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The History of the European Union

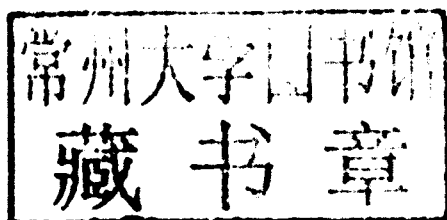
Origins of a trans- and supranational
polity 1950–72

**Edited by Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht
and Morten Rasmussen**

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The History of the European Union

This book radically re-conceptualises the origins of the European Union as a trans- and supranational polity as it emerged between the Schuman Plan of May 1950 and the first enlargement of the European Communities at the start of 1973.

Drawing upon social science theories and debates as well as recent historical research, Wolfram Kaiser and Morten Rasmussen in their introductory chapters discuss innovative ways of narrating the history of the EU as the emergence of a transnational political society and supranational political system. Building on these insights, eight chapters based on multilateral and multi-archival research follow each with case studies of transnational networks, public sphere and institutional cultures and policy-making which illustrate systematically related aspects of the early history of the EU. In the concluding chapter, leading political scientist Alex Warleigh-Lack demonstrates how greater interdisciplinary cooperation, especially between contemporary history and political studies, can significantly advance our knowledge of the EU as a complex polity.

This book will be of interest to students and scholars of Politics, European Studies and History.

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Origins of a trans- and supranational polity 1950–72

Edited by Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht and Morten Rasmussen

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Preface

As editors and authors of this book we are united in our belief that the history of the European Union (EU) is in great need of conceptual innovation. We advocate theoretically informed, source-rich multi-national and multi-archival historical narratives, which retain their disciplinary distinctiveness, but are also suitable for interdisciplinary communication and co-operation. The desirable combination of conceptual sophistication and time-intensive archival research also means, however, that such historical narratives, which span longer periods of time and cover a multitude of institutional and political actors and different policy fields, require greater joint effort in the reconstruction of the history of the EU. Conscious of our limitations as individual scholars, we have from the beginning conceived of this book as a highly integrated collective endeavour. All of us have profited tremendously from working together so closely with each other and commenting on earlier drafts of our chapters during a workshop at the University of Trondheim and on subsequent occasions including the annual conferences of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies in Limerick and Portsmouth. Suffering from various new public management 'quality assurance' schemes, which increase our administrative burden and tend to stifle innovative research, we have enjoyed co-operating closely on this project. We hope that this will encourage other scholars, not merely contemporary historians, to work towards greater interdisciplinarity in the study of the EU as a trans- and supranational polity.

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We are grateful to the University of Trondheim for funding a workshop which allowed us to discuss first drafts of our chapters. We would also like to thank the series editors for their continued encouragement and constructive criticism in the course of the preparation of this book, and Heidi Bagtazo, our Routledge editor, and her team for their professional management of the editorial and production process.

List of Abbreviations

ACEA	European Automobile Manufacturers Association
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCMC	Committee of Common Market Automobile Constructors
CED	Committee for Economic Development (United States)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPES	Comité Européen pour le Progrès Économique et Sociale
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLMC	Liaison Committee of the European Producers of the Common Market
CNPF	Conseil National du Patronat Français
Cocor	Coordinating Committee
Coreper	Committee of Permanent Representatives
DG	Directorate-General
DG III	Directorate-General for Industrial Affairs
DG IV	Directorate-General for Competition
DNA	Det norske Arbeiderparti (Norway)
EC	European Communities
ECA	European Co-operation Administration
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
ELEC	European League for Economic Co-operation
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Community
ERP	European Recovery Program
ERT	European Round Table of Industrialists
EU	European Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

IAR	International Authority on the Ruhr
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IR	International Relations
ISC	International Steel Cartel
LI	Liberal Intergovernmentalism
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MRP	Mouvement Républicain Populaire
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEC	Labour Party National Executive Committee (United Kingdom)
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
SAP	Socialdemokratiska Arbetarparti
SCA	Special Committee for Agriculture
SD	Socialdemokratiet (Denmark)
SEA	Single European Act
SER	Sociaal-Economische Raad (Netherlands)
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (France)
SGCI	Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel pour les Questions de Coopération Économique Européenne
SI	Socialist International
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Germany)
SPÖ	Sozialistische Partei Österreichs (Austria)
TBV	Technical Bureau for Vehicles
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICE	Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederation of Europe
US	United States
USHICOG	US High Commission for Germany
VAT	Value Added Tax
VW	Volkswagen
WP 29	Working Party 29 of the European Commission for Europe of the UN
WP 3	Working Party 3 co-ordinated by DG III

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1 Origins of a European polity

A new research agenda for European Union history

*Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht and
Morten Rasmussen*

This book sets out to re-conceptualize the history of the present-day European Union (EU) as the gradual emergence over time of a European-level polity: a supranational political system with a complex institutional set-up and policy-making structures embedded in what could be called an incipient transnational political society of intense networking and informal political co-ordination and governance. With their predominant focus on current Community politics, political scientists have characterized the EU as a supranational political system of multilevel governance.¹ Crucially, however, its historical origins are in the formative phase of core Europe integration in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) founded in 1951–52, and the European Economic Community (EEC) created in 1957–58, before its first enlargement by Britain, Denmark and Ireland in 1972–73. Integration in this formative phase created a broad corridor for institutional and policy options and developments up to the present. This book recasts the way we conceive of these historical origins of the present-day European polity. It does so by combining two chapters on network analysis and institutionalist theories as recent theoretical and conceptual approaches to understanding the EU as heuristic devices for developing sophisticated historical narratives of European integration with eight source-based transnational and supranational case studies followed by a concluding chapter on the scope for cross-disciplinary co-operation between a new history of the EU and social science research.

Starting in earnest with the creation of an industrial customs union after 1957–58, European integration has encroached so much upon the member-states and affected EU citizens in manifold ways that it should be inconceivable that historians of the economic, social and political history of postwar (Western) Europe and its nation-states should write about their specialized topics without sophisticated reference to this transnational and supranational context. Yet, much historical work on contemporary Europe more generally is as ill-informed about the history of the EU² as even many of those social scientists who actually argue from different theoretical perspectives that its historical origins and evolution are crucial for understanding contemporary issues of EU politics at the start of the twenty-first century. In large measure, this sorry state of affairs is due to the fact that much of the historiography of European integration has been conceptually

underdeveloped and methodologically weak, reconstructing the history of the EU as merely one long series of national policy decisions and inter-state treaty negotiations.

From the 1960s through to the early 1980s, much early historiography was driven by a strong normative desire to write the history of European integration in a Hegelian perspective as the unstoppable ascendancy of federalist idealism over the nation-states and their internecine wars. Walter Lipgens, the first holder of the Chair in European Integration History at the European University Institute between 1976 and 1979, was the leading scholar to write in this historiographical tradition.³ As a Catholic historian, an active member of the European Movement and a fervent supporter of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's policy of Western integration, he saw the formation of core Europe as a desirable attempt to overcome the nation-state: forward to the past of a new medieval order of 'unity'. In a revealing passage in an article published in 1983 in the German pedagogical history journal *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Lipgens insisted that schools should teach European integration as 'the most successful peace movement to date', and that they must make clear that 'all deficiencies and weaknesses, the talk of Brussels bureaucrats and crises, . . . result almost without exception from areas where integration has not gone far enough'.⁴ Academically, Lipgens was mainly interested in the contributions of the resistance movements and the European Movement to the European 'idea'.⁵ He amassed fascinating sources from many European countries, but crucially, failed to establish causal links between these movements' ideas and proposals and the actual process of core Europe integration after 1950–51. The lack of methodological sophistication combined with the normative overdrive of Lipgens and other, especially Italian and some British researchers with close links to the European Movement,⁶ subsequently led contemporary historians to abandon attempts to trace transnational dimensions of European integration altogether.

The accelerated opening-up of member-state archives induced other historians to redirect their attention towards government records. In his revisionist account, the British economic historian Alan S. Milward analyzed the origins of European integration after 1945 as the result of intergovernmental bargaining of 'national interests'. He replaced Lipgens' transnational movements with states as the only relevant, and allegedly cohesive actors, and ideas with material interests. In his first book, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945–51*,⁷ Milward reinterpreted the origins of the Schuman Plan as having resulted from a search of European governments for an economic peace settlement through integration to control Germany. In his second book, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*,⁸ he sharpened his thesis by arguing more provocatively that the overriding motivation behind the integration process was not to overcome the nation-state, but to strengthen it. According to Milward, the creation of the ECSC/EEC stabilized the nation-states through the selective Europeanization of domestic welfare policies that each member state alone could not have sustained in the longer run, as in the case of agriculture, for example. His research design was perhaps somewhat

unsystematically multilateral and comparative, but it went decisively beyond more limited attempts to explain the European policies of individual states. Especially by bringing states back in, and by emphasizing the socio-economic motivations of government policy on 'Europe', Milward made a fundamental contribution to the debate about the origins of the EU. His analysis of 'national interests', or what he has recently termed 'national strategies',⁹ still has profoundly realist connotations, however. Milward has insisted that 'the process of integration is not separable from the evolution of domestic politics'.¹⁰ He has sought to explain national governmental policy-making as embedded in parliamentary politics and reflecting electoral strategies. Some would argue, however, that his interpretation does not take sufficient account of the contested political nature of national European policy in the more pluralistic postwar democracies. In any case, Milward also wrote transnational actors out of the history of the origins of the EU altogether. Concentrating on the overriding importance in his view of material interests for national preference formation, moreover, he also tends to confuse policy ideas with idealism as in his brief discussion of the European policies of leading 'saints' like Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Paul-Henri-Spaak.¹¹ Yet, as Morten Rasmussen has recently demonstrated for the interesting Danish case, norms and ideas as well as material factors have shaped national preference formation.¹²

Whereas Lipgens failed to establish links between transnational movements, their ideas and governmental decision-making, Milward also does not demonstrate conclusively causal links between either the interests of particular domestic economic pressure groups or the musings of bureaucrats in economic ministries, who feature prominently in his studies, and the evolution of the external economic and integration policy of European states. Both Lipgens and Milward have transgressed the national perspective in reconstructing the origins of the present-day EU, however. This is more than can be said about most contemporary historians who have written about national policy 'towards Europe' based on government sources only. Milward in particular inspired more conceptually sophisticated attempts at explaining national European policies, especially in the Scandinavian context. On the whole, however, this dominant approach from the 1980s through to the early 2000s has been implicitly steeped in 'realist' assumptions about the autonomy of foreign policy-making elites in determining and bargaining 'national interests'. In this perspective, interests are mainly of a foreign and security policy (not economic) kind. Much of this historiography, which has also dominated the publications of the European Community Liaison Committee of Historians,¹³ shares a kind of Gaullist conception of European policy-making as controlled by political leaders and foreign ministries with fixed preferences. It makes no sustained attempt even to reconstruct governmental policy-making as embedded in domestic political contestation of aims and objectives by political parties, socio-economic interest groups and other democratic actors, let alone as a segment of the emerging European political space of high institutionalization and legal penetration. Even Charles de Gaulle could not conduct foreign policy like

the Austrian Count Clemens von Metternich in the first half of the nineteenth century, however. In the early postwar period, the politics of European integration was clearly qualitatively very different from the 'concert' of the Great Powers.

It is vital to move decisively beyond 'realist' state-centric approaches to understanding EU history. By reconceptualizing the history of European integration as the slow emergence of a European-level polity, we propose two new integrated fields of research that will not only broaden and improve our understanding of EU history, but also promise fundamentally to transform the way we conceive of national history and European policy-making. We advocate first, to analyze in a more conceptually sophisticated manner than Lipgens, and without his normative prejudices, the growth and character of the transnational political society in the making: the formation of formalized and highly informal networks of political parties, interest groups, policy experts, journalists and other actors with an interest, and a stake in, utilizing the new supranational political space for advancing their ideas and material interests, influencing European policy-making or transferring institutional rules and practices between member-states, below the supranational level. Networks have played a crucial role in shaping what Keith Middlemas first called the 'informal politics' of European integration:¹⁴ from establishing recruitment methods for supranational institutions, to forming guiding integration ideas, influencing policy-making cultures and developing socialization patterns. Paradoxically, contemporary historians of European integration have largely ignored this transnational dimension of the emerging Community polity precisely at a time when modern historians have begun to rediscover this same dimension in an attempt to conceptualize cross-border networks, communication and cultural and policy transfer during national integration and proto-globalization in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Transnational networking and communication were in fact much more intense in Western Europe after 1945 compared to the nineteenth century, however, when it took place under more difficult conditions of transport and communication technology and was also regarded with great suspicion by nationalists everywhere.

We propose second, to conceptualize the early EU as an incipient political system. For contemporary historians, the main challenge is not to ascertain whether the EU already is, or will become, a continent-wide federal state of sorts, or whether it remains a legal system 'sui generis': neither an international organization nor a state by traditional legal definitions. It is clearly, and has been from its inception, a political system in the making with horizontal and vertical institutional structures and complex European-level policy-making involving member-states, supranational institutions and societal actors, as Piers Ludlow has also argued recently in the first multilateral study of the EEC in the mid-1960s.¹⁶ Not least due to the traditional nation-state focus of modern historians of politics, however, which has been an endemic intellectual disease from the origins of history as a professional discipline in the nineteenth century, they have so far largely failed to explain convincingly the character of this new European political system.

We do not suggest that these two new integrated fields of research should replace the study of national history and policy-making as a core dimension of

EU historiography. Clearly, understanding the domestic socio-economic and political dynamics that shape national European policies remains essential for the analysis of EU history. Writing the history of the member-states and their policy-making requires a refined understanding of how national preference formation has increasingly taken place within an incipient European political system with more and more supranational competences characterized by ever closer network-type cross-border connections, however. Analyzing political processes in the national arena as isolated from supranational and transnational context and influences, as most contemporary historians still do, leads to a very distorted understanding of nation-states within the present-day EU, and of EU history. It also fails to conceptualize crucial long-term structural changes in the reduced capacity of member-states to act independently.

With the aim of upgrading the conceptual sophistication of empirical source-based research on EU history we propose that contemporary historians engage more effectively with the work of social scientists, especially political scientists, some of whom have for more than a decade analyzed the present-day EU as multilevel governance with strong transnational and supranational dimensions. We advocate such a dialogue with specific objectives in mind. Methodologically, social science theories and concepts can be used by historians as heuristic tools to clarify and discuss the often too implicit epistemological assumptions underlying their more empirically-driven research; enhance the scope and precision of their research agendas and more concretely, their guiding research questions; identify and show causal links in a more analytical and less descriptive research mode; and finally, prioritize in a more refined way factors and causes instead of merely listing different 'influences' that may have played a role in the integration process. Substantially, the theoretical and empirical state of the art of social science research on the EU as a political system and transnational society formation constitutes a natural point of departure for a new EU historiography that aspires to conceptualize the historical evolution of these two dimensions. We suggest that two sets of social science theories and concepts are especially useful for reconstructing the evolution of the core Europe polity: network-focussed approaches and institutionalist theories. We understand that social science 'meta'-theories like constructivism and other tools for understanding governance might also be beneficial for analyzing core Europe integration. The role of transnational networks in shaping institutional designs and policy solutions as well as the early development of the European institutions and their relationships with the member-states were especially crucial in this phase of integration until 1972–73, however.¹⁷ Thus, in the first conceptual chapter, Wolfram Kaiser takes core concepts such as networks from social science debates on EU governance to show how they could assist contemporary historians in conceptualizing the process of European integration as the formation of increasingly dense political and social links and bonds across borders. In the second conceptual chapter, Morten Rasmussen discusses different institutionalist theories and how contemporary historians might apply them fruitfully to research on supranational aspects of the ECSC/EEC as an emerging political system.