioning of European institutions have facilitated a normalisation of the relationships and exchanges among Europeans in the Common Market that is used for profit-making and providing services. For governments, local authorities, private companies and also citizens, Europeanisation is experienced as both institutionalisation and socialisation. The European reality of rights, opportunities, and interactions has become an everyday experience with which a third and a fourth generation of Europeans grew up and had time to become familiar. This, in short, is the banal account of Europeanisation. The relationship between European nations is no longer played off as an endless power game but is unfolding through learning, socialisation, and institutional adaptation.

In the professional EU studies narratives, this transition is marked by the slow replacement of the realist account of European integration as a power game between governments by the functionalist or institutionalist accounts of European integration as a regulatory regime of governance. The focus in many recent studies is on administrative routines or processes of adaptation of domestic political systems (Börzel and Risse 2003; Egeberg 2006). As such, Europeanisation has consequences for the organization of interest representation, for the formation of political culture and identities, and for the kind of norms and values that actors in the state and civil society promote. Civil society and social movement scholars, for instance, have analysed the strategic adaptation of civil society actors, trade unions, or political party actors to the new opportunity structure provided by the EU, but they also point to attitudinal changes of domestic actors and activists (Liebert and Trenz 2010; Marks and McAdam 1996). These effects of the politics of Europeanisation on the cognitive and normative structures of society (Börzel and Risse 2003; Featherstone and Radelli 2003) can be traced back to the level of public attitudes and discourse. First of all, Europeanisation has an impact on citizens' beliefs and identity (Trenz 2007). In general, there is found to be a positive relation between becoming involved in the EU, becoming socialized and, consequently, also supporting supranational integration and transfers of authority to the EU. Secondly, Europeanisation also affects the public at large and shapes patterns of opposition and support with the process of European integration or with specific policies promoted by the EU. These socialising

dynamics of Europeanisation are addressed in numerous case studies that have inquired into how Europeanisation correlates with the institutionalisation of common values and shared beliefs about what is 'good governance' and what concerns should be addressed by it (Rumford 2003).

An essential element of the plot of the story of Europeanisation is that it affects people's loyalties and identities, not necessarily through the formation of a new 'high culture' as an elite identity but as a collective experience that is open to everyone. In the European studies community, the Europeanisation of citizens' sense of identity and belonging is usually approached by Eurobarometer data, which measure the shifting attitudes of individuals (Bruter 2005). Opinion surveys and attitudinal research still leave the question open as to how re-socialised European citizens are involved in changing everyday practices and experiences. Here, the work of Laura Cram is useful (Cram 2001; 2009). Drawing upon the distinction between hot or heroic versus banal identification (Billig 1995), she proposes that European identity be analysed not in terms of the heroic story of the great achievements of European integration but in terms of changing everyday practices. Cram (2009: 109) argues that European Union identity is underpinned by a process that is banal, contingent, and contextual. The saga of Europeanisation would in this case not be based on deliberate choices by the individual to identify as a European citizen and to support integration. The Europeanisation of social practices and identities would be rather driven by the daily experiences of the citizens (either positive or negative) with the reality of Europe that is imposed upon them. Europeanisation is not choice; it is destiny. It is a form of the socialisation of citizens, who implicitly accept the changing European reality rather than explicitly consenting to it. Banal Europeanism draws attention to the subconscious processes that lead to the normalisation of the EU as a legitimate political authority (ibid.). The intuition is that there must be some level at which the EU as a political entity and as a reference point is taken for granted and citizens accommodate with the status quo of European integration. A political authority cannot only be constantly contested; there are not only great constitutional moments. European integration cannot be extraordinary or special all the time but needs to become a meaningful presence for citizens. So, the story goes that we need to distinguish conscious or *appreciated Europeanism* from subconscious or banal Europeanism.

There are, however, at least two dangers in these accounts of Europeanisation as normalisation. One is the danger of institutional stalemates. Banal Europeanism clearly lacks the mobilising potential of nationalism, socialism, or other 'isms that, in the past, constituted successful political forces. Such a post-heroic account of contemporary European history might result in some weak form of collective alignment – for example, a constitutional patriotism

that supports some constitutional essentials but for which people are no longer asked to make great sacrifices or to build the kind of solidarity that is necessary for shared welfare and redistribution (Müller 2009). Yet, in the long run, the post-heroic Europe might also increase people's disengagement or dissatisfaction with politics. Banal Europeanism, therefore, risks balancing social relations among Europeans at a low level of integration. The deadlocks and routines of banal Europeanism risk becoming a bulwark against innovation and initiative. European bureaucracy is experienced by many as an 'iron cage'. In this sense, banal Europeanism also reflects the deadlock in which European integration is caught. There is no easy way out of the banal, once you are trapped in it.

A second related danger of banal Europeanism is that European construction remains fragile. There is, perhaps, no need for an explicit consensus, but this can hardly prevent the expression of dissension. If EU citizens are socialising with European integration, they also learn about their opportunities to raise their voices, to protest against Europe, or to become rebellious. There are times of prosperity in which the European Union 'delivers', but there are also times of crisis in which the performance of the European Union 'suffers'. Europeanisation as adaptation, as a *deus ex machina*', or, even worse, as an 'iron cage of bureaucracy' creates resistance. For many, therefore, Europe is not only experienced as dull and boring; it is also perceived as annoying and pretentious. The European Union's promise of being profitable for everyone and preferable to alternative arrangements might be proven wrong and can easily be contested. Instead of creating equal living conditions across the territory of the European Union, the effects of EU policies might contribute to the worsening of living conditions in some parts or be directly related to people's sufferings. This is what I will describe in the following as the desacralized or sceptical account of Europeanisation.

The trauma of Europeanisation

The powerful account of the postwar triumph of Europe inevitably brings in an element of drama because the story of the rise of the new can only be told in relation to the fall of the old. There are different versions of the drama that relate to the intrinsic conflicts and cleavages of the European social space, the many frictions of European society. One popular account is based on the distinction between the winners and the losers of European integration. This contradicts the official credo of triumph that European integration would create equal living conditions for all and promote an 'ever closer Union'. Many scholars insist that there is a case for bringing power back in and that Europeanisation is not just to be perceived as a 'smooth transition' and mutual

learning (Mahoney 2004; Moravcsik 1998). Critical EU studies deliver accounts of power that is exercised by the EU and impacts on subordinated entities such as regions or member states. In particular, a more critical political economy approach to Europeanisation is often schematised around a quantified relationship between winners and losers, e.g., the beneficiaries of EU policies, those who get support from the European Union to impose their interests and identities or those who gain power, salience and legitimacy against those who have to pay the price of adaptation, face structural hurdles to compete in the EU game, or have to adjust their interests and identities (Jones and Verdun 2005; Koopmans 2007; Thatcher 2004).

Apart from these power games, Europeanisation also unfolds as the drama of history. The story of the rise of Europe is related to the parallel story of the fall of the nation-state. In the original heroic account, the demise of nationalism was embraced as a story of emancipation that would help to overcome the insufficiencies of the nation-state and complete the project of modernity (Beck and Grande 2007), the hope that Europeanisation ends the national era and establishes a more just and democratic post-Westphalian order. Habermas (2001) also evokes the fears of the still numerous defenders of the nation-state, who see EU bureaucracies threatening their sovereignty and way of life. More critical perspectives of Europeanisation have also begun to scrutinize the integration promise and diagnosed failures in important dimensions such as democracy or identity. Giandomenico Majone (2013), for instance, critically analyses the Europeanisation literature for overlooking the impact of what he calls the 'failed Europeanisation of the masses'. His explanation for this disregard is that the elitist bias of European integration corresponds with an elitist bias in EU studies: most scholars are used to seeing elites as agents of Europeanisation but do not pay sufficient attention to the negative attitudes and resistance of 'ordinary people'. Others diagnose the slow but steady decay of the European integration project: the original project of emancipation has been turned by European elites and capitalism into a new master plan of domination, a 'new Bonapartism' as Hauke Brunkhorst (2014) has labelled it. Instead of a decay of nationalism, Europeanisation could, thus, introduce its own history of decay and lead to re-nationalisation and the powerful confirmation of the nation-states.

Most powerfully, the emancipatory account of Europeanisation is challenged by the Eurosceptic account, which dismantles the false promise of Europeanisation and wishes to protect the achievements of the nation-state in terms of welfare, democracy, and popular sovereignty. Eurosceptics translate the drama of Europeanisation into a story of a collective trauma. The traumatic account of Europeanisation is obviously related to the life experiences of many Europeans who have reason to 'suffer' from Europe (e.g., as an effect of

economic crisis, see below). More important, however, is the cultural interpretation that is given to trauma, which helps to distinguish the Eurosceptics from the Europeanists in terms of two opposing and irreconcilable identity projects:

> The concept of trauma, borrowed from medicine, suggests that change per se, irrespective of its content, but provided that it is sudden, comprehensive, fundamental and unexpected, may produce painful shock for the social and particularly cultural tissue of a society. Paradoxically, this applies also to changes which are otherwise progressive, welcome, and intended by the people. Cultural trauma begins with disorganization of cultural rules and accompanying personal disorientation, culminating even in the loss of identity. This condition is made more grave by the traumatizing events or situations which occur as the effect of major change in areas other than culture, and affect the whole 'lifeworld' of the people.
>
> (Sztompka 2000: 4)

Euroscepticism provides a framework for turning the various critical accounts of Europeanisation into a political voice. Euroscepticism is a defensive and protective movement that opposes the dismantling of the national project of identity and democracy. It builds on an account of Europeanisation as inherently conflictive. Such conflicts may be interest-based or identitarian but, in most ordinary cases, are actually both, disrupting not only the myths of peaceful coexistence and equal living conditions among the Europeans but also the routines of conflict settlement implemented by EU institutions and the governments of the member states.

Euroscepticism can be approached as a discursive formation that contests the legitimacy of European integration as a project and of the EU polity as an institutional and constitutional entity that exerts political authority over the people and over the member states (de Wilde et al. 2013; De Wilde and Trenz 2012). Euroscepticism also needs to be seen as reactive to 'triumphant Europeanism'. It is staged as the profanation of the sacred. As such, it is part of the ongoing legitimation struggle manifested in debates about what European integration is good for and whether and why we should support it or not. By stating that Euroscepticism is reactive, it is emphasized that it reacts to and often explicitly responds to the public legitimation discourse that is launched in support of the EU. It is made possible because there are European leaders and institutions that try to promote the legitimacy of the EU (for instance, through public communication or PR strategies). To put it differently, the more the EU tries to be legitimate, the more it tries to tell its own success story, the more it also provokes a Eurosceptic reaction.

Furthermore, Euroscepticism is staged as a form of constitutional conflict. What is contested is the legitimacy of the EU polity, the underlying principle that justifies integration, the current institutional and constitutional setup and its future trajectory (ibid.)

As an expression of generalized mistrust and resistance of people towards the processes of Europeanisation, Eurosceptic counter-narratives explicitly reject the heroic account and dismantle the self-interest behind the 'bad promise' of European leaders or their bad values, which are not 'ours' and which threaten our identity. In recent times, we have experienced several situations in which not only the heroic account but also the regular and linear process of Europeanisation was deeply disrupted. The EU went through a series of crises that questioned the underlying credo of Europeanisation in terms of a correlation of 'deepening' and 'widening' and the creation of equal living conditions across the European social space. The automatism through which European society was imagined to come into being was challenged.

The crisis of Europeanisation

Many politicians but also political analysts have come to the conclusion that the very foundations of European integration are challenged by deep crisis. The constitutional crisis and, even more so, the Euro crisis are further symptoms of the drama of Europeanisation but no longer a drama that is played by some distant political elites in Brussels, a drama that affects all of us. Accounts of crisis vary, however, with regard to where to locate the crisis (international, European or domestic) and how to understand its causes and consequences. There is the natural history of crisis as destiny: The international order went through the major shock in the 2008 financial crisis, which, consequently, turned into a crisis of the Eurozone in 2009–2010. Yet, there is also the homemade crisis story of attributed responsibility. The crisis is related to deficiencies in the construction plan of European integration and, in particular, of the European Monetary Union, its institutional inadequacy, economic unsustainability, and democratic deficit. There is a double-edged sword of the critic in the sense that Europeanisation either went too far or not far enough. As regards the consequences of crisis, the legitimacy of the European political and economic order is not only challenged in the input dimension but also in the output dimension. Europeanisation is no longer automatically linked to better and more efficient governance. We have experienced that Europeanisation is not only the path of progress, the motor for the peaceful coexistence of the Europeans, the rational solution to our collective problems, the guarantee of our welfare and security.

Europeanisation can also disrupt ordinary life, affect us privately, and increase our fears and general feeling of uncertainty.

As an effect of crisis, Europeanisation can no longer be perceived as a confined and controlled process. At the same time, Europeanisation remains without alternatives. The EU studies community agrees in principle that the way out of crisis can only be sought in deeper integration and intensified cooperation. Europeanisation has led us into crisis, and only more Europeanisation can lead us out of crisis, so the story goes, even though, in practice and beyond the shared rhetoric, the interests differ widely. At this point, references to Europeanisation are mainly used to draw several rescue scenarios that explain why European integration continues despite crisis. The vocabulary of institutional theory, for instance, provides a reading of crisis as catharsis. Instead of putting an end to European integration, the economic and monetary crisis is frequently discussed as a filter for institutional reform and learning. Such shocks may have a revelatory function for the institutions and collective actors involved: shocks clearly travel between economically interwoven countries and raise a collective awareness for innovative solutions (Grant and Wilson 2012). In similar terms, neo-liberal thinking also praises the curative effects of shock therapy, which is needed to regain control over the financial market, to return to a strategy of 'fiscal realism' and to build a more sustainable and stable monetary union. In addition, cultural analysts emphasize the long-term effects of the Eurocrisis as a catalyst for the Europeanisation of the public sphere or as a promising avenue of politicization (Statham and Trenz 2014). The financial and monetary crisis triggers public debates, which affect the contestation of the legitimacy of the economic and political order, nationally and transnationally. Finally, the integration paradigm is upheld through the historicisation of crisis experiences. It is noted that the European integration process has already gone through several crises and has still continued to integrate:

> That in turn has shaped the retrospective post-crisis account, namely that the integration process is also fed by crises. The upshot is that integration is not only a fair-weather phenomenon; it is equally a bad-weather phenomenon. Through sunshine and storm, the EU continues to integrate.
>
> (Fossum 2014: 1).

It is striking that, in all these different variants, the saga of Europeanisation falls short of imagining the unthinkable: the Eurocrash or the collapse of the European Union is not foreseen and can hardly be envisaged without a major rupture of the narrative. Despite these disruptions of the architecture of EU governance and the evident shortcomings of problem-solving, the possibility

of system failure remains heretical. The terminology of Europeanisation is used to confirm the *telos* of integration and the belief in the steering capacities of a supranational governance arrangement. Europeanisation research is still used directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, to legitimize the European Union as a 'governance system' that, through management, intervention, and regulation, develops superior problem-solving capacities and higher legitimacy in terms of output and efficiency.

The linearity of the account of Europeanisation, the 'iron cage' of EU governance, can be only questioned at the price of deep rupture and heresy. The European studies community has only begun to recognize that this last scenario of a failure of Europeanisation and its possible reversal is a thinkable option (Krastev 2012). The debate on the failings of the system has begun to undermine the validity of the saga of Europeanisation. By reinterpreting the financial and monetary crisis as a symptom of system failure, the agenda of disintegration research is set, and the likelihood that a period of more or less intensive Europeanisation might be followed by a new phase of re-nationalisation is up for discussion.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have investigated variants of Europeanisation as a form of social imagination for the unity and diversity of a European society. This moves away from academic accounts of the 'analytical use' of Europeanisation as a unidirectional process of change that is measured and quantified in terms of shifting power relations and causal impact. By turning the 'science of Europe' into the object of analysis, four main narratives are distinguished that are used to construct Europe as a meaningful social entity and to interpret its historical origins, processes of change, and future trajectories. This saga of Europeanisation is at the core of European studies; yet, it is told differently by different disciplines, which claim to contribute to the 'science of Europe'. Europeanisation may be differentiated into narratives, which are ways to construct causalities about impact and social change attributed to Europe. These differentiated narratives make up the many faces of Europeanisation. At the same time, these academic accounts inform popular culture and help to interpret everyday experiences.

My proposal has been to study the competition within the discursive field of Europeanisation. The saga of Europeanisation can, then, be linked to the discursive dynamics of legitimacy contestations between the member states and the EU and the various actors involved in this process. Such a discursive understanding of Europeanisation is highly applicable to the transdisciplinary

debate on state transformation. It helps to understand the re-configuration of political legitimacy in a world in which fully sovereign and independent nation-states are no longer the sole guarantor for welfare, peace, and security.

Europeanisation ultimately opens a multidisciplinary research field in which we cannot expect to be able to follow only one straight storyline. In tracing back the saga of Europeanisation, we can learn that European integration is no longer a question that is only relevant for bureaucrats or for students who have an ambition to become bureaucrats. Europe has become relevant for sociologists, for cultural studies, for media studies, for anthropologists. There is an upcoming research programme that looks at how European integration through institutions, norms, and rules shapes the way citizens experience their daily lives as well as their relations with each other. We call this Europeanisation, and we are aware of the fact that this notion and the processes to which it refers remain heavily contested. The saga of Europeanisation is not only told by us academics; it is part of the way society interprets itself; it is the story of all of us.

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