Contemporary Europe

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"In the current political climate, it has become increasingly common to suggest that we are witnessing 'the end of the European project'. Euro-sceptic attitudes are widespread, not only in the UK but also in continental Europe, including in those countries that have traditionally been regarded as 'Europhile' or 'pro-European'. In this tension-laden and crisis-ridden context, more and more people seem to take the view that European matters – notably, European politics – are, at best, boring or, at worst, largely irrelevant to our lives. William Outhwaite is to be applauded for having done a superb job in deconstructing this prevalent misconception. His book is a powerful reminder of the fact that, in order to face up to the key civilizational challenges of our time, we need more, rather than less, pan-European – and, indeed, global – co-operation."

Dr Simon Susen, *Reader in Sociology, City University London*

"The European Union is at a critical stage of its evolution. It is more nec-essary than ever to understand the nature of the enterprise, to situate it in relation both to European developments generally and to the world at large. William Outhwaite, an established and astute commentator on contemporary Europe, in this succinct and highly readable book, provides all the necessary historical and theoretical tools for the job."

Krishan Kumar, *Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia*

"Refreshingly, this is a book about Europe in its proper sense, which means Europe in more than one sense. The discussion of the European Union as a transnational form of governance that intersects and doubles-up with nation-state governance obviously looms large in William Outhwaite's narrative of *Contemporary Europe*. Tellingly, the author's alternative title for his book was *Europe and the European Region in the Age of the European Union*. The EU therefore qualifies what Europe is nowadays, but neither defines nor exhausts it. The coherent pursuit of this line of interpretation (not an obvious one in the current panorama of European studies) makes this socio-political-historical account of the European region and of its peoples both interesting and distinctive.

In engaging and thoughtful style, Outhwaite offers an interdisciplinary panorama of what Europe has become, particularly as the effect of the end of the Cold War and the process of European integration. The book there-fore examines the Europe of the EU and the Europe outside it, well aware that these two areas have been continuously changing in both their borders and self-understandings. But geopolitics is not the only way in which differ-ent Europes are defined in this book. Outhwaite illustrates in rapid prose and colourful figures how the continent has been dramatically reshaped economically, institutionally, politically, territorially, and demographically, in the course of the last few decades.

A *tour de force* that remains critical of the (ir)resistible progress of European integration, and of the place of Europe in the world, but nevertheless confident that there is something valuable in the present European experience. *Contemporary Europe* is both a lively introduction to European studies, and a shrewd reflection on their multi-faced object of investigation."

Dr Dario Castiglione, *Associate Professor of Politics, Exeter University*

"Outhwaite's *Contemporary Europe* is a critical diagnosis of one of the most advanced political projects after World War II. The book is one of the two or three great books on Europe. It takes reality as seriously as the dream of European Unification. Insisting in particular that the dream is one of democratic growth, the present reality looks gloomy but not hopeless. There are already unique institutional advances of transnational democracy. Today they are under sharp restriction and hegemonic control, but restrictions and controls can be overcome, and the present crisis, therefore, is a great but probably the last chance of Europe."

Hauke Brunkhorst, *Professor of Sociology and Head of the Institute of Sociology at the University of Flensburg, Germany*

Contemporary Europe

Europe is one of the most dynamic and interesting areas of the world, pioneering in the European Union a new form of governance for half a billion people, represented in the world's first directly elected transnational parliament. This book situates the European Union in a broader European, global, historical and geographical context, providing a readable presentation of the most important facts and drawing on the theoretical approaches which have transformed the study of contemporary Europe over the past two decades.

The European Union is still on the road to what has been called 'an unknown destination', and this book presents its economic, political, legal and social trajectory from the middle of the last century to the present. *Contemporary Europe* covers some of these issues in an interdisciplinary framework, aiming to situate the development of the European Union in a broader context of pan-European and global processes. Europe has been cut down to size, but it does not have to become a global backwater, and the study of contemporary Europe's institutional reality does not have to be boring. The book counters this misperception, conveying the essential facts and theories of contemporary European reality in a clear and approachable analysis. It will serve as a readable introduction both to the academic field of European studies and to contemporary Europe itself.

William Outhwaite, FAcSS, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Newcastle University, is the author of *European Society* (Polity 2008), *Critical Theory and Contemporary Europe* (Continuum 2012), *Europe Since 1989* (Routledge 2016), and a large number of journal articles and book chapters on contemporary Europe. He taught European studies and the sociology of contemporary Europe at the University of Sussex (in the School of European Studies) and Newcastle University (in the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology). He is an associate editor of the *European Journal of Social Theory* and *European Societies*, the journal of the European Sociological Association, and is a member of editorial boards of a number of other journals.

I dedicate the book to the memory of Chris Rumford (1958–2016), from whom I also learned much about contemporary Europe.

Preface

People sometimes still suggest that European matters, particularly European politics, are boring. This belief has somehow survived the events of the past few years, in which the European Union has become a major force in the world and European affairs have become as dramatic as anyone could wish. This book aims to counter such a misperception, conveying the essential facts and theories of contemporary European reality in a clear and approachable analysis.

This book covers some of these issues in an interdisciplinary framework, aiming to situate the development of the European Union in a broader context of pan-European and global processes. It should serve as a readable introduction both to the academic field of European studies and to contemporary Europe itself.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy (PAC in French)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (EU-Canada)
CMEA	(Comecon) Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives (from the French *Comité des représentants permanents*)
DVU	Deutsche Volksunion (German People's Union)
ECJ	European Court of Justice; now Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit, forerunner of the euro
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFA	European Free Alliance (civic nationalist parties)
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EP	European Parliament
ERASMUS	European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

ERT	European Round Table
EU	European Union
GAL/TAN	Green-Alternative-Libertarian versus Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product (includes foreign trade etc.)
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs (now Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters (PJCC))
KKE	Communist Party of Greece
M5S	Five Star Movement
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Association
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (OTAN in French)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs; Soviet police and secret police
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands
N-VA	New Flemish Alliance (Belgium)
NWMA	North West European Metropolitan Area
ODS	Civic Democratic Party (Czech)
OECD	Organisation for European Cooperation and Development (OCDE in French)
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Germany)
PEGIDA	Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (Germany)
PHARE	Pologne, Hongrie: Activité pour la Restructuration Économique
PiS	Law and Justice Party (Poland)
PPP	purchasing power parity
PVV	Party for Freedom (Netherlands)
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEN	Trans-European Network
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Lisbon Treaty)
TiSA	Trade in Services Agreement
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
TTP	Trans-Pacific Agreement
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Key words

Europe, European Union, European identity, democracy, globalisation, migration, euroscepticism, European foreign policy.

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Dream and reality

Fernand Braudel's classic book of 1949, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, opens with a long discussion of the physical geography of the Mediterranean region and gradually introduces the human dimension. With the same idea in mind I might have called this book *Europe and the European Region in the Age of the European Union*. Here *region* replaces *world*, to avoid the suggestion that the contemporary world is shaped by Europe, even to the extent it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when European colonies covered much of the world map. The name of a monarch (1527–98), King of Spain, Portugal and (briefly) England, is replaced by the name of a political entity whose nature remains quite unclear.

Europe as a geographical entity, the western peninsula or subcontinent of the Eurasian land mass, would have been as it is without the European Union (EU). Even Europe as a political entity, made up of the national states which have become the default model of political organisation in the world (and divided from the middle of the twentieth century till close to its end into two distinct halves, East and West), would probably have looked much the same without European integration. What was called *communism* or *state socialism*, and the hegemony of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), would probably have run out of steam some time in the late twentieth or early twenty-first century in the absence of any moves towards integration in Western Europe. But separate processes can intersect, as when you arrive late for a train and find to your relief that the train, for quite other reasons, is itself

running late. The political shape of contemporary Europe has been drawn by these two processes: the end of the Cold War and the ongoing process of European integration.

There are basically two ways of thinking about the unity of Europe. One is as a 'federalist' political project begun after World War II of an 'ever-closer union' aiming at something like a United States of Europe; this is now substantially abandoned or indefinitely deferred. The other approach is to focus instead on the growing integration between European states, economies and societies, punctuated and qualitatively transformed by the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. The EU is a crucially important aspect of this second process but only part of the story; its development over the past sixty years needs to be put in context.

Take an imaginary trip across the European Union to illustrate these two dimensions. Depending on where you're starting from and how you travel, you may or may not need your passport or national identity card or to change some money. If you don't, it's because you're already in the 'Schengen' area of passport-free travel and the eurozone – both, of course, creations of what is now the European Union, though not coextensive with it. (If you're in Switzerland, you need the money but not the identity document; if you're in the UK, you need both.) If you're flying, you may need to show your identity documents for security reasons anyway – something imposed by most national states following the 9/11 terrorist attack of 2001. If your plane ticket is cheap, it's because of budget air travel which has transformed mobility within Europe and elsewhere – nothing specific to the EU here, though the coordination of air traffic is partly under EU control and the EU has also supported road and rail links. If you want to work during your trip, you won't need a work permit, thanks to European provisions for freedom of movement – unless you're from a recently joining member state with a transitional arrangement for a short period. The laws to which you're subject are partly local, especially the criminal law, but also partly European – or even international in the case of some human rights law (just in case you were planning on genocide). The political geography of Europe makes it possible for some Europeans to walk easily from one country to another – something which is difficult in the United States unless you live near the Canadian or Mexican border. As an EU citizen resident in another member state, you can usually vote in European and local elections – something which was unusual in the past except for special cases, for example in Ireland or for Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK.

What comes into your mind when you think of Europe? For me, it's a mental map of the (sub)continent, shading off to the east. For some people, it will be the EU as a political entity, as when there is talk of a trade deal between the United States and 'Europe', meaning the EU. Here's

another thought experiment. Which of these countries do you think of as being part of Europe? The UK, the Channel Islands, Iceland, Martinique, Turkey, Ukraine, Morocco, Russia? Well, people in the UK often talk about going 'to Europe' for their holidays, but it's joined to the rest of Europe by a rail link under the Channel and is (still) a member of the EU and a number of other European organisations. The Channel Islands off the French coast are dependencies of the British Crown but are not part of the UK, nor of the EU, though they have access to it through the Treaty on European Union of 1992, and Channel Island citizens are also citizens of the Union. Iceland is a good deal further into the Atlantic, but most people would think of it as European and it is a member of the European Economic Area, along with Liechtenstein and Norway, giving it access to the EU's single market. In 2009, Iceland applied to join the EU in response to the financial crisis which broke in 2007 to the present, but public opinion was negative and the country is currently not pursuing its application. Martinique in the Caribbean is an 'overseas department' of France, along with Guadaloupe, French Guiana and Réunion off the coast of Africa, and therefore part of the EU. Turkey applied for full membership of what is now the EU in 1987, but most of its territory would normally be thought of as lying in Asia rather than Europe, and this, along with its large and Muslim population (approaching 80 million, the same as Germany), has made its membership application problematic, especially in the eyes of centre-right Christian democratic politicians elsewhere in Europe. Ukraine is of course geographically and culturally European, indeed on some measures containing its geographical centre, but the prospect of its accession to the EU is now more remote than it seemed a few years ago. Morocco, by contrast, is not in geographical Europe, though I have included it here because it made an unsuccessful application in 1987 to join what is now the EU; the application was rejected on the grounds that it is not a European country. Russia, like Turkey, has much more of its territory in Asia than Europe, but its culture is European. With a population of 144 million and falling, it is much less than twice that of Turkey or Germany, but it is probably too big to think of as a possible member even of a vastly enlarged European Union.

These examples show how the boundaries of political and geographical Europe can vary. Does it make sense to think of Europe as a single entity? Yes, I think, for both geographical and political/cultural reasons. It now has a transnational polity which has expanded from its initial core of six member states to twenty-eight, with half a billion people, and acts as the main reference point, along with Russia, for the rest of the continent. Why do I use the possibly unfamiliar term *polity* rather than *state*? As we shall see, the EU is not a state like the United States, and unlikely to become one in the foreseeable future, but nor is it just an intergovernmental institution linking its member states. It is still, as Jacques Delors, then president of