

The Dwarfing of Europe?

A dialogue between Brazil, India, China
and Europe

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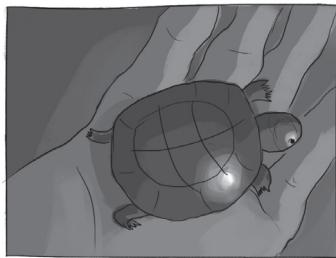
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Foreword



*"And how will these changes affect the narrative of Europe?
The 'never again' approach has unintentionally turned the gaze
inward looking, when an essential motive for integration lies
outside the continent."*

Yudhishtir Raj Isar

Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, The American University of Paris, France

Towards a more open Europe

Europe is struggling to come to terms with an altered reality. How does the shift of power to the Eastern and Southern continents influence Europe's policies and the citizens of Europe? Since the beginning of the financial crisis, we have grown accustomed to answering this question in terms of economic development and political impact. Discussions have centred on growth rates and debt burdens, European instability and indecision.

The cultural dimension of this question, however, is hardly ever on the agenda. Does the new reality alter the way in which the world sees us and – perhaps more importantly – does it influence the way in which we see ourselves? Broadening the debate will shed new light on Europe's many dilemmas and encourage new understanding of the fundamental issues underlying them.

On the initiative of Odile Chenal and Paul Scheffer – and in partnership with Yoeri Albrecht, Director of the Amsterdam debate centre De Balie – the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) organised a series of debates and essays to explore the cultural dimension of our changing world. This was made possible thanks to the collaboration with Tilburg University and Fritt Ord Foundation of Norway. With the title '*The Dwarfing of Europe? A dialogue between Brazil, India, China and Europe*',¹ some of the finest minds and most original thinkers from

¹ The controversial title *Dwarfing of Europe* – drawing on a 1948 quote by the British historian Arnold Toynbee – refers to the decline of European power in the world.

around the globe took part and shared with us their views on what Europe was, is and could still be. The first volume of essays, published in May 2013, focused on the Balkans, Belarus, the Middle East and Asia. In this second volume, we look across continents to Brazil, China and India.

The experts who impart their knowledge on the following pages come from various countries, backgrounds and fields of expertise. Like a kaleidoscope, their stories reflect different facets of the cultural dimension of changing relations between Europe and the rest of the world. In spite of their differences, however, two themes seem to echo through many of their reflections.

The first red thread is Europe's engagement with these cultures from past to present. In some cases, countries have been following Europe's example. In others, they have learned from Europe's imperiousness and mistakes and have taken a different approach. Whatever the scenario, the fact remains that Europe has had a profound impact, all too often negatively, on other cultures – even those so far away from our continent. And other cultures, whether inside or external to Europe, are shaping the future of Europe.

The second common thread can be seen as a reaction to the first: the bewilderment – and in some cases, downright frustration – that Europe is not open to learning from others. Is this a remnant of the past and a misplaced sense of superiority – or is it simply the fear of change, of the unknown? Whatever the reason, Europe does indeed appear to be bracing itself against change rather than embracing it and welcoming the opportunities it may bring. Far from being open, 'Fortress Europe' seems to be taking an equally rigid stance on the migration of ideas as it does on the migration of people.

The first thing Europe needs to do in order to rise above the crisis and shape its future is to open up to the outside world instead of curling up in defence. We hope the insights in the following essays will contribute to this unfurling, as well as offering a new perspective on Europe.

Görgün Taner

Chair of the Board of the European Cultural Foundation

Katherine Watson

Director of the European Cultural Foundation



Setting the context

The European Cultural Foundation's world

Odile Chenal

'The Dwarfing of Europe?' is a title that conjures up the prospect of a Europe that is shrinking, losing its position of great power in a multi-polar world where new giants are emerging, and it has certainly prompted plenty of reactions. Nevertheless, we are not talking here about an observation, but about a question: Is Europe's global position truly in decline? This is a question that leads to many more questions: If yes, then what kind of 'dwarfing' are we talking about? Why? When and how? What are the prospects for the future?

These questions and more were the subject of lively debate during the conference – entitled '*The Dwarfing of Europe?*' – organised by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) on 22 and 23 May 2013 in cooperation with Tilburg University's Department of European Studies and the De Balie debate centre in Amsterdam. The articles in this publication revisit the main themes of the discussions, as well as the analyses and the views of the contributors.

In this introduction, we consider what this title and this event represent in ECF's history and its future development. Paradoxically, '*The Dwarfing of Europe?*' has meant a radical enlargement instead of a dwarfing for ECF – or more precisely, a return to its founders' original perspectives.

From Europe at the centre...

A Europe extending from the Atlantic to the Urals was the vision of the Swiss philosopher Denis de Rougemont, who established ECF in Geneva in the spring of 1954. He did so with the support of prominent figures such as Jean Monnet, Maurice Schuman and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, who instigated ECF's move to Amsterdam in the early 1960s. Denis de Rougemont boasted a fair amount of experience outside Europe – he spent two years in the USA at the end of the Second World War and made several trips to Asia – but his thinking was focused on Europe. Wherever he was on the planet, it was Europe that he observed; it was Europe that served as the reference point.

ECF adopted an approach focused on Europe from the outset. First and foremost, it did so in the form of a wide-ranging vision, embracing Europe as a cultural continent that is by no means homogeneous but is built on shared humanist foundations. This 'Grand Europe' – that of The Hague Congress of 1948, of the Council of Europe founded in 1949 – is what defines ECF's geography. This approach also encompassed the vision of a political union that was still to be realised. ECF was created to accompany this nascent project of a political Europe – a project whose kernel took shape around six Western European states over the course of the 1950s.

Europe as a territory and as a project: with this cultural perspective and a political vision that was articulated without being superimposed, ECF set to work by way of successive enlargements of its sphere of activity:

During its early decades, from [1955 to 1985](#), the objectives of ECF's programmes were threefold: to ensure that societal questions (environment, media, education, etc.) that could no longer be addressed solely in the framework of nation states were taken into account at a European level; to prepare the young generations of

Europeans who were active in domains of cooperation that transcended their national frontiers (mobility programmes that formed the roots of today's Erasmus programme in particular); and to provide a cultural substratum (support for cultural cooperation projects, backing for trans-European cultural networks) for the burgeoning European project. ECF's territory is indeed that of the Grand Europe – and from the outset the Board of Governors has welcomed members from diverse European backgrounds, including Turkey – yet at this time, its activities were only being deployed in Western Europe.

The first 'broadening' of ECF's activities came about in the [late 1980s](#), shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The foundation then initiated programmes in Central and Eastern Europe as swiftly as possible; programmes that were focused on culture – the mobility of artists, the training of cultural professionals, co-productions – and that it managed in partnership with local actors. During this period, ECF's original feature was to implement an opening towards the Mediterranean, in parallel with this engagement in 'East-West' cooperation. Inspired in particular by the questions associated with migration to Europe, from 1992 ECF undertook a project on trans-Mediterranean cultural relations. By encouraging debate among intellectuals and artists from the two shores and translation programmes, ECF worked with actors who contemplated Europe 'from the outside' for the first time.

This shift continued in the [late 1990s](#), when ECF decided to steer its activities towards cooperation between the cultural actors of the European Union (which was enlarged in 2004) and those of the EU's neighbouring regions. Under the symbolic title 'Enlargement of Minds', it initiated artistic cooperation programmes in and with the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. While numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were already active in these regions, notably in the Western Balkans as it was emerging from the

war, ECF was bringing these regions together, but was also focusing its programmes on the arts and culture. From this point forward, vision and field of activity found themselves superimposed: since then, ECF has been working across the European cultural space in its entirety.

However, the shift does not stop there. Since [the end of the first decade of the 21st century](#), the question of Europe and its place in the world has taken on greater and greater urgency. While deeply committed to its cooperation programmes within the continent and across the new frontiers created by EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, ECF nevertheless opened a very small window on Europe's relations with the rest of the world. In 2007, ECF hosted a seminar on European diversity as seen from the world's other regions, drawing on the experiences and prisms of other continents to call into question a cultural diversity that Europeans perceived as theirs exclusively.

This was but a small first step: the crisis soon prompted ECF, like many other European actors, to pursue this process further and to rethink its strategy in the global context. In the wake of the 'Enlargement of Minds', this would involve a shift in perspective.

[...towards Europe, a world continent](#)

Fuelled by the international economic and financial crisis, by the presence of new economic giants on the world stage, by the weaknesses of the EU and the growing disaffection with the modes of political representation that underpin European democracy, the debate about the future of Europe and its place in the world is expanding rapidly. Amidst the numerous political and cultural actors who participate in such investigations, ECF adopted a specific approach: Were politicians and intellectuals bemoaning the absence of new European stories? Were they calling for new 'narratives' that were intended to offer a renewed vision of the future, a new dynamism, to the people of Europe? Thus, in 2009 ECF decided to embark upon an exploration of

these new European ‘narratives’. Aware of the fact that these radically reformist narratives are not created artificially – from the ‘top down’ – but emerge from new social, cultural and international experiences, ECF’s exploration proceeded in several directions.

One of the chosen paths to guide this exploration was to think about how Europe is viewed by other regions of the world.² There is an abundance of economic and strategic analyses of Europe’s position in the global context. However, there has been relatively little reflection on how the ‘new powers’ perceive Europe as a cultural entity, or about the ways in which these newly established relationships are altering Europe’s image of itself and of its future. Has the ‘old continent’ really become a museum? What do its values mean in the world now – and what values are we referring to? Can they be translated to other cultures and how? How do the modes of cultural expression, communication and interaction on these other continents affect Europe, the vision it has of itself and for its future?

All this raises big questions and gives pause for reflection...

For ECF, whose specific contribution has – once again – been to pose these questions in cultural terms, ‘*The Dwarfing of Europe?*’ conference held in May 2013 was symbolic of a change in perspective, of a shift from an insular approach to Europe in and of itself to a vision of Europe as an actor in a multi-polar world. Europe can no longer understand itself from within, nor build upon itself, if one does not understand it from without, from the exterior, as well. The often-used metaphor of the ‘House of Europe’ – a structure with a complex architecture – does not make sense any more unless it is situated within the big world city. This shift in perspective changes nothing as regards ECF’s European objectives, but it does redefine the panorama in

² ECF (2012) *Remappings. The Making of European Narratives*. ECF: Amsterdam.

which they are framed, and it questions the programme being implemented to attain them.

ECF remains keen to present itself as a pioneering organisation. Its history demonstrates that it is capable of making audacious choices, but this small foundation also reflects the spirit of the age. It is like a mirror that Europe holds up to itself. The image one sees in the mirror right now is fairly tumultuous; for those who look into the mirror with the world as a backdrop, the image might acquire greater clarity.

Odile Chenal worked at the European Cultural Foundation from 1990 to 2013. She started as Head of Information, then continued as Director of Programmes and Grants before becoming Deputy Director. In the last few years before her retirement, she championed the key role of research and development at ECF. Her professional life began in 1975 at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. In 1982, she became a cultural attaché at the French Embassy in The Hague, then moved across to ECF eight years later. She graduated in Art History and History (Nancy) and in Political Sciences (Paris, Oxford).

Dwarfing of Europe: an overview

Marjolein Cremer

In May 2013, six invited intellectuals from three different continents arrived in Amsterdam to share their expertise on Europe, external relations and cultural policy at the ‘Dwarfing of Europe?’ conference. It was a unique experience to have these Brazilian, Chinese and Indian researchers – Magnólia Costa, Cui Hongjian, Rajendra K. Jain, Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo, Ranabir Samaddar and Jian Shi – all together in one room.

The conference’s controversial title *Dwarfing of Europe?* was drawn from a 1948 quote by the British historian Arnold Toynbee and refers to the decline of European power in the world. This debate was reignited during the conference and continues in this publication, at times controversially. In his paper *Anxieties and dialogues of continents*, for instance, Ranabir Samaddar (Director of the Calcutta Research Group, India) describes the severe criticism Toynbee received for declaring that the age of Western imperialism was over. To this day, it seems that Western countries would like to set the global political agenda.

Yudhishthir Raj Isar (Professor of Cultural Policy Studies at The American University of Paris in France) and Paul Scheffer (Professor of European Studies at Tilburg University in the Netherlands) also explicitly discuss the notion of dwarfing in their articles for this book.

These changing visions of Europe were explored in three stages at the three-day conference:

1. What do ‘we’ Europeans really know about the ‘emerging’ economies of India, China and Brazil? How is Europe viewed by these countries and what are their perceptions and expectations of Europe?
2. What are the social and cultural consequences and impact on Europe caused by the rise of Brazil, India and China? Are China, Brazil and India developing in a fundamentally different way from Europe, with regards to the main social and cultural issues – including diversity, modernity, democracy or more concretely urbanisation or cultural expression?
3. What is Europe’s position in a globalised world? How does the changing balance of power affect the discourse Europe has about itself? And how will these changes affect the narrative of Europe?

These questions guided the conversations at the conference, which dealt with big global developments, such as modernity and democracy, on a highly academic level. Cultural practice as such was left out of a great deal of the discussion so that we could turn our focus on the global picture. In addition, we limited the ‘emerging’ countries to Brazil, China and India, although we were aware that expanding the debate to other emerging countries would be a useful next step.

About this publication

The publication is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the perceptions of Europe. The second section continues to discuss the current anxieties and dialogues around the decline of Europe.

I will give a further flavour of these two sections by highlighting and quoting some of the contributions. I don't intend to provide the reader with a complete summary, but I hope to structure their further reading and give some ideas about what to expect within these pages.

I. Perceptions of Europe

Despite the financial and economic dominance of the European crisis, Europe is facing bigger geo-political, social and cultural challenges than ever before. To frame these challenges, we need to take external perspectives of Europe into account. Intellectuals such as Rajendra K. Jain (Chairman and Professor at the Centre for European Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) and Karine Lisonne-de Vergeron (Senior Fellow of the Global Policy Institute, United Kingdom) have carried out numerous pieces of research on the outside view of Europe. In their papers, Jain outlines the dominance of Western imperialism and reflects on current relations between India and Europe. Lisonne-de Vergeron, as a European, considers Europe from the outside, specifically from China and India, by looking at how 'others' see us.

In *India and Europe: Towards a new narrative*, Jain describes a disconnect in world views and the patronising attitude of Europe in its civilising mission, which hasn't done much good in the eyes of the Indians. European social and cultural strengths include democratic institutions, efficient governance and combatting discrimination, but the global governance structures need to change. They must be more democratic, representative and legitimate by increasing the participation of developing countries.

What also emerges is a huge information deficit: we know very little about each other, "largely because of mutual indifference and neglect." Jain concludes that both Europe and India have visibility issues and action is needed to address this and to create a new set of

rules. “There has to be a real dialogue rather than a dialogue of the deaf (not talking *at* each other, but *with* each other) and a move towards greater mutual learning.”

In her paper, Lisonne-de Vergeron also acknowledges this information deficit in the case of India and adds that, as a way out of the crisis, Europe needs to be more united – either through the institutions of the EU or through the closer cooperation of member states. To forge more fruitful bilateral relations, culture would be an asset, she says. European external cultural engagement, in particular with China and in general with other emerging countries, could revive Europe’s cultural diversity.

Focusing on relations between Europe and Brazil, Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo (Professor of International Relations at São Paulo Federal University, Brazil) shares an historical overview: for a long time, Brazil regarded Europe as a partner and a model, but this is no longer the reality. In Brazil, economic developments were combined with social investments in the nineties, whereas Europe followed a neo-liberal agenda, including austerity plans. At the same time, Brazil felt that it was not taken seriously in diplomatic or economic multilateral talks with the EU. There are double standards at play in terms of the EU’s treatment of Brazil regarding sensitive issues such as human rights and the environment. “From Brazil’s perspective, the European Union needs to come to terms with its own misgivings and demands for change, as can be seen in the deteriorating political and economic situation of its members.” Mutual concessions have to be made. But if this development continues, Pecequilo expresses a gloomy outlook regarding mutual relations and “the risk of a lost partnership”.

The first section closes with two case studies: one by Jian Shi (Vice-President of Sichuan University, China) and Yan Zhuang (lecturer, Sichuan University) on youth mobility between Europe and China; and a second on what we can learn from China by Fokke Oobbema (Foreign Editor at *de Volkskrant*, The Netherlands).

Shi and Zhuang highlight the importance of mobility in terms of overcoming the sometimes stereotypical perceptions Chinese students have of Europe as the ‘exotic other’ – to protect cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

Obbema highlights the opposite view – the biased view Europeans have of China. “It is only now, with the rise of Asian powers, that our feeling of superiority is seriously questioned, both in Asia and in our part of the world. Perhaps this humbling experience will help us to be truly open and perceptive towards China.”

II. Anxieties and dialogues

Now the perceptions and expectations of Europe have been tackled, it’s possible to take a more in-depth look, and with this more ‘anxieties’ come to the surface. To answer the guiding questions two and three above, Isar, Samaddar and Scheffer discuss the existing issues of democracy and migration, and the growing weakness of the welfare state. *Are China, India and Brazil developing in a fundamentally different way from Europe with regards to modernity, democracy and diversity? How does the changing balance of power affect the discourse Europe has about itself?*

Yudhishthir Raj Isar frames dwarfing as a European anxiety: “[The disquiet] that is today emerging – after more than six decades of European recovery, affluence and integration – is linked precisely, however, to anxieties about external threats from nations or groups of nations that represent Europe’s new ‘Others’. I for one would wager that even more than the early twentieth century narrative of decline, the current anxieties are the product of imaginings that are only partly justified.”

He therefore puts the relative dominance of Europe in the world into perspective. Before colonialism, China and India were already the

giants, both economically and culturally. “The totalising cultural effects of European expansion have been greatly exaggerated,” he writes. The anxiety of the dwarfing of Europe and consequently a new distribution of not only economic and geopolitical power, but cultural power as well, is imaginative. Isar doesn’t believe either that globalisation will cause mass cultural uniformity, but he believes in a worldwide mosaic of increasingly polycentric and polysemic cultural production centres.

The issue of a real dialogue not based on dominance is raised by Ranabir Samaddar: “The lesson is that cultural presuppositions often hinder dialogue, because thereby the dynamics of dialogue is constrained on account of anxieties, myths, and a lack of scientific attitude to the needs of conversation and mutual learning.” He points out that: “the official Europe is less of a dialogic space, and more of a constellation of financial centres in the form of cities like London and Frankfurt, scattered civil society groups, and bureaucratic power centres. It does not produce a general will from its so-called internal dialogues”.

Samaddar therefore tackles three features we need to be aware of when discussing bilateral relations between Europe and India: first, the historical relations between Europe and the post-colonial world towards development and democracy; second, the so-called homogenous space in Europe dealing with issues of a ‘post-secular’ society, migration and citizenship, which leads finally to our common post-colonial predicament. He concludes that an awareness of the post-colonial reality will help to reshape dialogues between Europe and the post-colonial world, including India.

Samaddar prefers to discard the image of an orderly, homogenous common European space in which borders are set and disputed. His view contrasts greatly with the view of Paul Scheffer, who focuses on the discussion between internal – and external – borders of Europe.

Now the internal borders of Europe have softened or lost their strength, the external borders are more significant.

Scheffer highlights that we are slowly but progressively experiencing the end of the post-colonial world. With this final phase, we are returning in fact to the period of around 1800 when China was in power and we can speak of the returning power of China and India in the world. According to Scheffer, this justified our focus on the outside borders of Europe, because Europe is the only scale in which we can shape the world economy to our own social model.

Scheffer does contest, just as Samaddar does, the idea of modernity as an exclusive Western affair. What can we learn from a pluralistic and religiously diverse society such as India and the federalist system in Brazil? The time has come when modernity is not exclusively dominated by Western ideas. Although Scheffer puts the 'dwarfing' of the Western world into perspective – interestingly, in a different way from Raj Isar – he bases his ideas on corruption indexes, the Human Development Index, etc. He speaks about the hidden vitality of European societies, which enjoy a high quality of life. Issues such as a strong rule of law, a healthy environment, low corruption rates and a strong sense of sovereignty indicate, for Scheffer, that Europe and the Western world are still relevant and vital.

Section two concludes with two perspectives. First, a statement by Magnólia Costa (Head of Institutional Affairs, Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo, Brazil) on 'universal museums', a place where cultural artefacts from all over the world are displayed. She raises issues about the legitimacy of how these museums have obtained their pieces. In Brazil, museums aim to bridge social divisions and encourage integration, instead of generating profits for themselves.

In *Europe and the collaborative approach to foreign policy*, Renée Jones-Bos (Secretary-General, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) draws the

conclusion that – in order to meet the global challenges – Europe needs new forms of collaboration. We need to cooperate, which is a two-way street, where Europe cannot force its values on anyone. She calls for “strong European democracy, transparent decision-making and more effective institutions. The EU can only be a credible partner for the new powers if the people of Europe support the European project”. She reminds us that “with great power comes great responsibility”.

The publication concludes with a glimpse towards a future European narrative by Berthold Franke (Director, Goethe-Institut, Prague and Regional Director, Goethe-Institut, Central Eastern Europe).

Concluding remarks and further dialogue

Of course, the three days of discussion did not conclude with one straightforward answer to the main questions. There are many different perceptions on the position of Europe in the world, especially in the context of our common history and colonial past. To overcome the stereotypical perspectives, we need to take a more open and outward look. We can learn from Brazil, India and China.

As Rajendra K. Jain puts it: “The diverse society in India has taught them to set up a real culture of dialogue”. In Brazil, culture is more alive and closer to people’s hearts and minds. In Europe, culture is often referred to as bricks and mortar – which is considered to be our heritage – but which is not as alive as the local communities that participate in museum projects as in Brazil. And in the discussion with China, we need to avoid pointing the finger, as Europe has double standards when it comes to human rights’ issues.

The main lessons I brought away from these insightful discussions are: there is a lack of mutual knowledge; Europe needs to listen more and lecture less; we have to bear in mind the colonial ‘us and them’ perspective, which is not productive for an open dialogue; and we still

live in an unequal world where the political agenda is set and dominated by Western countries.

In the end, Europe's position in the world is changing: to talk in terms of *dwarfing* or *becoming a giant* is perhaps too simplistic. However, posing these questions did open up a fruitful dialogue that needs to continue. We still have a lot more learning to do: we need to revise our mental maps, as Rajendra Jain suggested, we need a different set of rules – and we need to change not only the European but the global narrative.

This spirit of reflection needs to continue so that we have a more open and outward perception of the world. To quote Scheffer, the very least we can do is to be curious about ‘others’.

Marjolein Cremer is Project Officer for Advocacy and Research & Development at the European Cultural Foundation. She coordinated the Dwarfing of Europe seminar and debates.



I Perceptions of Europe

India and Europe: Towards a new narrative

Rajendra K. Jain

Europe has been a major factor in Indian developments and consciousness for over 500 years, ever since the arrival of the Portuguese, the Dutch and later the British. European political ideology and thought had a profound influence on the English-educated elite, as well as the social-religious reform movements from the late eighteenth century onwards. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Indian political thought was profoundly influenced by European political thought and philosophies. Personalities like Garibaldi had an impact on the initial stages of the Indian freedom movement. Many senior leaders of the national freedom movement were educated in Europe, mostly in England. European ideas about national identities, constitutional and political thought, development, economic organisation and civil society had a profound impact on Indian thought processes.³

³ See Dixit, J.N. (2001) 'Perceptions and Misperceptions in India and Europe', in Rajendra K. Jain, ed., *India and Europe in the New Millennium*. Radiant Publishers: New Delhi, pp. 73-88.

Indians sought to emulate the many Western value systems and Western institutions. The rule of law, the Westminster parliamentary system, a free press, a professional civil service, the legal system, the judiciary and the English language – all had their origins in British rule. At the same time, Indian elites asserted the importance of basic Indian values, criticised the arrogance of the Western rulers, and passionately questioned Western analysis and assessments regarding India's history, intellectual heritage and cultural and religious identity. Why do perceptions and expectations differ?

Indian perceptions of modern Europe have been the result of a specific historical experience of a cultural and colonial encounter with the West and a selective admiration of Europe. After independence, Anglo-American imagery in Indian media and popular culture has largely conditioned the Indian elite's perceptions of Europe, which tended to reinforce and sustain stereotypical images and clichés (e.g. France as the land of food, wine and fashion; Switzerland as the paradise for romance; or German cars as consumer brands). For most Indians, Europe largely remains a strange land and an exotic place for tourism, to which only a privileged layer of society had access until recently. The European Union (EU) remains a complex and strange economic and political collectivity. Historically, close links with the Anglo-Saxons have restricted greater interaction with continental Europe, which remains rather thin even today.

When it comes to perceptions in South Asia, especially in India, there are still three kinds of people in the EU. In the first category are those who are otherwise very well informed and knowledgeable but make no attempt to understand South Asia, because others have tried it before and failed. Then there are those who understand nothing and have no desire to, because India is simply too complex and too distant. Between these two categories there is a small minority with the courage and perseverance to make an effort to understand the more complex problems of India and who wish to do something about it.

India and the EU are learning to engage one another intensely beyond trade and commerce and to acquaint each other with their expectations and aspirations. However, despite nearly a decade-long strategic partnership, the two sides have not been able to transform shared values into shared interests and shared priorities. This is largely because of a big disconnect in world views, mindsets and practical agendas, as well as mutual indifference. Each side perceives the other through the lens of its own experience, two different cultures and belief systems. These fundamental differences will remain because India and Europe are at different levels of socio-economic development and because they come from two different histories and milieus, as well as having two different geographical and geopolitical perspectives and priorities.

Despite common aspirations for forging a rule-based, multi-polar world order, there are basic differences in both perceptions and interests of the emerging powers in many fields, including trade, development, globalisation and World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, the International Criminal Court, climate change and so on, regarding which the EU has taken a contradictory stand.

Emerging powers like India perceive post-modern Europe as a lonely power in what is basically a Westphalian world with pre-modern and modern mindsets. There is a growing normative disconnect between the EU and the emerging powers, which are increasingly critical of Europe as a purveyor of norms engaged in a kind of ‘regulatory imperialism’, seeking to impose norms and standards irrespective of a country’s stage of development. Emerging powers want to play a greater role in the formulation of new rules for the international economic and financial system.

Many people in India, and in other parts of the developing world, feel that Europeans have come to believe that their transcendence of power holds lessons for others, and they have ‘a civilising mission’ in

the modern and pre-modern states. Europe very often tends to have a patronising attitude, under the motto “Let’s engage and teach you how to do things”. The EU’s narrative that portrays it as contributing to the well-being of peoples around the world has identified emerging countries as scapegoats that are unwilling to cooperate and adopt its high global standards.⁴ For instance, there is a tendency to view climate change in India in developmental rather than environmental terms. A distinction is usually made between the survival emissions of a developing country and the lifestyle emissions of the West. Attempts to push through binding environmental commitments in international agreements are seen as attempts to restrict the development potential of developing countries and impair their competitiveness. “European states have an environmental agenda that is all about saving their commercial interests and not saving the planet.”⁵

Main European social and cultural strengths and weaknesses

European social and cultural strengths include anti-discrimination laws and institutions that aim to combat discrimination and exclusion on the grounds of religion, gender or ethnicity, viable democratic institutions, efficient governance, “an uncompromising commitment to the rule of law, and a relentless striving for collective self-introspection and self-correction”⁶. India could also learn from European experience about how to limit the influence of kin and nepotism in politics. A major strength of Europe is stable political institutions, including the norms of coalition governance, which are more driven by issues and stability.

⁴ Nițoiu, Cristian (2013) ‘The Narrative Construction of the European Union in External Relations’, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 14(2): pp. 240-251.

⁵ Pramit Pal Chaudhuri, ‘4-word principle India’s big green victory at Rio,’ *Hindustan Times*, 21 June 2012.

⁶ Momin, A.R. (2006) ‘India as a Model for Multiethnic Europe’, *Asia Europe Journal*, 4(4): p. 535.

With Europe having become increasingly multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual, it is facing a major challenge of diversity management and accommodation. Many educated Indians feel that Europe tends to be “socially and culturally protectionist”,⁷ that Europe confronts social and political difficulties in dealing with its diversity of cultures, that multiculturalism does not seem to be working in Europe, and that European societies have not been able to meaningfully integrate non-Western ethnic minorities, especially Muslims. On the other hand, India has been able to better accommodate its incomparable diversity in a constitutional framework within a discourse that is not about dominance, but coexistence.

Europe is perceived as deeply divided on the issue of Turkey’s accession to the EU. If Turkey is admitted, a former Indian foreign minister remarked, it will mean “the entry of the first Muslim country into the EU. If it is not, the EU will be perceived as an exclusively Christian Club”.⁸ The admission of Turkey into the EU is considered by many in India to be a real litmus test for the secular and pluralistic credentials of Europe. If Turkey were to be deemed ineligible for EU membership after abiding by the admission norms, just because it is a Muslim country, then it would send “a very wrong signal”.⁹

For most Indians, there is no such thing as a European culture, but many cultures and identities. This is partly the result of the ambiguity

⁷ Lisbonne-de Vergeron, Karine. (2006) *Contemporary Indian Views of Europe?* Chatham House: London, p. 41.

⁸ Address by India’s External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh at the seminar on ‘Europe and Asia: Perspectives on the Emerging International Order’, which was organised by the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, 19 November 2004.

⁹ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in an interview with the Editorial Board of *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 September 2004. Online: <http://tinyurl.com/p2wayfn>.

of the discourse about EU cultural identity within the EU itself, which has been seeking to foster a European identity and common European values. Despite nearly six decades of integration, no European *demos* exists.

Perceptions of the EU as a political actor and development partner

Most stakeholders in India regard the EU not merely as an economic and trading partner but as a global actor with a growing profile and presence in international politics. However, they feel that the EU displays a lack of geopolitical coherence and has not yet shown signs of acting as a credible power. India and the EU have many common interests, but the goal of transforming them into coordinated policies has been rather elusive. The Union is not considered to be critical to the politico-security discourses within South Asia.

Emerging powers like India argue that the structures of global governance must be more democratic, representative and legitimate by increasing the participation of developing countries. Europe is clearly overrepresented in multilateral institutions and is in no hurry to part with its disproportional representation and influence. Whatever increase in representation of the emerging powers in international institutions there might be will usually take place at the expense of the Europeans. It regards the emerging powers more in terms of “co-opting them in a largely Western dominated system, ensuring that they played by the rules already established by the dominant players. Change was still driven by the Western, industrialized economies with little by way of agenda setting by the emerging economies. The existing architecture was sought to be retained even while accommodating new players. More tenants occupied the building, but the landlord, who set the house rules, remained the same.”¹⁰ In fact, India has consistently argued

¹⁰ Saran, Shyam. ‘The Evolving Role of Emerging Economies in Global Governance – An Indian Perspective’, a lecture delivered on 7 June 2012, pp. 25-26. <http://tinyurl.com/kp48cq>
Emphasis added.

for preserving, reforming and strengthening existing international institutions, not replacing them. It has argued that its membership in them would contribute towards those efforts.¹¹ Confronting diverse developmental challenges, India's growing integration with the world economy has compelled India to participate more proactively in the framing of new rules in order to ensure a conducive environment for its continued growth and development.

The global slowdown due to the unfolding of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis has, *inter alia*, impacted on the Indian economy through the deceleration in exports, the widening of the trade and current account deficit, the decline in capital flows, the fall in the value of the Indian Rupee, the stock market decline and lower economic growth.¹² Initial German and French responses to the disconnect between a single European currency, a single European Central Bank, and a fragmented fiscal arrangement, were characterised by efforts to avoid confronting the challenge head-on by applying various 'Band-Aid solutions', such as bailout packages for Ireland, Greece and Portugal.¹³ India has been concerned about the social effects of austerity measures, especially as restoring competitiveness in most South European countries will in all likelihood be a generational project.

Since the early 2000s, Indian leaders have on many occasions expressed a desire to emulate the EU's example of regional cooperation. Like Europe, the creation of greater constituencies for economic

¹¹ Singh, W.P., Mehta, P.B. and Jones, B. (2013) 'A Hesitant Rule Shaper?' in *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order*. Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C., p. 10.

¹² Jain, Rajendra K. (2014) 'China, India and the Eurozone Crisis,' in Jain, Rajendra K. ed., *India and the European Union in a Changing World*. Aakar Books: New Delhi, pp.146-157.

¹³ Shyam Saran, 'The Coming Global Crisis – Is India Ready?' *Business Standard*, 21 September 2011.

cooperation in South Asia will have positive spillover effects in fostering greater mutual trust and goodwill, thereby eventually dampening political differences and bolstering regional cooperation. The assumption of asymmetric responsibilities by India has also contributed to strengthening intra-regional cooperation.

India regards Europe as an increasingly important development partner. It has a lot to offer in terms of a market, high technology, and foreign direct investment (FDI). There is a growing desire to learn from Europe and adapt many European best practices in various socio-economic fields. For instance, India can learn from Europe in limiting the influence of kin and nepotism in politics and institutionalising better norms for coalition governance.

A worsening demographic profile with a greying population is compelling the EU to address the problems and opportunities of either in-sourcing highly skilled immigrants or outsourcing services. There is considerable potential for India and Europe to move increasingly towards partnerships in cutting-edge technologies in a manner that would combine India's strengths with European capabilities. The growing trade and the rise of Indian multinationals are both creating constituencies in Europe that will be further strengthened by the conclusion of the India-EU trade and investment agreement. If this were indeed to take place in the near future, it would not only set the parameters of the trading relationship for the next decades, but significantly bolster the strategic partnership.

Towards a new narrative

There is a big gap between self-perceptions of the European reality and how 'Outsiders' – especially how emerging powers like China, India and Brazil – perceive it. The old developing country prism has tended to cloud the European perceptions of India for too long. This is

changing somewhat with India itself becoming a major donor and with EU development aid likely to cease from 2014.

Both India and Europe have to make a conscious effort to overcome perceptual differences, since misperceptions constrain greater mutual cooperation and dialogue. It is essential to explore innovative ways so the EU can better target and synergise its media and communication strategies in key strategic partners like India in order to enhance its visibility and overcome stereotypes and misperceptions. More importantly, it is about overcoming the enormous information deficit that still persists about the EU in India and about India in the EU, largely because of mutual indifference and neglect. Clearly, both have a visibility issue to address and an imperative need to devise more coherent and effective public diplomacy strategies.¹⁴

Europeans have to revise their mental maps about the growing profile of emerging powers and the gradual shift of economic power to the East. Old habits die hard, so this may not happen soon, especially as Europeans are used to wielding influence, and at one point in time whether you were listened to depended on Europe. With the rise of the ‘Rest’, things are not quite what they seemed to be.

Many of the historical and cultural bonds and terms of reference that traditionally linked India with Britain and, in turn, Europe have withered away considerably over time, as a result of globalisation and the growing influence of American television and Hollywood, as well as greater societal preferences for and links with the United States, owing to the large diaspora there. A wired-in middle class is no longer greatly interested in European history, art or society, so India needs to

¹⁴ See Jain, Rajendra K. and Pandey, Shreya. 'The Public Attitudes and Images of the European Union in India', *India Quarterly*, 68(4) October-December 2012: pp. 331-343; Jain, Rajendra K. and Pandey, Shreya. 'The European Union in the Eyes of India', *Asia Europe Journal*, no. 8, 2010, pp. 193-209.

devote greater political energy and attention to developing closer links with the ‘new’ Europe.

Despite divergences on many global issues, India’s broad interests as a rising power on most issues of substance – such as the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the prevention of terrorism, maritime security, coping with health hazards and epidemics – are consonant with those of the other major powers. India and Europe are displaying a growing willingness to discuss and engage, but there is a pressing need to reorient mindsets in order to tap into the vast untapped potential of their relations. Both need to foster greater cultural dialogue in order to better comprehend differences and how they can be overcome to achieve common goals. To that end, enhancing knowledge about the emerging powers among younger generations in Europe would help to gradually erode stereotypes. There is a need to reinvoke, widen and deepen dialogue within civil society and sustain it beyond being largely government-driven. It is imperative to create greater constituencies in order to establish the broader societal bases for a mutually beneficial relationship between India and Europe.

Europeans will have to change their continuing narrative so that they can continue as before without adapting. In the writing of new rules they need to cooperate more with emerging powers by taking on their developmental concerns. Europe should recognise that it has to listen more and lecture less, for very often most Indians tend to regard Europe as being intrusive and preachy. The new European narrative needs to be more open, inclusive and accommodating. There has to be a real dialogue rather than a dialogue of the deaf (not talking at each other, but with each other) and a move towards greater mutual learning.

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Chinese and Indian views of Europe and the role of culture in European external affairs

Karine Lisbonne-de Vergeron

As globalisation proceeds and evolves, the way different cultures view each other is clearly of growing importance. The financial crisis of the past few years has given further impetus to this approach, since the more numerate modes of analysis have been found so signally wanting. When I initially started to look at non-European views of Europe a few years ago,¹⁵ especially Chinese and Indian views, it was upon the consideration of at least two other factors: First, the rise of these emerging Asian giants and their sustained expansion, translating

¹⁵ See Lisbonne-de Vergeron, Karine. (2006) *Contemporary Indian Views of Europe*, ed. Chatham House and the Robert Schuman Foundation; *Contemporary Chinese Views of Europe* (2007), Ibid; *Chinese and Indian Views of Europe since the Crisis: New Perspectives from the Emerging Asian Giants* (2012), ed. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Robert Schuman Foundation and the Global Policy Institute.

into what many have characterised as a continuous and progressive shift in the world's economic centre of gravity from the West to the East, a trend that the 2008 crisis accelerated. And second, the sense that a general crisis in the West might cause Europe to falter, because of the failure of further institutional integration with the rejection of the proposed Constitutional Treaty in 2005, and, more recently and more dramatically, through the stresses of the monetary union.

The novelty of the rise of the Asian giants has now worn off. The mutual interdependence between the East and the West has continued to grow, but some significant weaknesses are being revealed in Asia, especially in India. At the same time, the Euro crisis is in many respects fading and may well prove to have been the catalyst for a sustained European renewal – political and cultural, as well as economic. Europe might recognise its potential strength again. So taking stock of how Europe is perceived by its non-European partners – the subject of this publication – is indeed very timely. Central to such a task must also be an assessment of the EU's capacity to face up to the challenges of the new globalised world that we can see emerging, notwithstanding the impact of the rise of China and India.

New perspectives from the emerging Asian giants

So how is Europe viewed by China and India now? What are the expectations and implications for the EU's relationships with each of these two partners? What are the challenges for Europe? Two preliminary remarks seem to underline any reflection on the matter. First, considering whether these countries regard Europe as a global actor and how they see it in social, economic and cultural terms is also to some extent a reflection of how they perceive themselves in world affairs. In part, it is an evolving perception of their own pace and state of development. Secondly, Chinese or Indian perceptions of Europe are inevitably linked to the depth and breadth of the EU's relationship

with each of these countries, particularly in economic and political terms, despite cultural affinities and/or shared histories.

What has been opened up over the past few years, most brutally, is the issue of European competitiveness in a world economy that has been, and will continue to be, substantially defined by the rise of Asia and emerging countries such as Brazil. Some oversimplified or misinterpreted the Euro crisis as being a long overdue reality check for a Europe that would overpay its workforce and which, as a result, has accumulated excessive levels of debt and seems doomed to relative, or even absolute, economic decline. It is a view heard increasingly often, especially in countries such as India, but this is so far, it seems, more a shift of perception than of fact. The EU remains the largest trading partner of both China and India. Although both countries consider the economic crisis as one of the “Western mature economic model”, Europe’s pre-eminent weight has in both cases been sustained over the past five years and has actually been reinforced in the case of Sino-European trade. By contrast, China is Europe’s second trading partner, whereas India is currently a long way behind in ninth place, just after Brazil.

This may explain, for example, why Indians tend to be more cautious than the Chinese about Europe’s economic, social and demographic prospects. It also, obviously, explains the much greater intensity of the Sino-European diplomatic dialogue, as compared to the Indo-European one, and at least partly reflects the information deficit about the EU and Europe that is very apparent in India. Overall, Indians – far more than the Chinese – still tend to consider Europe as a group of countries that are declining when considered individually. This is partly underpinned by the consideration that India is less exposed and has less at stake, notably because Indian investments in Euros are very limited, although they feel the Euro’s development is also in their interests. It is also underpinned by the fact that, so far, India’s engagement with Europe has been based on a case-by-case

approach rather than clear-cut strategic lines. This contrasts to Europe's relationship with China, which has intensified over the years to cover a wider spectrum of bilateral cooperation, including social and most notably cultural matters. In the case of India, the EU-India Free Trade Agreement, which is currently in the final stages of negotiation, should help to strengthen the bilateral relationship and improve Indian perceptions of Europe, at least economically.

As regards the political dimension, two aspects need to be considered, which I would call the 'internal' and 'external'. The lens through which one views cultural compatibility and/or perceptions is, indeed, partly related to whether two parties see the world in similar ways. Here there are clear variations in analysing how Europe perceives China and India and how each of these countries sees us. But perhaps most important is how they view their own country internally – what China thinks it will become in 20 years or so, or the way in which India sees itself evolving. On a spectrum of relative differences, there is no question that the political debate in India is still partly coloured by a European institutional legacy, India being both a *Rechtstaat* (a country with a rule of law) and a democracy, although internally India's values and priorities are increasingly diverging from Europe's. Yet India does not rate Europe very highly as a potentially important power in the long term.

China is clearly in a totally different league in this regard, being furthest away by far from rating European examples or political values highly. China's 'own way' and attitudes to law and democracy need no elaboration. Even though the contrast with China is the most acute, from an external standpoint, however, the way in which the Chinese and the Europeans look at the world is probably much closer. The Chinese are, paradoxically, far more confident than other nations that Europe will remain a major power in world affairs, and indeed one of the two cultural poles of world civilisation alongside China. The fact that the political values of China and Europe are probably the furthest

apart does not mean, and in fact has not meant so far, that Europe's most comprehensive partnership with emerging countries has been with China. This is obviously a highly complex and multifaceted paradox, but one that underlines a critical element in all future thinking on the subject. Let me simply focus on two questions: Is this economic and political template also applicable to social and cultural perceptions of Europe? And what are the cultural implications for Europe, its role and relevance?

Many Indian opinion formers profess, as in China, that they expect and would indeed desire greater European integration, as well as the emergence of a European Union (EU) that plays a greater role in international affairs. However, they tend to have a somewhat downbeat assessment of the EU's current geopolitical importance. Europe does not rank very highly on the list of India's most significant international partners, trailing behind the United States, China, Japan and Russia. This is not, I believe, based on any Indian judgement as to the likely evolution of the EU's internal political integration over the next few years, but on what is seen as a clear and possibly a growing distinction and divergence of both strategy and sentiment between Europe and the US.¹⁶

This is despite the fact that India has retained a dominant culture that accepts, rather than contests, its very significant religious and ethnic diversity – something plainly of great importance for her perceptions of Europe: the European Union – comprising 28 member states, with 24 official languages and a population of some 500 million inhabitants – and the Indian Union, with 28 states, 22 official languages and a population of over 1.2 billion inhabitants – share the notion of 'unity in diversity'. Yet so far, due in part to India's own pace of

¹⁶ India deploys only 700 or so diplomats around the world. Given such limited resources, anything that helps to streamline the bilateral relationship between the EU and India is to be welcomed, including a stronger role for the European External Action Service.

economic development and geopolitical priorities, this has not translated into a greater partnership with the EU, at least in cultural matters.

Indian young people are still much more attracted by the US than they are by Europe. India's links with Europe are fading socially, whereas those with the US are growing. For example, there is now an Indian diaspora in the US of over 2.5 million, with increasing political influence, as underlined by the India caucus in the American Senate. Over a quarter of the employees of NASA and Microsoft are Indo-American or Indian citizens and some 100,000 Indians are currently studying in the US, compared to around 50,000 in Europe. Indians generally believe that Americans are more interested in and appreciative of their culture than Europeans. Though we cannot doubt the fascination felt by contemporary Indians for the US, this does not extend to imagining that an eventual 'Indian dream' would be some sort of melting pot based on the American model. The growing disconnect between India and Europe is also underpinned by the perception of diverging demographics. Europe's difficulty is seen as being that of an ageing population, while more than half of the Indian population is under 35 years old (notwithstanding the important challenges that India faces socially itself, whether it is in greater access to education for its population or in tackling the very difficult challenge of sustained poverty despite economic growth).

Through the Chinese lens: EU-China cultural engagement

China represents a different dynamic from that of India. The Chinese are, generally speaking, more supportive of the idea that the EU could play a greater role as a political actor. They are concerned by the challenges and difficulties that Europe is facing from an economic and social standpoint, but they do not see any long-term areas of significant contention with Europe in the political field when compared in particular to their relationship with the US. China's relationship

with Europe has also recently expanded to include people-to-people and cultural exchanges as an important aspect of the bilateral partnership, to a degree not yet matched in the Indo-European partnership. People-to-people exchange has become the third strategic pillar of the Sino-European relationship since 2012, following the creation of the high-level economic dialogue in 2007 and the high-level strategic dialogue in 2010. The year 2012 was actually devoted to the EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue, with projects across several cultural industries and joint events.

Though American culture still attracts Chinese youth, many Chinese consider that only Europe shares with China the experience of being a very old civilisation and therefore boasts a similar sense of cultural continuity. Some recall Europe's capacity to have astonished the world culturally thanks to its creativity throughout history. There is also plenty of potential to strengthen educational exchanges further.¹⁷ This is, of course, also the case with India. However, the level of the bilateral relationship between China and the EU is also the result of the importance that China attaches to cultural diplomacy, as demonstrated by the rapid spread of Confucius Institutes around the world over the past few years – a strategic assessment of culture as part of China's external development, which, so far, has not been considered with comparable vigour by India.

The need for greater unity

This does not imply that Europeans cannot learn from India, with its gigantic democracy constituting signal proof that it is in principle possible to achieve a sense of common feeling across so many different languages and throughout such an ethnically and religiously diverse society. This seems to me a particular area in which a closer dialogue

¹⁷ Over 120,000 Chinese people are studying in the EU, a six-fold increase since 2000, but there are only some 20,000 European students in China.

between India and the EU could and should be sought. It is also a reminder that administrative and market structures on a continental scale do not preclude the development of diverse cultures and societies, but the considerations from China are most revealing. China's astonishing development over the past 20 or 30 years has indeed been partly based on the sense that great civilisations can suffer, yet they come back to their natural status of cultural pre-eminence.

In many respects, Europe (the EU) currently shares with China the experience of being in transition, in grasping its European scale and a greater sense of common interests. When devising new narratives for Europe, Europeans could take from China and her perceptions of Europe the idea of being more optimistic collectively. There are many reasons for this, despite the current economic and social difficulties that Europe faces: To name just a few, Europe's extensive reserves of capital; its sustained strength in innovation, research and technology; its institutional capacity to expand by bringing in new EU members; the potential for closer integration of the single market and the Euro zone, including in fiscal terms; and above all its rooted yet diverse culture. All of these factors constitute a formidable comparative advantage for Europe in world affairs.

Considering external perceptions of Europe inevitably invites a process of self-awareness. This is especially so because the rise of the Asian giants (and other emerging countries such as Brazil) constrains us to think in terms that break the bounds of the immediate and the short term. One very significant aspect of this is that the crisis has made it all the more vital for Europeans to recognise that, in the long run, their only prospect for engaging with these new continental powers is by being more united, either through the EU's institutions or through closer cooperation among several member states in those areas where smaller groupings prevail. Moreover, a task group could be set up as part of the European External Action Service to coordinate or

facilitate European external cultural engagement, in particular with China, and more generally with other emerging countries, and to support and widen existing initiatives by the European Commission and national institutions. The more China, India and the rest of the emerging world grow in cultural importance, the less dominant the US's cultural weight will be in the world and this will also bring about a revival of the importance of European culture, most notably in its relative diversity, with social, economic and political benefits. Strengthening such European cultural engagement externally will be an asset to forge more fruitful bilateral relationships that help deliver our objectives across the board.

Non-European views of Europe, those of China and India in particular, now present a clear challenge for Europeans: the need for greater unity, self-confidence and the capacity to master our continental scale, and what this means not only for Europe's sustained prosperity and power but also for its unique perception of humanity, for its values and culture.

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Brazil and the European Union: Partner, model or threat?

Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo

The end of the first decade of the 21st century was characterised by a significant crossroads for the European Union and the United States that called into question traditional social, political and economic policies. Problems such as unemployment, low salaries, loss of economic competitiveness and social tensions led to the definition of this period as one of a new depression, part of a broader structural change in the world's balance of power. These trends were representative of change in Western societies, which seemed to have reached the limits of their development and dynamism, as expressed by popular protests and the loss of international power. For the EU, even the idea of integration was being questioned, and viewed as part of the problem and not part of the solution.

On the other hand, countries like Brazil, China, India, South Africa and Russia were experiencing an era of prosperity, coupled with the recovery of their sense of pride, power resources and social progress due to their economic expansion. Concepts like 'emerging nations' and

the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)¹⁸ gained ground, portraying these nations as the new alternative power axis of international politics: an axis of Third World¹⁹ nations, located in Asia, Europe and the Americas, that represented part of the West and the East, that focused on economic and political policies different to those that were implemented in the North, in particular in the 2000s. The power transition seemed to indicate a decline of the North, and the creation of a multi-polar scenario, in which the South would prevail. Nevertheless, these same nations are nowadays facing similar problems in their economies as the indexes of growth are slowing down, due to the prevailing global imbalances.

In considering these trends, the aim of this paper is to analyse one feature of this process of reordering, focusing on one of the most relevant partnerships of Brazilian foreign policy: the EU. So, what is the Brazilian perspective on a possible dwarfing of Europe? Will these changes in the world's balance of power represent a widening gap between these traditional partners? Will a deepening of the North-South divide and differences of opinion jeopardise the prospects of cooperation?

In order to answer these questions, the text will analyse how this relationship is evolving, by considering Brazil's perceptions of the EU. Although deepened by current turbulences, these expectations are

¹⁸ The grouping was originally known as 'BRIC' before the inclusion of South Africa in 2010. Both terms are used in this book.

¹⁹ Although there is some disagreement regarding the use of some concepts such as 'the Third World', 'South' and 'North' – since its origins date back to the 1960s – it is the author's choice to maintain their use in the article. Other options, that are also subject of debate, that could have been used, such as 'Global South' and 'Global North', and 'Second World', do not retain the political and historical meaning of the original concepts that I want to discuss. Since there is no academic consensus about the issue, and the original concepts still retain their influence among scholars, they are used in the article.

rooted in previous issues that are linked to sovereignty, as well as to geopolitical, strategic and economic trends. Mostly, the EU can be seen as a three-fold relationship from Brazil's perspective: as a partner, a model or a threat.

As a partner and model, the weight of European integration as an example for Brazil will be discussed, as well as the occasionally excessive focus on this same process of integration (and the idea of a European Union-Common Market of the South framework). It is therefore necessary to investigate whether the relationship is facing a downside due to the EU's economic crisis or if it also embodies differences of political positions, regarding broader themes such as human rights, the environment and sovereignty. In addition, we will discuss, from Brazil's perspective, if there is a sense of frustration that may lead to misplaced notions of threat. So, is Brazil better off without Europe? Or is Europe better off without Brazil? Or, even, is Europe better off without its own Union?

Partner and model

From the standpoint of Brazil's foreign policy, political and economic exchanges, the bilateral relations with the EU (and within individual partnerships that are part of this Union) are considered strategic. In spite of the considerable weight of the US in the nation's agenda, the role of European nations in building the Brazilian economy and society were significant. One cannot forget Brazil's heritage and waves of European immigration that were essential to the country's own identity as a multicultural, multiracial and democratic nation. Even before the EU took shape as a political and economic actor, the ties between the two sides of the Atlantic were strong. Nevertheless, as we shall see, strong ties are not equal to harmony or a profitable exchange between nations or blocs.

It should therefore be noted that Brazil perceives itself as part of the bloc of Western societies, which is centred in the US and European nations, even though the nation is part of the Third World and the so-called Southern periphery of the international system. This is in fact an ongoing debate regarding Brazil's own identity that affects its models of development and patterns of international relations (including relations with the EU), as some tend to view the country as 'First World' while others view it as 'Third World'.

In a very simple (albeit misguided) logic, some argue that, since Brazil can be defined as a Western nation, it should follow the lead of the main representatives of this bloc, the US and the EU, aligning its policies and values with their orientation. Once economic development is achieved – mainly also pending this alignment and aid from the 'North' (which would be a reward for this 'good behaviour') – the country would be able to ascend to the 'First World' with its partners. Historically, it led to some of the most curious statements from Brazilian politicians. For example, Juracy Magalhães declared that "what is good for the US is good for Brazil", and former President Collor de Mello indicated that "he would rather be the last of the First World, than the first of the Third World".

On the other hand, those who perceive Brazil as a Third World nation support a more autonomous external and domestic agenda, where the country still remains a Western country. But a different kind of West, one that has African, Asian, American and European heritage that leads to a complex blend in its society, providing it with its richness. In addition, a continental nation that is diverse in its power resources and difficulties regarding poverty, integration and inequalities, but that can stand on its own feet with adequate political, social and economic policies of development.

In that sense, this is the Brazil that prevailed in the first decade of the 21st century and that is now faced by its own future and watching

the possible dwarfing of Europe, leading to the three-fold perception of the continent as a partner, model or threat (these are, in fact, mixed, blurred and overlapping trends). As mentioned, the three-fold perception of the relationship is not recent, and is ingrained in diplomatic affairs, dating back to the 1990s and even before. Due to the scope of these issues, for this paper the focus of debate regarding these perceptions relates to Brazil's new power status and the crisis of Europe at the turn of the new century, and the starting point will be in the 1990s.

From the 1990s, relations between Brazil and Europe tended to focus heavily on economic issues, including trade and the prospects of regional integration. With regard to the more recent issue of regional integration, whereas Europe was coming to terms with its own project, promoting its upgrade after the end of the Cold War, leading to the creation of the EU, Brazil was launching its own project in South America, alongside its partners in the Southern Cone – Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Even though the creation of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) cannot be disconnected from US initiatives for the hemisphere – such as the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative proposed by President George H. Bush (1989–1992) and the Free Trade of the Americas Areas that followed as part of Bill Clinton's agenda (1993–2000), or Brazil's own projection of power in South America – the example of European integration was the one MERCOSUR followed since its inception.²⁰ So, more than a partner, the EU was seen as a model for and by MERCOSUR.

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of Brazilian foreign policy and its relations with the USA, see Pecequilo, C.S. (2010) 'A new strategic dialogue: Brazil-US relations in Lula's presidency', *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, volume 53, Special Edition, pp. 132–150.

This was largely regarded as a natural development, since the EU was perceived as being the most advanced project of integration, and the paths it had followed since its birth in the 1950s tended to guide other regional projects. However, the idea of ‘a model’ led to two different sets of problems: first, there were some principles regarding sovereignty and governance in the EU that were unlikely to be followed by Brazil and its partners due to its comprehensive approach (in fact, even in the EU these supranational goals and principles do not necessarily become reality, in the fields of defence and foreign policy in particular);²¹ second, the prospect of a model tends to hinder the idea of an equal partnership, leading to the risk of excessive expectations and, therefore, frustrations.

In relation to the first set of issues, although MERCOSUR was characterised by political and economic goals, the political ones were much more limited than those in the EU, preserving the governmental power of decision-making in all instances. Also, these different views on sovereignty extended to broader issues of political, social and economic projects of Brazil as a society, and not only as a member and leader of MERCOSUR. In particular in the 2000s, from Luis Inácio Lula da Silva’s terms in government (2003–2010) onwards, Brazil promoted the renewal of social projects based on economic development and welfare programmes (with the focus on ending poverty and fighting Brazil’s deep social and economic inequalities), breaking the neo-liberal agenda that prevailed in the 1990s. On the other hand, the EU followed the opposite path, with economic austerity plans and convergence demands for nations to become part of the Eurozone, where the roots of the enduring 2008 crisis are to be found.

Since the political framework differed so much, the model focused on economic issues, which narrowed the field of discussion and started

²¹ See Baudet, T. (2012) *The Significance of Borders*. Brill: Leiden/Boston, for the debate about supranationalism.

to widen the gap between projects and, even, values regarding social and economic needs. There were several framework agreements between the blocs, but there were no significant advances in projects, since both sides sustained their positions in bilateral and multilateral trade talks. As long as Brazil argued in favour of trade openness and fairness, the EU preserved its traditional policies and practices and there are several disputes ongoing in the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding these different stances. This leads to the second set of problems: the EU was seen as a model and as an example, so Brazil was expecting it to act accordingly when pushed towards partnership, which did not happen at all.

Although the term ‘strategic partnership’ continued to be applied freely to the relationship to the bloc, and within nations of the bloc in more bilateral terms, opportunities and common goals seemed to be more limited and were replaced by other exchanges. Brazil, in this sense, was also refocusing its priorities towards South-South cooperation, not only because of these limitations and obstacles, but also as a means to rebuilding and reaffirming its Third World identity, and its role as one of the most relevant peripheral nations. As Visentini points out, the turning point for this process was former President Lula’s mandate, with its high-profile diplomacy and its economic and social projects, which tied development, stability and welfare together.²² These nations soon came to be known as the ‘BRICS’, as the emerging countries that were redesigning the system of alliances, multilateral talks and the world’s balance of power. And, from partner and model, the distancing of Brazil and the EU led to an overlapping perception of threat.

²² Visentini, P. F. (2013) *A projeção internacional do Brasil 1930-2012*. Campus Elsevier: Rio de Janeiro.

Perception of threat

All in all, these trends point to a relationship that nowadays is characterised by an overall sense of frustration on Brazil's part that is widening the gap between these two traditional partners. Although there is an expected and natural gap in the relationship that was bound to arise due to Brazil's refocusing of priorities in the South (and its BRICS partners), that comes from a greater convergence of interests and policies linked to similar social, political and economic agendas and the reordering of the world's balance of power generated by these phenomenon, it should be mentioned that Brazil tended to expect more from Europe. Why is that so? Can this be portrayed as a somewhat naïve attitude from Brazil?

One could say that there are some excessive expectations that are characteristic of Brazilian evaluations of its partners and multilateralism, which Cervo calls a "Kantian vision" of international relations (that tends to view the scenario in terms of cooperation, peace, principles and values convergence).²³ However, the country's views of the EU as an equal potential partner are related to Europe's rhetoric as well. Since Brazil stopped seeing the EU only as a possible model for MERCOSUR, it has been looking for new venues of cooperation as well as regional integration, supported by a positive view of the bloc. During most of the last two decades, the EU presented a stance in international affairs trying to set her apart from US hegemonic power and unilateralism that included the defence of cooperation, global governance and social issues added to a mild defence of a multi-polar balance of power. At the height of this rhetoric, hypotheses of a 'transatlantic divorce' became quite popular during George W. Bush's presidency (2001–2008).

²³ Cervo, A. (2008) *Inserção Internacional – formação dos conceitos brasileiros*. Saraiva: São Paulo.

For Brazil this seemed to open up new opportunities for partnership, not only through a possible European Union-MERCOSUR agreement, but also as a means to find a new set of political alliances and opportunities within the North, which would help the country to achieve its diplomatic goals and bolster its development. After a period of alignment to the US in the 1990s, Brazil's foreign policy, in particular under Lula's government (2003–2010), strengthened its autonomy and high-profile political agendas, focusing on South-South cooperation but without abandoning the North-South axis. Moreover, the economic crisis was over, after the efforts during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's two terms in office (1995–2002). This enabled his successor, Lula, to promote growth, stability and social reform. A renewed partnership with the EU then seemed viable.

Nevertheless, the EU-US divide was not as deep as expected, due to the EU's strategic dependence on the US in the military realm and due to the fact that political, economic and diplomatic convergences overcame possible new gaps, including the pressures of the economic crisis from 2008 onwards. At the same time, Brazil and the 'RICS' countries were growing and characterised by political and economic dynamism, as well as social hope, pushing for reforms in the political, economic and social agendas that prevailed in the North. Instead they were arguing in terms of growth, development, stability and welfare, and their demands were falling flat, whether in bilateral or multilateral relations.

Brazil therefore had to come to terms with the fact that the EU, even before being drowned by its own crisis, was also not recognising this 'new Brazil' and this trend towards multi-polarity. The pattern of a cooperative rhetoric clashed with unilateral policies, and stand offs and paralysis in multilateral talks, that spread from the United Nations to the World Trade Organization. In addition, from Brazil's point of view, this deepened the perception of the EU's double standards

regarding sensitive issues such as trade, human rights and the environment.

In this sense, Brazil points out that EU double standards prevail in several areas: trade (protectionism and subsidies), human rights and the environment. Added to the non-recognition of Brazil's new power, there was a growing gap between the so-called universal standards that were defended by the EU and its own practices in the bloc, including the treatment of immigrants and religious issues. The North-South divide grew deeper, and pressures over these nations seemed to grow at the same speed that the crisis spread all over the continent, leading to protests, high rates of unemployment and social despair.

Not only was Brazil frustrated, but she also felt threatened, since these 'European Union views' clashed with matters of sovereignty for the country, interference in internal affairs, followed by the shadows of military and political interventions in the Third World, under the 'responsibility to protect' the UN agenda. In this sense, we should mention the BRICS countries' strong opposition to recent events that led to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention in Libya, the paralysis in Syria, the Iranian nuclear issue and the absence of reforms in multilateral organisations.

From Brazil's perspective, the EU needs to come to terms with its own misgivings and demands for change, as can be seen in the deteriorating political and economic situation of its members. It is not clear for Brazil what Europe will be in the near future, and where its choices will lead it. As a bloc that is searching for common solutions? Or as individual states once more?

Prospects for Brazil-European Union relations

It seems there is no easy answer to the question of whether Brazil is better off without Europe. However, if trends continue at the same

pace as they have in the last decade, the relationship will naturally weaken. The partnership will remain but it will be downgraded, as the gap in interests, projects and even values continues to grow. Being a partner involves more than being a model, as discussed above, and it means mutual concessions and respect for each other's social and cultural differences, political and economic agendas. When relative power positions are shifting, this process becomes even more difficult, because even though asymmetric power conditions tend to persist, new light must be shed on talks and diplomatic efforts. It is a learning process for both sides, and it should be faced with no illusions.

Both Brazil and the EU must approach the relationship pragmatically. We could venture to say that neither would be better off without the other, but also that nowadays none sees the other as their main partner. In this sense, both sides are focused on their regional issues, their bilateral relations with the US (and the imbalances created by the hegemony's political and economic crisis) and their relations with the BRICS countries. In the midst of an ongoing crisis, all these poles are at a crossroads. It will be difficult for the South to sustain its growth with a long-standing crisis in the North, particularly as the South competes and cooperates within its own alliances as well.

Moreover, in 2014 Brazil will face new presidential elections, when identities and projects will tend to clash. The future prospects for bilateral relations? If nothing changes, in the long run, Brazil and the EU are facing the risk of a lost partnership, losing significant historical links and also limiting prospects of cooperation.

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Youth mobility: the living bridge between Europe and China

Jian Shi and Yan Zhuang²⁴

The world of the 21st century is dramatically different from that of previous decades. The rapid economic and social development has accelerated the process of globalisation and has created a wider range of cross-cultural dialogue. Global actors play different roles on the international stage and new factors such as soft power and intercultural dialogue are gaining importance. The future is being shaped today by young people all over the world, who are developing new ways of dealing with this 'global village'. By encouraging them to acquire first-hand experience with other cultures and thus create their own perception of the world we can contribute to this.

²⁴This text is a shortened version of a longer essay. Please find the full text at <http://www.narratives.eu/reading-room/>

Europe in China

The perception of Europe in China has changed in recent years too. In the mid twentieth century, the term ‘Europe’ was used to refer to countries in Central and Southern Europe and not to the European Union member states. From the 1990s onwards, as China opened up under the ‘Reform and Opening’ policy, high-quality European products began to flood the markets. Europe was seen as a wealthy continent and its culture was perceived as exotic, with its influences from Greco-Roman culture, Judeo-Christian traditions, the Enlightenment and capitalism.

In recent times, the Chinese media has focused more on Europe, and joint EU-China programmes and activities have begun to spring up. In fact, China-EU relations have become one of the most important relationships in Chinese foreign policy.

When talking to Chinese students, however, it becomes clear that their perception of Europe is shaped mainly by the media and coloured by second-hand sources. As future decision-makers in the global village, this influence could prove dangerous. It would therefore be preferable to help Chinese students to form their own reflections on Europe and through them, to develop a picture of Europe through young people’s eyes. The Erasmus Mundus Actions programme provides excellent opportunities to do both.

Gaining new perspectives

Studying abroad offers young students valuable opportunities to immerse themselves in new environments. The university is the institution *par excellence* where this can take place. To echo Walter Rüegg, no other European institution has spread over the entire world

like the traditional form of the university.²⁵ The Erasmus Mundus programme takes this one step further, not only offering international academic activities at renowned institutions but also providing students with a broader sense of international collaboration and engagement.

Both the exchange students and their host environment benefit from each other and develop new perspectives on each other's culture. At the same time, this interaction via culture enables them to get a clearer image of themselves and their own identity and culture. They begin to view themselves as citizens of the world, living in a truly global village.

Living abroad forges strong bonds: more than 86 per cent of Erasmus Mundus students make new friends with whom they stay in touch after the programme. Holding their own in a different culture enables them to make huge leaps in their personal development and this also translates into improved career perspectives. The salaries of Erasmus Mundus students tend to be higher and rise more steadily than those of students without international experience.²⁶ But most importantly, participating in an exchange programme enables students to develop better skills for international cooperation, in work and in everyday life. In an increasingly globalised world, these are valuable skills to have!

²⁵ Rüegg, Walter. (1992) *A History of the University in Europe: Universities in the Middle Ages*. vol. 1. Cambridge University Press: New York.

²⁶ See "Graduate Impact Survey" by Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, May 2013. <http://www.em-a.eu/en/erasmus-mundus/graduate-impact-survey.html>.

Cultural attraction

It is clear that students benefit from exchange programmes like Erasmus Mundus, but these programmes offer attractive opportunities for countries too. As Joseph Nye says, in the Information Age, winning hearts and minds is more important than hard power.²⁷ When a country's policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, its soft power is enhanced and it improves its position in the increasingly competitive international arena. Personal contacts, visits and exchanges play a role in this, as experiencing a country for yourself can help you to better appreciate its culture and its values. Academic mobility can therefore help to create greater acceptance of cultures and increase their attraction. Participating in local everyday life allows a culture to 'grow' on you.

China too sees the benefits that exchange and interaction can bring. For the past 30 years, the country has benefited from its open-door strategy. EU-China relations began in 2003 with a Declaration on cultural cooperation between Europe and the Chinese Ministry of Culture. The importance of the cultural dimension was reaffirmed in 2009 during the 12th EU-China Summit, with the establishment of the EU-China High Level Culture Forum. And at the 14th Summit, EU and Chinese leaders decided to develop a third pillar to their partnership, acknowledging the importance of personal exchanges between individuals and civil society partners.

Ready for the new world

The world around us has changed and it is our responsibility to prepare our young people for the challenges that this new environment brings. Educational exchanges and cultural activities can help to equip

²⁷ Nye, Joseph S. (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs: New York.

them with the skills they need, as well as enhancing mutual understanding and mutual trust. In turn, this can help to protect and promote the cultural diversity that helps to keep our globalised world a dynamic and interesting place to live in.

Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with third countries. In addition, it contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in third countries by increasing mobility between the EU and these countries.

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Yan Zhuang is a lecturer and a PhD candidate at Sichuan University. Her research areas and publication topics include EU-China relations, cultural identity, citizenship and youth policy. Her current research focuses on the promotion of culture in EU external relations. As a young cultural analyst, she attended the EU-China Youth Policy Dialogue 2012 in Brussels. She has also been a grant holder and exchange PhD candidate under the framework of the Erasmus Mundus Action.

What can we learn from China?

Fokke Obbema²⁸

Do Chinese people live in a completely separate wing of the human house with their own set of values and culture, as suggested by the British China expert Martin Jacques? Or are they ‘people just like us’, as the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci observed at the beginning of the seventeenth century?

While writing my book *China and Europe*,²⁹ these two fundamentally different approaches to China regularly came to mind. I am, however, very much in favour of taking a more balanced approach: be aware of differences but without over-emphasising their importance, and be keen on achieving a better intellectual understanding of China and our own prejudices but without resorting to naivety.

Looking at China from a variety of angles will enable us to get to the heart of the matter. For this essay, the pivotal question is: what can we learn from China? This was in fact my favourite question when talking to China experts both in China and Europe over the past two years.

²⁸This text is a shortened version of a longer essay. Please find the full text at <http://www.narratives.eu/reading-room/>

²⁹Obbema, Fokke (2013) *China en Europa, waar twee werelden elkaar raken* [China and Europe: Where two worlds meet], Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, ISBN 978-90-470-0609-1.

Based on the feedback I received over the years, I would say that the most important thing we as Europeans can learn from the Chinese is: learn to learn. This may sound easy, but it is in fact extremely hard as it entails coming to terms with our ingrained feelings of superiority. These feelings are the result of several centuries in which western domination of the world has been taken for granted. To perceive China as it really is – without prejudices or projections – requires focus and effort. The question is: can we do it?

A biased view of China

Historically speaking, there are a number ‘Great Europeans’ who studied China intensively. If we take their efforts as our example, we soon see where the pitfalls lie. In the eighteenth century, French philosopher and writer Voltaire was full of praise for the Chinese emperors, especially Emperor Qianlong, whom he called the ‘king-philosopher’. For Voltaire, Chinese society provided proof that it was quite possible to have a society of high moral standing without a dominant religion. He was enthralled by Confucianism (he even had a statue of Confucius in his study) and the meritocratic principle governing the selection of mandarins at China’s imperial court. Voltaire’s German counterpart was philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, who praised the Chinese for not being corrupt – a somewhat surprising observation in our present-day context. In fact, Leibniz even dreamed of bringing Chinese missionaries to Europe.

In reality, however, it was Europe that sent Catholic missionaries to China. It was their glowing reports that turned Leibniz and Voltaire into China-adepts, without them ever having set foot on Chinese soil. Their enthusiasm for China should be seen in the context of the problems in Europe at the time, which gave them a powerful motivation to idealise China. Leibniz was abhorred by the Thirty Years War and Voltaire fought continuously against the Catholic Church. By

idealising the good, they eclipsed the darker sides of the Chinese system, for instance, the despotic nature of the imperial power.

In the twentieth century, the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre took a leaf from their book in an even more dramatic way. Sartre celebrated the new human being that Chairman Mao was creating while turning a blind eye to the cruelties of the Cultural Revolution. He visited China only once. His convictions about China can only be understood in the context of his fight against Western capitalism.

These three examples of glorifying China can easily be counterbalanced by numerous others, arguing the exact opposite. German Emperor Wilhelm II, for instance, dubbed the Chinese the ‘Yellow Peril’ for fear of them invading the world. And French philosopher Charles de Montesquieu emphasised the despotic nature of Chinese power. These negative images of China and the Chinese became particularly predominant in the nineteenth century, when European powers were conquering the world, including parts of China (without formally colonising it), and there was a firm belief in Western superiority. It is only now, with the rise of Asian powers, that our feeling of superiority is seriously questioned, both in Asia and in our part of the world. Perhaps this humbling experience will help us to be truly open and perceptive towards China.

Learning from culture?

So moving back to our original question: what can we learn from China? When it comes to values like the rule of law, human rights, separation of powers, accountability of those who govern us, it seems clear to me that China could learn from the Western approach, rather than vice versa. The abundant growth of the Chinese economy that the West would love to replicate offers equally limited options. It would be very hard to transfer the authoritarian-technocratic approach that the Chinese political system allows to our political

system. The same goes for China's industrial policy and its much-lauded investments in wind and solar technology. The policy cannot be copied, but it does force the EU to formulate a clever industrial policy in response.

What then does China have to offer to us in the realm of culture? All over the world, China has created hundreds of Confucius Institutes, which promote Chinese culture and language. In Europe alone there are 129 institutes in 34 countries. In interviews for my book with some of their directors, a number of issues came to light. The most obvious one is, of course, academic freedom, as the institutes are financed by the Chinese government. Should Western universities be linked to institutes that are funded by a foreign state with an authoritarian government? The answer to that question seems to be correlated with the financial resources of the universities in question, explaining why Oxford refused to enter into this kind of cooperation with the Chinese state, but Paris Diderot accepted.

However, the Chinese state appears to lack a clear view of what it wants to achieve with these institutes. It has quantitative, but not qualitative goals. There is talk of a contribution to 'harmony' and 'progress' in the world, but these notions remain vague. Unlike the US, Chinese leaders seem to have no clear ideas about the norms and values that China could contribute to the world.

Power to the people

So the soft power investment in Confucius Institutes does not seem to be paying off. The same applies to 24-hour news channels and English language newspapers that have been introduced. In fact, the best opportunities for increasing China's soft power appear to lie in the Chinese government becoming more trusting towards the Chinese people in general and towards its many talented individuals in particular.

The potential of this approach is enormous. At the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, *A Touch of Sin* by Chinese director Jia Zhangke was a contender for the Palme d'Or. This film painted a very frank picture of China, clearly showing corruption and the gap between economic winners and losers. In 2012, the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Chinese writer Mo Yan. Chinese art and literature in general are becoming increasingly popular in the West. In science, finally, the progress is also notable – in 2008 and 2009, the Nobel Prizes for Chemistry and Physics were awarded to Chinese researchers working in the US.

As the godfather of the soft-power notion, Joseph Nye, would put it: the best chances for China to increase its soft power “lie in liberating the talents of its people within society”. This would benefit both China and the world at large. It would also be a great help in answering the question we started with. “What can we learn from China?” For the time being, my answer would have to be: from the Chinese, we can learn openness towards ideas from other parts of the world. That is a characteristic that is both hopeful and exemplary to us in Europe.

Fokke Obbema works as Foreign Editor and commentator at the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*, where he writes about China and Europe. While working as Chief Economics Editor for the paper (2007–11), he became fascinated by China. This resulted in his well-received book, *China en Europa* (*China and Europe*), which was published in 2013. This work centres on the dilemma of whether Europe should be afraid of China and its increasing global economic and political power, or whether Europe and China might overcome their cultural and political differences to develop a relationship of trust.

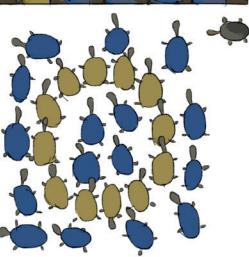
The crown jewels

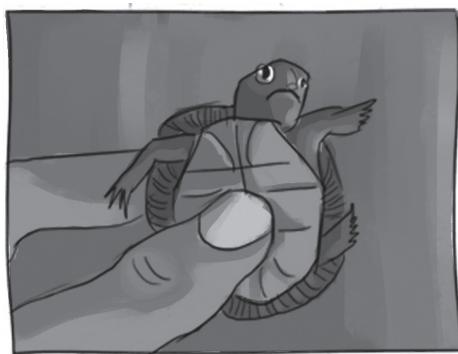
by Soumeya Ouarezki

Europe's leaders, presiding over an ageing, weakened continent, decide to pluck whichever nations are still standing on their feet and to bring them together.

Soumeya Ouarezki studies at the Algiers School of Fine Arts, Algeria, where she is specialising in graphic design. Her work has been published in two anthologies, Monstres in 2011 and Waratha in 2012, published by Dalimen. Ouarezki was colourist of Yaghmoracen, a comic book published by Rive Sud in 2012 and has also worked on the animation team hired for the production of singer Warda el Djazairiya's last video clip.







II

Anxieties and dialogues

Further thoughts on the ‘dwarfing’ narrative

Yudhishtir Raj Isar

The ‘Dwarfing of Europe?’ seminar was inspired by European anxieties generated by recent shifts in the distribution of economic vitality and power across the world. These anxieties have in turn produced a new avatar of the narrative of decline – almost a century after the first appearance of this trope on the European intellectual scene amidst the ruins of the First World War, when the German historian and philosopher of history, Oswald Spengler, published *The Decline of the West (Der Untergang des Abendlandes)*. The trauma of the Great War that had just ended gave Europe much to be pessimistic about as regards its own future. As the philosopher Ernst Cassirer put it, “many, if not most of us, had realized that something was rotten in the state of our highly prized Western civilization. Spengler’s book expressed in a sharp and trenchant way this general uneasiness.”³⁰ This was a purely endogenous disquiet, however, focusing on the European ‘self’; comparisons with other continents played little if no role. Despite the even more terrible Second World War that was to come in less than two decades, this disquiet was soon overcome. The

³⁰ Cited in the Wikipedia entry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_Spengler, accessed on 25 September 2013.

new version of it that is today emerging – after more than six decades of European recovery, affluence and integration – is linked precisely, however, to anxieties about external threats from nations or groups of nations that represent Europe's new 'Others'. I for one would wager that even more than the early twentieth century narrative of decline, the current anxieties are the product of imaginings that are only partly justified.

The '*Dwarfing of Europe?*' seminar itself did much to show why this is so. It also clarified the contours of the present iteration of decline. To some extent, it distinguished myth from reality as well. Since the seminar, several of these issues have returned to my awareness or resonated in my mind. They have done so particularly in the light of the research I have carried out in India recently, of numerous conversations I have had with Indian artists, arts activists and cultural officials. These encounters, focusing on my Indian interlocutors' perceptions and expectations of Europeans and the European Union, have taken place in the context of the EU 'Preparatory Action' on 'Culture in External Relations', for which I am the Team Leader. This Preparatory Action is formally described by the European Commission as an analysis of the existing resources, strategies, positions and opinions regarding culture in external relations that should come up with "conclusions and recommendations identifying areas of strong EU added value on a geographical basis, which are meaningful from the point of view of EU instruments". In more direct language, the purpose of the inquiry is to analyse the ways in which the EU as an entity, as well as the 'Member States' that constitute it – have related, are relating or should be relating culturally to the rest of the world. It is an inquiry designed to uncover ways of making these relations better, of charting out pathways from the 'is' to the 'ought'.

That aim itself is indicative of the kinds of anxieties experienced by many Europeans today and that underpinned the question posed in the seminar's title. It is even indicative of certain fears, both overt and

covert: that European cultural life might be somehow diminished as a result of the redistribution of economic and geopolitical power in the world that itself will bring about a redistribution of ‘cultural power’, as it were. A cognate concern is that Europeans risk ‘missing the boat’ in cultural terms as well, unless they are unable to adapt nimbly to a vastly changed global cultural landscape. All of these fears were aired at the seminar; some of them were validated on that occasion, while others were found to be chimerical.

Writing here with the benefit of hindsight, and informed by the inquiry process that occupied me in India from mid-July to mid-September, my purpose is to shed some new light on the three following themes: i) problems with the very notion of ‘dwarfing’; ii) the nature of erstwhile European cultural dominance, in other words its limits, and the ways in which a ‘world culture’ deeply moulded by Europeans over almost five centuries is being increasingly re-appropriated in the twenty-first century by cultural actors via new processes of cultural emancipation, and iii) the ways in which cultural cooperation with European partners is perceived to have added value by stakeholders elsewhere and the expectations they have of future cooperation with Europe and Europeans. To be sure, the present reflections have been prompted primarily by the views and stances of Indian interlocutors, yet these opinions and behaviours are probably shared across the entire non-European world, and at many levels.

I should add parenthetically here that my own life experience over the last few months has subtly increased the ‘in-between-ness’ of my gaze. Born, raised and educated in India, but an inhabitant of Europe since 1968, a citizen of a European member state, France (and hence of Europe), since 2002, I have always retained a certain measure of distance from full European-ness by virtue of the cultural imprinting of the earlier years. This liminality has been preserved, despite my fully-fledged engagement with European cultural life and debate over the last decade. Nevertheless, since the forces of acculturation are

powerful, it has been steadily reduced over the years. At the present juncture, however, since I am spending much more time in India, there has been a slight swing back the other way in my own perspective: I find myself speaking from both inside and outside.

What giant, what dwarf?

This shift of perspective bolsters my first set of observations on the problematic notion of ‘dwarfing’ itself. The term reflects a two-fold exaggeration. Its use denotes a short sighted aggrandisement of Europe’s former role on the one hand and a set of unwarranted assumptions as to the extent of Europe’s current or imminent decline on the other. The former tendency is implicit in the very term ‘emerging’, which reveals a singular absence of historical perspective in the *longue durée*. For only five centuries ago, in the vision of the world held by Europeans before their extraordinary colonial expansion, countries such as China and India were the true giants on the world scale, both economically and culturally. It is true that this was a long time ago and that by the nineteenth century Europe had become the world hegemon in economic and political terms. But the extent of its cultural hegemony has always been overstated.

Colonialist expansion did not take place in a cultural vacuum. Its erstwhile victims had their own modes of existence and resistance, through which European cultural influences were often mediated and redirected. Everywhere forced to make compromises with local cultural orders, if only in the interests of profit or rule, nowhere did European culture offer a total alternative to local cultures. What they in fact brought to the colonised, most of the time, were bits and pieces of technology, or objects of consumption divested of the intentions of the producers, together with chunks of political and religious ideology equally unmoored from their European history.³¹ In India in particular,

³¹ See Sahlins, M. (2004) ‘Goodbye to Triste Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History’ in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, ed. R. Borovsky. McGraw Hill: New York.

already in the late nineteenth century, anti-colonialist nationalists produced their own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before beginning to wage their political battle with the imperial power. While the material domain was that of the coloniser's sovereignty, these nationalists staked a claim to the cultural in the broad sense of the term. And throughout the twentieth century and so too today, Indian culture has been self-consciously articulated as the privileged expression of this inner domain. While the outer, or material, world of public and political life, business, science and technology was dominated by the colonising Europeans, the cultural world could not be. The totalising cultural effects of European expansion have been greatly exaggerated. In other words, there never was a giant who is now becoming a dwarf.

Conversely, the idea that Europe as a cultural space is destined to be somehow sidelined by the welling up of cultural energies and projects in the rest of the world, notably the BRIC countries,³² is equally illusory. Until recently, of course, the idea could be entertained that the latter were inexorably going to overshadow Europe as economic powers by the middle of the century. The recent slowing down of economic growth in both China and India, however, makes that prospect seem exaggerated as well, as economists and other scholars remind us that the startlingly high growth rates these countries have experienced are simply unsustainable. More importantly, not only are those growth rates unlikely to endure, their existence has not brought about a significant increase in support for cultural activity in these countries, nor for that matter any significant outpouring of cultural creativity there.

A final thought in this regard: although colonial history was made by Europeans, that history came to a close after the Second World War, when world dominance crossed the Atlantic into American hands.

³² Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Indeed the fear of imminent ‘dwarfing’ at the hands of American economic, political and cultural power was one of the factors that propelled the European project right from the start and that has always underpinned the affirmation of Europe as a ‘cultural project’. By the same token, most perceptions in the non-West of ‘Western’ dominance after the Second World War are primarily perceptions of American dominance. Europe plays a secondary role, whether as a dominator or as an attractor.

This is particularly interesting when we note that the spectre of loss of dominance has been an American preoccupation for much longer than it has been for Europeans. US public opinion was marked in 2008 by *The Post-American World*, a book in which the Indian-born American popular pundit Fareed Zakaria presciently advised his countrymen about the challenges of a world in which, as he put it, “for the first time ever, we are witnessing truly *global* economic growth that is creating an international system in which all parts of the world are no longer objects or observers but players in their own right.”³³ The author provided a list of the 25 companies likely to be the world’s next great multinationals. Among them were four each from Brazil, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan; three from India; two from China; and one each from Argentina, Chile, Malaysia and South Africa. In the coming decades, three of the world’s biggest economies will be non-Western (Japan, China and India). Many similar analyses have been penned since then; all recognise that we are living in an increasingly multi-polar or poly-lateral and inter-dependent world.

³³ See Zakaria, F. (2008) *The Post-American World*. Penguin Books India: New Delhi, p. 3.

Walking with the Devil...

My second theme is connected to the changing distribution of cultural influence in the world. The ‘dwarfing’ metaphor is a European euphemism for the loss of cultural dominance. As I have just observed, that loss in fact occurred some time ago; Europe’s cultural primacy has long been challenged by that of the United States and, as we know, countering the American threat has provided one of the key motivations of European media policy and, implicitly if not always explicitly, of the EU’s cultural policy goals. Today, however, the threat is perceived as coming from a different quarter. Picking up the issue five years after the Americans did, Europeans now appear to fear that the economic clout of the ‘emerging’ nations will lead to the gradual eclipse of the cultural power of crisis-ridden Europe.

There are several reasons to find this fear not entirely convincing. The first is that we are still in a post-colonial world in which the cultural dominance – or cultural capital – Europe has accumulated over the five previous centuries continues to operate. As Edgar Morin once put it, “Europe has europeanized the world and globalized European-ness”. This globality of European-ness is a given of contemporary world culture as it were; it is a legacy for all. To be sure, this pre-eminence is on the wane. But more significant than that waning, it seems to me, is the fact that the dominance of *any one* world region as a pattern is today being superseded by the trans-cultural intertwining of cultural influences. And this has specific consequences among all those who used to be on the dominated side of the fence. I want to draw here on the views of the Cuban curator and critic Gerardo Mosquera, who in a text called *Walking with the Devil* cites a folk fable from Latin America. In this fable, a peasant had to cross a ruined bridge. As he trod warily, to cover all his bases, he kept repeating to himself: “God is good, the Devil is not bad; God is good, the Devil is not bad ...” The timbers creaked frighteningly, making the peasant keep repeating the phrase until he safely reached the other side. But then

he exclaimed: "Go to hell, both of you!" And continued on his way. But later something unexpected happened: the Devil appeared to the peasant and said to him: "Don't be afraid, I'm not resentful. I just want to make you a proposal: follow your own path, but let me accompany you, accept me, and I will open the doors of the world for you." And the peasant, pragmatic and ambitious, agreed.

Today we see that culture throughout the non-West (or for our purposes, beyond Europe) has followed its own course, but pretty much according to the strategies of the European Devil, who, perhaps, is not so evil after all. Both the Devil and the peasant are in fact rather pleased with their mutually beneficial pact, and proceed down the road together rather happily today. The fable applies as much to Asia or the Arab world as it does to Latin America.³⁴

As a result, Latin American art, or Chinese art or Indian art for that matter – and we could be talking just as easily here of cultural production in general – has ceased to be wholly and purely the cultural production of those places. Instead it has become culture *from* one of those places. *From*, and not so much *of*, is the key word, says Mosquera, in the re-articulation or even elimination of the polarities between local and international, contextual and global, centres and peripheries [...] Europe and not-Europe. New patterns of economic and political power are changing the directionality of cultural flows. They are also empowering a diversity of cultural subjects. Nobody can deny that, to a certain extent, the agency of the latter is still being constrained or manipulated by the established power structures – both European and North American – in particular by the markets and distribution circuits they still control. Yet globalisation has also pluralised cultural circulation, and has generated an equally plural

³⁴ See Mosquera, G. (2010) 'Walking with the Devil' in Helmut K. Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar (eds), *Cultural Expression, Creativity and Innovation. The Cultures and Globalization Series*, 3. SAGE Publications: London.

consciousness, as well as a range of ‘horizontal’ circuits and spaces. These are replacing the ‘vertical’, ‘North-South’, Europe and the rest, radial circulation pathways of the past, or at least extending and democratising them. The horizontal networks are gradually subverting the axes of control typical of the radial scheme by including a variety of new centres on a smaller scale.

Influences and trends emanating from Europe alone are being replaced by a multi-directional web of interactions. These are pluralising what we understand by ‘international art’, ‘international art language’ and the ‘international art scene’, indeed what we understand to be the contemporary. This paradigm of active plurality, in which contemporary cultural production increasingly takes place, marks a particularly significant qualitative shift. Of course Europe has ceased to be the hegemonic source and certainly European thinkers and cultural operators in Europe, for their part, recognise that the cultural world they once dominated is moving into increasingly uncharted directions, that its inner resources are increasingly escaping their exclusive control, drawing on other narratives, dreams and memories, and that they will increasingly have to take on board references and constructs that their own cultures have played no part in making, and which, like their own, will be given universal relevance by people from other shores. In this manner, then, globalisation appears less and less to be producing a pattern of mass cultural uniformity. On the contrary, we seem to be entering an era where cultural production is becoming increasingly polycentric and polysemic. The most evident expression of this state of affairs is the steady emergence of a worldwide mosaic of cultural production centres, tied together in complex relations of competition and collaboration.

For example, in Mosquera’s view the art world has changed a lot since 1986, when the 2nd Havana Biennial held the first truly international exhibition of contemporary art, gathering 690 artists

from 57 countries and pioneering the extraordinary internationalisation of art that we witness today. Previously, a balanced national plurality was sought at the shows and events; now the challenge facing curators and institutions is how to respond to contemporary global vastness. The challenge is to be able to stay up-to-date in the face of the appearance of new cultural subjects, energies and information bursting forth from all sides. It is no longer possible for a curator to operate wholly within a New York–London–Berlin axis and to look down condescendingly from there. “Has the Devil been useful?” asks Mosquera. “Or have we sold our souls?” Whatever the answer may be, artistic and cultural practice throughout the world has now become profoundly trans-national and trans-continental, as creative people everywhere have recourse to globalised repertoires, methodologies and ... fashions. Perhaps the Devil is now all of us.

European added value

History has given Europe the privilege of placing its perhaps indelible stamp on world culture. Despite all the new churnings of repertoires, motifs and influences, the sheer weight, variety and range of European cultural creativity are such that no ‘dwarfing’ is likely to take place any time soon. Yet the new situation means that Europe can no longer play the role of world beacon merely by presenting its arts and culture for uncultured others to admire and emulate. The new landscape of cosmopolitanism, both as an ontology and as a reality (sometimes banal), makes it indispensable for Europeans to come to adapt to this new reality.³⁵ The technologies and mobilities of globalisation have brought European cultural products within the relatively easy reach of many, across the entire world. Mozart belongs as much to South Asians – or for that matter Pacific Islanders – as he does to Austrians, as both Edward Said and Salman Rushdie were to observe and demonstrate, each in his own way...

³⁵ See Beck, U. (2006) *Cosmopolitan Vision*. Polity Press: London.

More than just a matter of extended mobility or the capacity to consume, it is also the emergence everywhere of a widely shared curiosity about many places, peoples and cultures; of the ability to ‘map’ one’s own culture in terms of historical and geographical knowledge; of “semiotic skills that make it possible to interpret images of various others; finally a widely shared openness to other peoples and cultures”.³⁶

Europeans, in other words, need to think twice before contenting themselves with practising a self-conscious projection of the masterpieces of European heritage or the achievements of their contemporary cultures. Now, while it is most unlikely that the official cultural diplomacy of European nation-states will ever be able to break away from this classic mode of national self-representation, a different set of opportunities is emerging from the kinds of benefits that artists and cultural operators in other parts of the world attribute to their cultural cooperation with European partners and attach value to. These benefits arise not so much from the sharing of product as from the sharing of process. In other words, from shared and mutual learning: about the manner in which cultural professionals operate, overcoming constraints and obstacles, constituting a professionalised sector, developing a distinctive voice and advocacy identity, playing a galvanising role in civil society.

For the Indian cultural operators, artists and arts organisations that contributed insights to the ‘Culture in EU External Relations’ inquiry, the most significant dimension of European cultural presence in India was how agencies such as the Goethe-Institut, British Council or Institut français, as well as many cultural projects supported by the embassies of countries without established cultural institutes, were contributing to critical reflection and capacity-building within the sub-

³⁶ See Szerszynski, B. and Urry, J. (2002) ‘Cultures of cosmopolitanism’, *The Sociological Review*. 50(4): pp. 461-481.

continent itself. This mutual reflexivity is the outcome of a deliberately assumed solidarity and a spirit of sharing on their part that deliberately eschews mere national projection.

Although it is vibrant, the Indian cultural sector is fragmented and financially precarious. It lacks adequate professionalism, apart from a few exceptions that prove the rule. There is no governmental provision to overcome these lacunae, nor is there significant business sponsorship for the arts. Grant-giving private foundations are rare, although a number of operating foundations, particularly in the visual arts, have been created by and for wealthy benefactors. The corporate world supports the arts and culture only in a limited manner, primarily for promotional purposes, drawing on advertising budgets for ad hoc, one-off commitments to cultural presentations and products. Such support “tends to go out to art that needs it the least ... the arts are defined for corporate leaders and marketing executives by the elite social circles in which they move. As long as product promotion remains their principal justification for supporting the arts, business houses will continue to give no attention to creative processes, constraints and innovation.”³⁷ What is true for India is no less true for many if not all of the ‘emerging’ economies (with the possible exception of Brazil).

Yet by the same token in India – and again, the same can be said of their counterparts in Brazil or China – individual cultural entrepreneurs have nevertheless achieved a great deal and their efforts have been facilitated by European actors, the cultural institutes and others. “They have helped us to help ourselves,” said one leading arts activist. “They have empowered us through ideas.”

³⁷This is an observation made by Anmol Vellani, Director of the India Foundation for the Arts, in a paper entitled *The Case for Independent Arts Philanthropy*, to be found on the website of the India Foundation for the Arts: <http://tinyurl.com/ln3edek>

They have enabled Indian cultural operators to think through the challenges they face and must shoulder independently of government or the business sector. They have enabled them to establish links with their peers elsewhere, to embark on international networking of their own and on their own. This is, in other words, a key capacity-building role that is arguably the best way of shouldering ‘the White Man’s Burden’ for the twenty-first century, by enabling cultural operators, together with their organisations and networks, to collaborate transnationally in the crucially important area of strengthening professional skills and organisational infrastructures in the arts and culture sector. Or by developing cultural relationships based on a spirit of dialogic partnership and mutual learning for a plurality of cultural agendas and across many ‘horizontal circuits’. By enabling cultural actors – in their own way and in their own terms – to deploy the creative imagination as they establish and defend their renewed senses of place within the uneven and shifting terrain of globalisation and to nurture “the eruption of intensively, self-consciously hybrid cultural forms, grounded in aesthetic and social codes that traverse imaginatively the frontiers of tradition and cosmopolitanism”.³⁸ This amounts to a more lasting contribution to the flourishing of the cosmopolitan global civilisation that is in the making – and that Europe sees itself as embodying already – as well as to the moral interdependence and the complex re-patterning our decidedly post-Western, possibly post-European, world so urgently requires.

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³⁸ Waterman, C. (2010) ‘Closing Reflections’ in Helmut K. Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar (eds.), *Cultural Expression, Creativity and Innovation*, The Cultures and Globalization Series, 3. SAGE Publications: London.

2007 and 2012. From 2004 to 2008 he was President of the arts and culture advocacy platform Culture Action Europe. From 1973 to 2002 he served as an international broker of ideas for UNESCO, notably as Executive Secretary of the World Commission on Culture and Development. In 1986-87 he was also the first Executive Director of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Anxieties and dialogues of continents

Ranabir Samaddar

Civilization on trial?

After the Second World War, British historian Arnold Toynbee – in an unprecedented mood of apology and self-condemnation – wrote *Civilization on Trial* (1948) and following that *The World and the West* (1953). He argued that the ascendancy of Europe in the world and the spread of Western civilization were remarkable events, but that militarism and militant nationalism were the causes of the overstretched position that Europe had reached. It was evident that Europe had suffered the terrific double strain of inward transformation and outward expansion, and could no longer squander resources with impunity, spend material wealth and human resources unproductively, or exhaust muscular and psychic energy. *Civilization on Trial* contained an evocative essay, *The Dwarfing of Europe*, which was first delivered as a public lecture in 1926 and summarised his apologetic mood. Even though *The Dwarfing of Europe* remained a famous essay for the powerful metaphor that also expressed a concept, readers are less aware how the British public and the community of professional

historians received Toynbee's argument and the proposition that the two wars had shown that the age of Western imperialism was over.³⁹

The hostility in Britain to Toynbee's later writings was not so much around the question of colonialism or imperialism that marked modern European history, but the implications of his position, namely that it involved the question of liberalism in the debate. In post-war Britain, the contending arguments on empire had to make their respective positions clear regarding the insistence that, in the face of the challenge of communism, any criticism of the West, including Western imperialism, should be low or muted. It was a sort of McCarthyism in a British orthodox intellectual climate.

Critics said that Toynbee's Reith Lectures had been wrong and significantly a strategic disaster because, in representing the West as an imperialist aggressive civilization, Toynbee was guilty of accepting Soviet propaganda. The West was not wilting before the creative forces of Asia. It was wrong to assume that the British mind was comfortable and complacent with the certainties and prospects of liberalism. Toynbee was too anxious about the values that supposedly guided civilizations, and therefore was wrong in suggesting that the decline of the West lay in the limits of its core values, the first of which was liberalism. It also dragged in the issue of religion, specifically Christianity, which – along with liberalism – had made European progress and expansion possible. Toynbee's fundamental error, it was argued, was to remind the country of the linkages of liberalism with empire in the post-War era when the country was searching for ways to reground 'Western values'. With his emphasis on moral and religious values, Toynbee had earlier alienated the Leftists and the mainstream liberals, and now with his criticism of the Western

³⁹ Toynbee, A.J. (1948) *Civilization on Trial*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, reprint; *The Dwarfing of Europe*, pp. 93-116; Toynbee, A.J. (1953) *The World and the West*. Oxford University Press: New York.

emphasis on liberal and Christian values, he had antagonised the Right.⁴⁰

The interesting point here is not Toynbee's ideas and suggestions, or the idea of decline in European history, which has a long genealogy, but the animosity Toynbee's ideas roused in mainstream intellectual circles, and the failure of his ideas and suggestions to create any impact among thinkers, policy-makers and leaders, even in that moment of war-ravaged Britain.⁴¹ The dialogue suggested by Toynbee did not take place, because the West was not ready to admit responsibility for centuries of colonialism and the devastations of colonial and imperial wars. One may ask: Is the situation in this respect any better today? Even though Europe is caught in financial, economic and other forms of crisis, does it appear that she is now in a chastened mood and ready to learn from others? After all, post-War Europe was in no better position than she finds herself in today. The only difference is that the United States – with the Marshall Plan – was accepted as the saviour then, and the saviour is not there at hand today. The dialogue between continents or nations thus depends not only on benevolence, platitudes and the goodwill of a few; they are conditioned by externalities setting the stage for dialogue. The trope of dialogue and the rejection of dialogue both show the deepest of the anxieties of power that is inherited, stored, exercised and accumulated.

⁴⁰ For an account of the debate, Ian Hall, "The Toynbee Convector": The Rise and Fall of Arnold J. Toynbee's Anti-Imperial Mission to the West", *The European Legacy*, 17(4), 2012, pp. 455–469; also at <http://tinyurl.com/oqrscvo> (accessed on 20 July 2013); see also the attack on Toynbee by Elie Kedourie (1970) *The Chatham House Version and Other Essays* (reprint 2004; Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, IL).

⁴¹ For such a recent critique of the decline theory from the point of European progress and resilience, see Arthur Herman (2007) *The Idea of Decline in Western History*. Free Press: New York.

While power is conceptualised as a matrix, it is important to keep in mind at the same time that power is a flow. It is relational. Power, in other words, acts on power. Dialogue as a political and cultural act is implicated in that relational world of power. Anxiety is only the displaced state of that power matrix.

The question of dialogue, marked and at times prompted by the anxiety of power, is therefore one with many assumptions and angles. It tells us the hidden premises and suggestions of what Charles Tilly had termed as “contentious conversation”.⁴² And even though the initiative for dialogue always comes in a cultural frame, the failure of a dialogue to take off, as the Toynbee experience shows, reinforces the point that culture remains deeply implicated in imageries of power and contestations. Yet, as paradoxical as it may seem, these cultural assumptions (for instance, *Europe was a giant, now dwarfed, and we must make appropriate cultural inquiries*) propel dialogue even if in a halting manner. The challenge is if dialogue as a political and cultural act can escape those constraining moments and can be conducted with increasingly fewer restrictions, more freely, if you will, light-heartedly. But this also means that we need to take note of one more assumption.

The assumption is that, in the dialogues between cultures, continents, or civilizations,⁴³ there are ideal, homogenous sets of representations engaging in dialogic acts. But there is no authentic single European culture. Or for that matter, there is no authentic single Indian or Asian culture. There are many Indias, in the same way as there are several Europes. It is also not that there is nothing called a national culture. But this idea of national or continental culture effaces pluralities that are internal to a country or continent. An awareness of this will irrevocably make us commit to norms of

⁴² Tilly, Charles, ‘Contentious Conversation’, *Social Research*, (65): pp. 491–510.

⁴³ I am using these terms interchangeably here, as shorthand for continents and large countries.

plurality in the field of culture, and will create a healthy scepticism about claims to homogeneity of cultural practices. It will also make us alert to the question, what is this cultural space called Europe or India we are basing our discussions on? Once again, if we look back at the Toynbee episode, we shall see that a dialogue between Britain and the erstwhile colonies required dialogue within Britain or Europe. Critics of Toynbee did not only oppose the dialogue with outside, but dialogue within also.

In other words, we are speaking here of the internalities and externalities of dialogue not only as a concept, but also as an ensemble of specific practices. They also form the backdrop against which we can make observations on the possibility and the desired trajectory of dialogue between Europe and India – in a broader sense, Europe and the post-colonial world. This also means that we must look for the motivations for dialogue in other histories than in that of anxiety or a sense of doom. We need to ask and be scientific in our inquiry in order to draw suitable lessons from the dialogue. For instance, in the dialogue between nations, we must first know why continents or nations succeed or fail. A nation succeeds not because of any metaphysical reason, but because of the nature and quality of social institutions. The decline of Rome re-enacts itself in every major phase of world history. A nation can fail if its political institutions are not inclusive in nature, and are overwhelmingly extractive, as Rome became in ancient Europe. And after all, China could not have succeeded and pulled nearly a billion people out of poverty without its social and political institutions trying to be inclusive. Again, a nation can fail if it does not remember its locative specifics. It can try to become a maritime power, a land power and a dominant power in the sky all at the same time. It overstretches itself in the process. Its army may want to station its garrisons all over the world beyond its boundary. Location matters. Europe thought that its future was secured with the trans-Atlantic alliance. It neglected the fact that it was a peninsula of a large land mass called Asia.

One commentator has put it this way, “Most people forget that the first modern economy in the world was not Portugal or Spain, or England, but Holland. Even though the Portuguese and Spaniards opened up the maritime routes to America and the Spice Islands, they remained feudal powers [...] The rise of Holland (is) as human conquest over water. Holland has only a population of 16.6 million, in an area 20 per cent larger than the island of Taiwan, ranked 17th in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), and 14th in terms of GDP per capita, at \$46,100 just behind US (\$50,000) and Japan (\$46,700), but ahead of old rivals, UK (\$38,600).

Historically, because of constant flooding in its low-lying land, the Dutch learnt to work cooperatively to build dykes, through ‘poldering’ – constant irrigation, drainage and pumping of water. Thus, in their constant struggle against flooding and weather risks, the Dutch developed their infrastructure cooperatively, learning how to manage risks through precaution (high savings), consultation (constant feedback) and inspection (maintenance of strict standards). To do so, they built highly inclusive, flexible and innovative institutions that opened up to global trade. Their constant struggle against water meant that the Dutch had superior shipbuilding technology, drawing on timber from the Baltic areas and arbitraging the trade with Northern Europe. By 1598, the Dutch had established the first Insurance Chamber, the largest trading company by 1602, and a forerunner of the first central bank, the Amsterdam Exchange Bank in 1609, Merchants Exchange 1611 and Grain Exchange in 1616 [...]

One tends to forget that, as late as 1750, 30 per cent of the share capital of the Bank of England was owned by the Dutch. What is remarkable about the Dutch model is [...] its sustainability and durability. The Dutch runs one of the largest pension funds in the world, and a recent study has shown that there are more than 400 Dutch companies with over a century of history, including one that survived since 1530... There is much that the East has to learn from

the West. No history is a straight line, and there is nothing inevitable about success or failure. Whether it is Abenomics or Likenomics, the key to sustainable and inclusive growth is about strong social institutions with the right checks and balances.”⁴⁴

The lesson is that cultural presuppositions often hinder dialogue, because thereby the dynamics of dialogue is constrained on account of anxieties, myths and a lack of scientific attitude to the needs of conversation and mutual learning. This is not possible when a mood of unilateralism prevails in dialogic practices. To understand the cultural roots of unilateralism in Europe in her dialogues with India or the Orient, we must realise that modern European history still suffers from Max Weber’s ghost.

The conventional history of modern European progress draws on a narrative of transition, best theorised by Max Weber who formulated his famous thesis about Europe’s transition to the modern economic order through the secularisation of a particular religious tradition in the capitalist economic ethic. The secularisation theory has now been critiqued extensively, on the grounds of being empirically unsound and narrowly based.⁴⁵ But the trope of secularisation looks like a real process, while as Giorgio Agamben points out that the thesis of secularisation functions as a ‘signature’ of other things.⁴⁶ It functions

⁴⁴ Sheng, A. (2013) ‘Why Nations Fail or Succeed?’, *The Statesman*, 17 August 2013; see in this connection the recent work of Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2012) *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (Penguin), to which Sheng refers.

⁴⁵ For an overview of the criticisms of the Weber thesis, Green, W. Robert (1959) *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics*. D.C. Heath and Co.: Boston; also Anthony Giddens (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

⁴⁶ Agamben, Giorgio (2011) *The Kingdom and Glory – For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, p. 4.

in the conceptual system of modernity as a veiled reference to theology. It allows monotheism to become the presiding theological principle under which secularism works. Thus economic activities may be plural, administrative-governmental practices may be variegated, but legitimacy is drawn from a particular theological attitude of monotheism. It thus cements the unity between being and acting – the sovereign being and the governmental actions and practices. The sources of politics become mysterious through the operation of monotheism. Political rationality takes a back seat. Mythological binaries take a front seat in relational acts such as conversations and dialogue.

In short, while discussing the potentialities of dialogue between Europe and India, we have to keep in mind the nature of the historical relation between Europe and the post-colonial world, and the features of the received discourse of this historical relation. For the purpose of this article, I will discuss three such features, of which I have until now identified just one. Let me conclude this first point before I move on to the other two.

We are speaking here about the specificity or universality of the ‘European’ path towards development and democracy. It also relates to the supposed truthfulness of the received discourse about the European history of democracy, urbanisation, secularism and citizenship. The additional point here is, even if we agree to the truth claims of the European history of democracy, urbanisation, secularism and citizenship, should we regard this to be very specific to Europe or universally valid? This will require that we survey at least briefly our experiences of the roles of the state, community, popular politics and migration in the context of this article, because on the basis of these experiences we can analyse the issue of the specificity or universality of European, or for that matter ‘other’, experiences.

Fortress Europe

So let us move on to the other two questions. To me, the second question revolves around the homogenous space that Europe has sought to create for herself by, among other things, putting around herself a barrier in order to prevent immigrants from coming in, which will help Europe to retain her mythic white, Christian, parochial and Atlantic-centric self. This policy of ‘Fortress Europe’ reflects on its culture of citizenship, social rights, legalism, etc. Already one can see how the democratic polity in Greece came under attack in the last two years as the country was forced to swallow bitter pills at the command of European bankers and international capital. On the other hand, as the philosopher Jürgen Habermas has now asked, should the Europeans not become post-secular to appreciate the pluralities of the post 9/11 world? It is useful to recall in this context what Habermas said a few years ago about the pluralities of the post 9/11 world. In an article published in 2008, he wondered if the European countries were not already in a post-secular stage. The occasion of rethinking, he admitted, was the large-scale entry to Europe of immigrants with faiths other than Christianity, the US war against terror and the conflict of secular societies with fundamentalist beliefs. In a thoroughly Euro-centric view of the world by his own admission, he argued,

“A ‘post-secular’ society must at some point have been in a ‘secular’ state. The controversial term can therefore only be applied to the affluent societies of Europe or countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where people’s religious ties have steadily or rather quite dramatically lapsed in the post-War period. These regions have witnessed a spreading awareness that their citizens are living in a secularized society. In terms of sociological indicators, the religious behavior and convictions of the local populations have by no means changed to such an extent as to justify labeling these societies ‘post-

secular'. Here, trends towards de-institutionalized and new spiritual forms of religiosity have not offset the tangible losses by the major religious communities."⁴⁷

Habermas then argued that the secularised societies of Europe formed an exceptional phenomenon in the midst of a religiously mobilised world society, and it was erroneous to hold that, with modernisation, the world would witness the disappearance of religion in the foreseeable future. The awareness of living in a secular society was no longer bound up with the certainty that cultural and social modernisation could advance only with diminishing public influence and personal relevance of religion. Religion was gaining influence not only worldwide but also within national public spheres. Churches and religious organisations were increasingly assuming the role of, in his words, "communities of interpretation" in the public arena of secular societies. In this perspective he felt that the separation of church and state called for a filter between these two spheres – a filter through which only 'translated', that is, secular contributions could pass from the confused din of voices in the public sphere into the formal agendas of state institutions. He further argued that the democratic state must not pre-emptively reduce the polyphonic complexity of the diverse public voices, because it was in no position to know whether in so doing it was cutting society off from scarce resources for the generation of meanings and the shaping of identities.⁴⁸ The political public sphere

⁴⁷ Habermas, Jürgen, *Notes on a Post-secular Society*. This text was initially written for a lecture that Habermas gave on 15 March 2007 at the Nexus Institute of the University of Tilburg, Netherlands. The English version was published on the internet on 18 June 2008 at <http://www.signandsight.com/features/1714.html> (accessed on 16 December 2012).

⁴⁸ The similarity of the argument of Habermas with Rawls' idea of "overlapping consensus" is obvious. Habermas himself notes, "This is the key issue for John Rawls when he calls for an overlapping consensus between groups with different world views to accept the normative substance of the constitutional order". This is a reference to *Political Liberalism* by Rawls (1998).

must be able to meet their religious fellow citizens as equals. And then he drew the following conclusion:

“Were secular citizens to encounter their fellow citizens with the reservation that the latter, because of their religious mindset, are not to be taken seriously as modern contemporaries, they would revert to the level of a mere *modus vivendi* – and would thus relinquish the very basis of mutual recognition which is constitutive for shared citizenship. Secular citizens are expected not to exclude *a fortiori* that they may discover, even in religious utterances, semantic contents and covert personal intuitions that can be translated and introduced into a secular discourse.”⁴⁹

Post-secular society in short would overcome the limits of secularisation by a rescuing process of translation of the traditional contents of religious-spiritual language in the public-political language. Here the interesting question will not be if Habermas is right, but what kind of subject is envisaged here. Who is this post-secular subject? What kind of inter-subjective dialogues are thus being proposed so that spiritual and affective ideas are translated into the secular public-political language of demands, rights, policies, claims, duties, obligations, legitimacy, etc. through strictly tolerant and rational means based on the mutual accommodation of religious and secular subjects? I think we can sense here the limits of the theory of communicative rationality as the basis of inter-subjective dialogues. Yet the fact that the theorist of communicative rationality has to address the issue of religion indicates the presence of the affective subject in politics, with which he has to come to terms. But this is strictly speaking not a new problem.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Habermas draws inspiration from Kant, who too wanted to cope with the secular-religious divide and the presence of the affective subject in his distinct way, that is, by *a priori* assumptions. The idea that man can profess or practise faith not for ultimate gain but as the way of a moral being, and only in this way man could be both religious and rational – though as Kant said that there was no inherent need to be so – was succinctly expressed in the title of his essay, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793). Kant wrote, “Yet an end does arise out of morality; for how the question, what is to result from this right conduct of ours, is to be answered, and towards what, as an end – even if granted that it may not be wholly subject to our control – we might direct our actions and abstentions so as at least to be in harmony with that end: these cannot possibly be matters of indifference to reason.”⁵⁰ Kant could envisage the presence of religion in the formation of a moral subject, but the formation of a rational subject with critical capacity had nothing to do with religion. It is this theory of the rational subject of public affairs that must now encounter the affective subject in any dialogue – and clearly dialogues with the *outside* implies dialogues *within*. Precisely, Europe is no longer (even if we assume it once was) a homogenous space. Immigration is one of the markers of this heterogeneity of the social space called Europe.⁵¹

Clearly, the heterogeneity of the social space called Europe that necessitates dialogues *within* in order to have meaningful dialogues with the *outside* has to do with the question of migration. For a long time, we ignored the fact that a good part of the particular constellation of territory, authority and rights that we now term as Europe had imperial lineages in more than one way. European empires had been characterised by several kinds of population flows. Barbarians had

⁵⁰ Kant, Immanuel, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson – <http://tinyurl.com/p3ofcy> (accessed on 25 December 2012).

⁵¹ I have written at length on this in “Europe: A Zone of Translation?”, *Journal of Civil Society*, 8(3), September 2012.

appeared periodically in history against empires. Barbarians represented migratory movements, and in the context of our time we may say they had a decisive impact on what Sandro Mezzadra calls “borders/confines of citizenship”.⁵² As we know, the classic concept of borders arose in the wake of the emergence of the modern state and its geopolitical dimensions, within which the individual was historically constructed as a citizen. Nation, state, citizen, border – all these seemed to unite in an excellent fit.

Now two things have thrown this fit into disarray. I am speaking here about the emergence of empire and the trans-border migratory movements, which have collectively thrown our understanding of citizenship into doubt. Sovereignty in the beginning was not always strictly territorial, and imperial sovereignty was not so much indicative of the borders of the empire (though Hadrian was the first known ruler to have territorial markers put in place to indicate the imperial reach), but more of exceptional powers to be above law and execute lives as and when the emperor felt necessary. Of course, who was Roman was a problem then too, and trans-border incursions of people into Rome made things difficult. It was these incursions and the intrinsic difficulties of defining citizenship under imperial conditions that made empire as a form of the State increasingly impossible. The problem as we know was temporarily solved with the emergence of modern political society, where citizenship, territoriality, borders and sovereignty were combined in the form of modern nation states – but we have to note here, that this was possible not only because of popular democracy (the dream of Rousseau, and which every liberal political philosopher has looked forward to), but also because of colonialism, which meant in this respect several things.

⁵² *Borders, Confines, Migrations, and Citizenship*, trans. Maribel Casas Cortés and Sebastian Cobarrubias, May 2006, on this, see the book by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013) *Border as Method* (Duke University Press), where the relational theme of migration and citizenship is discussed in detail.

Colonialism meant: (a) clear territorial distinction between the sovereign state and the subjugated areas known as colonies; (b) clear legal distinction between participants of the polity, that is citizens and the subjects; (c) clearly demarcated sites of developed sectors of economy and the production of primary goods; (d) and, finally an effective way of combining territorial conquest, subsequent annexation and the long distance control of economies of the world. In this way, the imperial form was taken over by the modern nation state; and the imperial form of the nation was the historically achieved solution to the twin problems of the empire having borders, and the need to negotiate the territorial limits of the legitimacy of the power of the State. As if politics had solved the question of the distinction between internal and external, which was supposedly the only thing required to guarantee order and peace. Yet immigration flows make the solution of the border question in the form of a European space only partial. Migration history is thus, to use the words of Saskia Sassen, “the shadowy cone over the history of Europe” – that contains the unreported histories of masses of errant, deported and eradicated individuals who live in a foreign land, in countries that do not recognise their ‘belonging’. These migratory movements have fractured the national, ethnic and linguistic features of polities and political societies. In a defensive move, the empire now speaks of ‘metaborders’, indicating the division between the imperial land and that of the barbarians, and not the boundaries between its constituent units. Yet as a strategy, it has had mixed fortunes. While in the last 15 years, this institutionalisation of ‘metaborders’ as a strategy has served the function of locating and defining the imperial land better, it has ill served the function of stopping the raids of what the empire considers the extra-planetary animals. Thus, for instance, the phenomenon of labour flows from ‘New Europe’ to ‘Old Europe’ threatens the imperial-civilisational core of the Euro-Atlantic continent, and consequently puts pressure on the internal confines of the empire. The border/confine in this way is continually under pressure, and the stress reproduces itself in the interior of the empire. The reserve army, or the

army of surplus labour, must conform to the institutional rules of the global labour market. The logic of these institutional rules, while calling for orderly immigration, allows detaining centres in Greece and elsewhere, encourages racism and xenophobia, and produces an interceptive system with FRONTEX leading the pack featured by, among others, groups of self-styled vigilantes prowling the cities of Europe.⁵³

Post-colonial predicament

As if ordained by fate, the discussion on immigration leads to the third question: that of our common post-colonial predicament. It is a global predicament. Heterogeneity of economies, the emergence of the affective subject of politics, the return of primitive accumulation as the other of the most advanced and virtual mode of accumulation, increase in extraction processes, massive labour flows, different forms of forced migration, the crisis of the imperial mode of political unity and organisation, the decline of the liberal parliamentary model and the worldwide ascendancy of the executive, assertion of autonomies at every level of political society, expansion of dialogues, new forms of

⁵³ One recent report prepared by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), *Defending Refugees' Access to Protection in Europe* has pointed out facts about how Europe's external borders are managed, and how a special agency (FRONTEX) has been raised to preserve these borders; likewise the report points out inconsistencies between the Schengen Borders Code, the EU Asylum Procedures Directive and the International Human Rights Laws including the International Refugee Law. It also explains in detail new techniques of pre-frontier controls (visas, carrier sanctions, posting immigration liaison officers at airports, biometric methods and information databases, and measures to "control trafficking and smuggling"). There are now developed methods for interception at sea in the name of rescue, border monitoring to thwart the immigrants, and managing land, sea, and air borders to keep away the people come as stowaways, or through tunnels, or in the bellies of ships..." Sirtori, Sonia and Coelho, Patricia (2007) *Defending Refugees' Access to Protection in Europe*, ECRE, December 2007 – <http://tinyurl.com/lp6tg56> (accessed on 31 March 2013).

democracy making, and finally newer ways of state making characterise the global post-colonial predicament.

We have to realise, particularly after the financial crash of 2008, that it is not only the Global South that is bound by a post-colonial destiny, but that the post-colonial predicament is global; it faces Europe also. This predicament, to repeat, stems from histories of rampant capitalism (particularly the domination of financial capital), unbridled hegemony of the market, a framework of liberal rule that fails to understand popular aspirations from below, neo-colonial and imperial practices, and neglect of other social histories of growth, development, and the making of political societies. It is post-colonial, because it is marked by the realities of post-colonial capitalism, post-colonial politics, neo-colonial interventions by great powers of the West (in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and who knows, now in Syria) and the impact of these on the so-called metropolitan world as well. In today's world, a country may have been once a colonial power or once colonised, or it may have been post-colony long ago. But all are now in the post-colonial age, where old North-South distinctions are undergoing modifications, and the post-colony may be within the belly of Europe as well.

It seems to me that, like Europe, the post-colonial countries also often forget the histories I am referring to, their respective strengths and characteristics, and become eager to imitate the histories of Europe indiscriminately. I think the lessons of our anti-colonial past, our popular politics, the dialogic pluralities in our societies, even many aspects of our economic development, are immensely valuable and can lay the groundwork for a permanent workshop of ideas and ideals.

An awareness of the post-colonial reality will help to reshape dialogues between Europe and the post-colonial world, including India. It is imperative that we realise this more than ever, so that a federal vision based on the dialogic practices can be developed. And, all these

call upon us – the post-colonial subjects of the Global South – also to look inwards: What kind of post-colonial future do we set for ourselves? I know on hearing my opinion it will be said in cities like Brussels that countries in Europe are already engaged in dialogues for more than a half century and this is how they made the European Union. Likewise it will be said that, in post-colonial democracies such as India, there are immense social and political conversations going on.

But two things must be placed as caveats before one can say so assertively. First, the intra-European dialogues are overwhelmingly statist conversations leading to treaties, more treaties and regulations. “We the people of Europe” is a far cry. The official Europe is less of a dialogic space, and more of a constellation of financial centres in the form of cities like London and Frankfurt, scattered civil society groups, and bureaucratic power centres. It does not produce a general will from its so-called internal dialogues. Second, in countries such as India, the official dialogic situation is similarly constricted. The state is hard on its own people and soft on the global financial world outside. Political conversations and dialogues in a post-colonial society like India go on not so much through formal liberal democratic channels of the so-called public sphere, but through many spheres constituted by many publics, and the daily conversations that mark our semi-legal way of leading life. Indeed such conversations are marked by a sense of legal pluralism. There democracy is made daily, contingently, and in a contentious manner.

Such a situation calls for the development of our translating abilities – translation of ideas, histories, cultures and languages. Translation enhances a federal view of the world. Translation makes co-existence contingent on the material, but makes co-existence at the same time durable. For that we must discard the trap of the imagery of an orderly, homogenous, market-centric existence produced assiduously by corporate capitalism and neo-liberalism.

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The old continent in a new world

Paul Scheffer

The idea that I want to investigate here is simple, but it may have major ramifications: for a long time European unification was all about internal borders, but in the coming decades it will increasingly be about external borders. I am focusing on the place of the old continent in a new world, but in doing so I wonder whether the growing pressure on Europe's external borders might not sooner or later lead to a revival of its internal borders. How can we achieve a more stable way of dealing with the border of Europe?

I do not want to take these questions too literally. I am not going to discuss checkpoints and customs posts, nor imports and exports. These are nonetheless crucial issues, especially the matter of border controls. After the abolition of internal borders, we now urgently need to ask ourselves how we can protect our shared outer boundary. Increasing freedom has introduced a new security problem, but resistance to cooperation in that field is considerable, since border controls are still regarded as the responsibility of nation states. The European Union is not working adequately yet as a protective layer in this sense, which is another reason why there is such uncertainty about matters like the eastward expansion of the Union. Can we leave the protection of a shared external border to countries like Bulgaria and Romania?

These are all important matters, as I say, but I want us to turn our attention to a world in which power relations are changing. When Europe asks for help from countries such as India, Brazil and China to get it through the monetary winter, then we know something essential has changed. There are other examples that make clear that Europe's position in the world is shifting. To limit myself to the Netherlands: Tata Steel (a global steel company with headquarters in India) has bought the steel company Hoogovens; the Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim is acquiring a larger and larger stake in the prominent telecoms company KPN; and tomorrow it may be the turn of Philips to be taken over. Way back in 1948, British historian Arnold Toynbee spoke of the 'dwarfing of Europe'. That is what I want to talk about in looking at Europe's borders.

Yet this is merely half of the truth. In thinking about the external borders, we may become aware not just of Europe's relative loss of power but of the hidden vitality of the old continent. The BRIC countries, as they are known – Brazil, Russia, India and China – do not resemble each other at all in many ways. However, as well as above-average economic growth, they have a number of features in common, such as extreme income inequality, poorly functioning judiciaries, corruption that pervades the whole of society, rampant urbanisation and negligence in dealing with the environment. European experience is quite different, and often in a positive sense. Perhaps in thinking about the external borders we will discover where our societies' strengths lie.

The use of the term 'internal borders' to refer to the national boundaries within Europe involves a choice in itself, of course. By talking about an internal border I am assuming Europe to be a single whole. That is certainly one option, but there are good arguments for continuing to regard the Franco-German or Polish-Czech border as fully valid. We have to guard against the kind of overstatement exemplified by the description of the years 1914-1945 as Europe's long

civil war. That is an interpretation in retrospect. In the experience of contemporaries, both the world wars were intensely national in character.

In any case, it is beyond doubt that we can imagine an inside only if we first conceive of an outside. However much we may talk about dismantling the traditional borders within Europe, all such efforts unintentionally point to a divided past. Europe's 'no more war' was inspired by a fear that history might repeat itself. It was a hopeful incantation, but, as we know, there is no hope without fear.

Dominated by division

If we look back to the beginnings of the European Community, it is striking to see the degree to which thinking about the unification of the continent was dominated by division. It would not be going too far to say that the imagined future of Europe was hostage to the past. The founder of European integration, a French man named Jean Monnet, wrote in his memoirs of the fear that "if we did nothing we should soon face war again". Something needed to be done before it was too late.

As I say, without an 'outside' there can be no 'inside'. Europe sought the outside in its own history; "the past is a foreign country". The notion of a union between traditional enemies – France and Germany – was the *leitmotif* of the establishment of the European Community. The ghosts of its own past amounted to a threatening outside world against which the idea of Europe was intended to offer safeguards. Its barbarism was of its own making, or as French writer Paul Valéry put it back in 1918: "We modern civilizations, we too now know that we are mortal".

Seen in this way, 'Europe' is the last great civilising ideal, with all the taboos that attach themselves to such ideals. The goal is so emotionally charged that it is difficult to have a rational debate about

the means of achieving it, as was clear even during the development of the Coal and Steel Community. Monnet believed that, from that moment on, “the method, the means and the objective [...] were indissolubly linked”. Many people experience a similar discomfort in the debate on Europe: if aim and means are conflated in this way, can we differ over the means, even if we agree on the aim?

That ‘no more war’ motif is still invoked, as we saw in recent years during the crisis over the common currency. Dramatic statements were heard from Poland, France and of course Germany: the failure of the Euro would mean a considerable increase in the likelihood of war in Europe. Angela Merkel made no bones about it: “Countries that share a common currency do not go to war with each other.” She was forgetting former Yugoslavia for a moment. EU President Herman van Rompuy came up with the most concise version: “If the euro falls, the Union falls, and with it our best guarantee of peace.” He had temporarily forgotten his criticism of the exploitation of fear by populists.

Yet I have the impression that those words are no longer as powerful as they once were. Essential to the founders of Europe and the generation that came after them, they are not as significant now as they used to be. However much the past may be dragged up – see for example those Greek demonstrators who waved swastikas and welcomed their German financiers with a heartfelt “Sieg Heil” – it fires imaginations less and less.

All this can be seen as Europe’s success. The internal borders have become more porous. Many countries have abandoned border controls altogether. Customs posts are crumbling even in northern France; they are still in place, but it is better not to ask what kind of state they are in. The free movement of people, goods and ideas is intensive, although we still have a long way to go to achieve what Goethe once called “free commerce in ideas”.

As integration increases, the danger of violent confrontation on the continent is abating, although I must say that awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union demonstrated an all too unambiguous interpretation of history. Precisely the fact that the European Community has always been able to stay well away from the major power politics of war and peace may have been crucial to its success. Without an American security guarantee, Europe's concentration on domestic politics – such as free economic exchange or shared support for agriculture – would not have been possible. Even during the civil war in Yugoslavia, Europe was a powerless observer, to say nothing of its divisions at the time of the war in Iraq.

However that may be, with the smoothing away of the internal borders, the recurrence of war has slowly moved beyond the horizon of the conceivable. Nowadays the majority of people in the Union were born after the Treaty of Rome was signed. We may fight over ways of giving shape to integration, but there is little difference of opinion about the goal it serves. The peaceful interweaving of the nation states of Europe was, and remains, a great achievement.

It was of course always Europe's intention that foreign policy would become domestic policy. Sure enough, European solidarity makes the Greek budget deficit our deficit too. It makes the Italian prime minister to some degree our prime minister, and the refugee problem in Italy an issue that troubles us all. That is the purpose of integration: abroad becomes home. This is precisely the reason why the relationship between the new internal world and the larger outside world is becoming so important. Now that the internal borders are weakening, the external borders are increasing in significance.

That shift has been accelerated by the Euro crisis. Conflict over the common currency has had contradictory consequences. Europe is closer than ever; the Spanish and Greek elections have become our elections. The time of avoidance is over, which is good; the

Europeanisation of national politics is well underway. That is an optimistic interpretation, but the image it evokes should not simply be taken at face value. The ‘irreversible’ Euro project produces resentment, while Europeanisation has created a backlash in the form of nationalistic politics. But perhaps the conflict over the Euro enables us to create a new image of Europe as an internal world. Nationalisation no longer has the same meaning as it had 20 or 30 years ago.

Europe’s final gasp?

So the internal borders certainly do still matter, but Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset was correct when he wrote in the 1930s that the nationalism of his day needed to be seen in the context of the decline of European power. His words were cutting: “The frivolous spectacle offered by the smaller nations today is deplorable”. He regarded that spectacle as the final gasp of nations that had declined to provincial proportions: “The last flare, the longest; the last sigh, the deepest. On the very eve of their disappearance there is an intensification of frontiers – military and economic.”

Eighty years ago that was a glimpse into a distant future. It is now far more tangible. With the gradual shift of primacy from the internal borders to the external borders, a new chapter has opened. The relative power of Europe is declining rapidly. In his delightful novel *The White Tiger*, Indian author Aravind Adiga describes the ascent of an entrepreneur in Bangalore. In the margins of his life story, we read: “White men will be finished within my lifetime. There are blacks and reds too, but I have no idea what they’re up to – the radio never talks about them. My humble prediction: in twenty years’ time, it will be just us yellow men and brown men at the top of the pyramid, and we’ll rule the whole world. And God save everyone else.” It is a witty summing up of an entire library of books about the dramatic shift in power that is now well underway.

That change can be seen in the proportion of the world's population that is made up of European or Western peoples. In 1913, the population of Western Europe alone was still 14.6 per cent of the global figure; by 2001 the proportion stood at less than half that, namely 6.4 per cent. It has shrunk still further since then. At the same time, around 40 per cent of human beings live in China and India. As a diplomat in Singapore remarked: it is unthinkable that the 12 per cent of the world's population that lives in the West will continue to lay down the law to the other 88 per cent.

This is no isolated figure. Not only is Europe's share of the global population declining, Europe is also the only continent where the population will remain more or less static over the coming decades. Whereas the population of the United States is set to grow by 36 per cent in the next 40 years – from 310 million to 420 million, Europe's growth will remain close to zero, with its numbers increasing from 501 to 517 million. If we accept that a young population usually tends to favour political and social reform, what are we to conclude about a greying Europe? How much innovation are our societies capable of, at a time that will demand a great deal of imagination and adaptability?

It is not just the demographic weights that are shifting. Economic relationships are changing no less rapidly. The debt mountain in the West and the surplus in China suggest that the world is being profoundly transformed. The global economy is becoming multi-polar. Even if it grows far more slowly than in the past 30 years, the size of the Chinese economy in 2030 will have outstripped that of America by a long way. One figure illustrates this: by 2020, the Chinese share of world trade will be an estimated 12 per cent, that of America around 9 per cent and the European Union's share a little over 8 per cent.

The starting point of Chinese development is at a low level, but the demographic weight of the country means that such growth nevertheless has huge consequences. Indian-American economist

Aravind Subramanian shows very clearly how far China has already come. Gross Domestic Product per head of the population is still less than a quarter that of America, but because China has four times as many inhabitants, its economic weight is already considerable.

The economic contribution of a large part of the world's population was of course extraordinarily small over the past 100 years. Subramanian has calculated the total for China, India, Indonesia and Brazil combined. In 1960 their share of the world economy was no more than 29 per cent of their weight in terms of their share of the world's population. That figure has since grown to 65 per cent and his prediction for 2030 is 95 per cent. So by then the share of those countries in the world economy will reasonably accurately reflect their share of the world population. His prediction is that two thirds of world growth between 2010 and 2030 will take place in the emerging economies.

A silent revolution is underway. The gap between richer and poorer regions of the world is shrinking, which is good news. The majority of developing countries have achieved higher growth than America or Europe over the past ten years. All the standard ways of thinking about North and South, East and West need to be revised. Not just China, India and Brazil, but countries including Turkey, Ghana and Nigeria are seeing a spurt in economic growth. This is a welcome change, since it means many people will be able to escape poverty. Three quarters of the poor in the world now live in middle-income countries such as Brazil. It is those countries that now face the question of whether they wish to redistribute their growing wealth.

Slowly but very surely, we are living through the start of the end of the post-colonial world, which is a break that runs deeper than decolonisation. Anyone who realises that, in 2000, no fewer than 125 member states of the United Nations were former colonies will appreciate the importance of that liberation. But in many respects the

post-colonial world was a continuation of the old colonial dependence in a new form. It is only with the end of the post-colonial era that one can speak of a true emancipation in relations.

We need to consider that we are in fact returning to the world as it was in around 1800. Not without reason, Henry Kissinger called China a “returning power” rather than an “emerging power”. The economic might of India and China was considerable until the early nineteenth century. In other words, the story of Western domination goes back no more than two centuries. Perhaps in 50 years from now we will be forced to conclude that Western dominance was an anomaly in a far longer history of more equal relationships, which are now slowly being restored.

A new story about ‘Europe’ must therefore take not Berlin but Beijing as its starting point; it needs to begin not in Paris but in São Paulo. ‘No more war’ has become a form of Eurocentrism, since it unintentionally concentrates our gaze inwards, whereas the real motive for integration lies outside the continent. The internal borders are no longer the main source of concern when we look at the time that is approaching. The external border is at the core of a future-oriented approach to European politics.

We can experience Europe as our interior only if we manage to grasp this new exterior. Any justification for Europe that we may wish to talk about resides above all in a world upon which continental powers such as China, America, India and Brazil will place their stamp. ‘Europe’ is the only scale at which we can give shape to our own social model in the world economy. This means that European integration is not about loss of sovereignty but about increased influence through joint action.

Towards a polycentric world

All these developments will confront Europe with countless new questions, but the most important change is that the way in which countries like China, India and Brazil view us will increasingly influence the actions and policies of European countries. Having lived for almost two centuries with European and later American dominance, we are now moving towards a world that is at least polycentric, a world in which Europe will increasingly be confronted with economic and cultural innovations that originate in the East and the South.

British historian Arnold Toynbee saw this development coming a long time ago: "The paradox of our generation is that all the world has now profited by an education which the West has provided, except the West herself. The West to-day is still looking at history from the old parochial self-centred standpoint which the other living societies have by now been compelled to transcend." But that complacent attitude could not endure, because "sooner or later, the West, in her turn, is bound to receive the re-education which the other civilizations have obtained already". Toynbee wrote those words in 1948, and we see his prediction borne out in the rise of the so-called BRIC countries. Europe has touched the world and as a result it is now being touched by the world.

As I have said, this forces us to examine ourselves more closely. We have seen it before; in the post-war decades, the shock of decolonisation had a wholesome effect. Without that experience, the unification of Europe would have been unthinkable. The decisive initiative that brought Europe together was taken by former colonial powers like France and the Netherlands, which saw in the integration of the old continent a means by which to halt their decline. They needed to be thrown back on their own resources before they could see each other as neighbours. This also explains why it is taking so long for Britain to

identify with the European Community. The illusion of imperial greatness was preserved longer there, even though there was less and less reason for it after India gained its independence in 1947.

We saw the same story in the 1980s. The rise of Asia gave an important boost to the creation of the internal market. Under the leadership of Jacques Delors, many realised that Europe could hold its own in global competition only if it succeeded in reforming itself. The creation of a market of more than 500 million people has been an important precondition for its continued ability to strive after its own social model. With the unification of Europe, that ability is at stake. Many politicians and opinion makers could be reproached for having lazily regarded European unification as mainly a matter of bureaucracy and meddling.

The shifting of power in the world is once again raising innumerable questions, not just about how Europe should respond but about the consequences of the end of the post-colonial world for the way we look at history, to take one example. Early forms of religious tolerance in India might teach us that the history of democracy is not purely a European business. The ramifications of this relate to the future as well as the past.

It is surely remarkable that modern India, a state with extremely diverse religions and languages, plays no real part in the development of theories about pluralism and democracy. Indian historian Ramachandra Guha rightly remarks: “One would think that given its size, diversity, and institutional history, the Republic of India would provide a reservoir of political experience with which to refine or rethink theories being articulated in the West.” In other words: what do the experiences of India, or for that matter Brazil, tell us about how to deal with ethnic and religious pluralism in a democracy? In discussing European federalism, would it not be fascinating to include the

experience of federalism in those two continental states, rather than merely America?

We have to take one further step. The time has arrived when ideas about modernity should no longer be shaped by Western assumptions alone. This is an issue that lies at the root of the research programme I am currently establishing at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands. Martin Jacques – a British expert on China – has defined one of the most important issues of coming decades: “The emergence of Chinese modernity immediately de-centres and relativizes the position of the West. In fact, the challenge posed by the rise of China is far more likely to be cultural in nature.” He claims that the idea of modernity will become increasingly contentious.

Much uncertainty surrounds the emergence of a non-Western modernity, but we cannot exclude the possibility that the authoritarian modernisation of China will be seen as a model by countless developing countries. In a more general sense, we are justified in asking whether a new modernity is emerging in which democratic assumptions run into difficulties. How will things go in a world dominated by competition between continental states such as India, China, Brazil, Russia, the United States and Europe? What is the current state of democracy in these territorially vast states? Europe is itself struggling with this; it has not yet found a way to create a lively democracy on a European scale.

There is further uncertainty in the field of culture. A time will come when most Nobel Prizes are no longer won by scholars at American universities. But will English as a world language gradually be pushed aside by Chinese? Might Asian films, music, science and literature conquer the world? For the time being it does not look as if, in a cultural sense, ethnocentric China will overtake the melting pot that is America. Real power in the world is of course about the power of attraction as well.

Rise of the non-Western world

The image of shifts taking place in the world is therefore far from straightforward and we see this reflected in the work of Kishore Mahbubani. On the one hand he stresses that the world is going through a process of ‘de-Westernisation’: “The mindsets of the largest populations within Asia – the Chinese, the Muslims, and the Indians – have been changed irrevocably. Where once they may have borrowed Western cultural perspectives, now their perceptions are growing further apart.” This accords with Jacques’ observation about ‘contested modernity’.

On the other hand, Mahbubani never tires of stressing that the East is developing so successfully because the lessons of the West have been learned and taken to heart: “Asian societies are not succeeding because of a rediscovery of some hidden or forgotten strength of Asian civilizations. Instead they are rising now because (...) they have finally discovered the pillars of Western wisdom that (...) have enabled the West to outperform Asian societies for the past two centuries.” In a new book he even talks about ‘global convergence’: “Today, despite a rich residue of differences, we are converging on a certain set of norms on how to create better societies.”

This rather self-contradictory diagnosis stems in part from the ‘double bind’ in which the rising or rather reviving powers of the non-Western world find themselves: their sense of self-worth tells them that their indigenous cultural traditions must be valued at their true worth once again. At the same time, it is obvious that many Western ideas have penetrated deep into those societies and are helping to determine the direction in which modernisation is moving. There is too much of the West in the East and the question is of course how much of the East will eventually penetrate the West.

This is also to say that the loss of power by the Western world is relative. The differences between the two worlds have decreased but they are still considerable. We only have to look at the Human Development Index, a ranking introduced by the United Nations. The top five countries on the 2012 index are Norway, Australia, the United States, the Netherlands and Germany, in that order. France is at number 20 and the United Kingdom at number 26. The BRIC countries look unimpressive by comparison, with Russia at 55, Brazil at 85, China at 101 and India way down at number 136. So in terms of quality of life, the gap between the Western world and the emerging economies is still substantial.

If we look at the corruption index, the picture is similar. Western nations, although not free from such abuses, do far better than the BRIC countries. In a list of 176 nations, Brazil, China, India and Russia are at numbers 69, 80, 94 and 133 respectively. This hints at extremely weak judicial systems and the culture of corruption that accompanies them. The situation in Western countries is certainly not ideal, but they are very different. The United States is at number 19, while the three main European countries, Germany, the United Kingdom and France, are at numbers 13, 17 and 22 respectively. There are major variations within Europe, with the Netherlands at number 9, for example, and Italy in 72nd place, lower than Brazil.

So, step by step, we are discovering the hidden vitality of most European societies. They have a comparatively high degree of equality, a good quality of life, low levels of corruption and reasonably effective judicial systems, along with a type of urbanisation that contrasts favourably with the growth of megacities in India, China and elsewhere. Migration from the countryside to the cities is taking place outside Europe on a scale and at a pace that has never been seen before in world history, and the effects of such rapid urbanisation are clear: cities where both the social and the physical environment are up

against huge pressures. You only have to think of the air pollution in Beijing or Harbin.

To a great extent, these are growing pains; development in the non-Western world is happening so quickly that it is almost impossible to avoid material and moral imbalances. We can see in the history of industrialisation in Europe and America much of what we are now seeing elsewhere in the world. The environment in cities like London in the late nineteenth century was appalling; the air was full of poisons and child mortality was extremely high.

At the same time, it is becoming clear that the creation of a stable judicial system, for example, is a long and laborious process. A law-based culture cannot be imposed by decree; it takes a great deal of time for its norms to permeate a society truly. Abuse of power naturally puts a brake on economic progress, since it is hard to do business in a corrupt environment. In a more general sense, a properly functioning constitutional state is extremely conducive to prosperity.

All this leads China expert David Shambaugh, in his recent book *China Goes Global*, to a cautious verdict concerning the impact of the rise of China on the rest of the world. He does not deny that a historic change is taking place. Nevertheless, he comes to the conclusion that, regarding many aspects of power – especially as far as soft power is concerned, which he describes as the “intrinsic ability of a country to attract others” – China is not doing very well at all. His conclusion is this: “I argue that China is a global actor without (yet) being a true global power – the distinction being that true powers influence other nations and events.” What holds true for China is certainly also true of Brazil and India.

One final note in the margin: in the world’s emerging powers, the history of Western domination has awakened a powerful consciousness of the value of sovereignty. These countries, for important reasons, are

looking for recognition from the rest of the world, and at the same time they are averse to any overly broad application of doctrines, such as Responsibility to Protect. In their view, Western countries are all too ready to use human rights as a pretext for military intervention – see for example Libya or Iraq. They share an emphasis on sovereignty, but that may in fact make them less well prepared to deal with a world in which mutual dependency has increased enormously.

Paul Scheffer is a Dutch author who served as Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Amsterdam between 2003 and 2011. He is currently Professor of European Studies at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. In 2000, he wrote the essay *Het multiculturele drama* (*The multicultural drama*), which was highly influential in shaping the debate on multiculturalism and immigration in the Netherlands. His 2007 book, *Het land van aankomst*, was published in English in 2011 as *Immigrant Nations*, and is a comparative study of immigration in Europe and America. Scheffer is a columnist for the Dutch quality newspaper NRC Handelsblad and publishes regularly in other European journals and magazines.

Museum is the world

Magnólia Costa⁵⁴

“Museum is the world” Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica wrote in 1966.⁵⁵ This quote seems to tie in nicely with the concept of ‘universal museums’. A universal museum is a place where cultural assets from all over the world and from all periods in history are preserved, studied and exhibited. The term was launched in 2004 by the publication of *Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums*.⁵⁶ The document was signed by many different museums; among them the ‘Big Five’ – three of which are located within the European Community: the Louvre, the Berlin State Museums and the British Museum (the ‘Big Three’). The British Museum was responsible for composing the text.

By positioning themselves as universal museums, the museums that signed the declaration aimed to affirm their right of ownership over the artefacts in their collections. Their arguments to do so focused on two points: legitimisation and preservation. In short, museums argued that the way in which artefacts from other cultures had become part of their collection was perfectly legitimate and that, by

⁵⁴ This text is a shortened version of a longer essay. Please find the full text at <http://www.narratives.eu/reading-room/>

⁵⁵ Oiticica, Hélio (1966). From the series *Programa ambiental*. Typed document, dated and preserved: 0253/66. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/mrrv6ed> (accessed on 9 July 2013).

⁵⁶ Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums (2004) *Icom News*, 1(4). Paris: International Council of Museums Magazine. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/lsknejf> (accessed on 8 July 2013).

including the artefacts in their collections, they were in fact preserving them for mankind.

The declaration met with acclaim but also with criticism. For critics, the main problem lies not with the artefacts themselves – the heritage, but the way in which the artefacts are understood and used to convey the cultural values underlying them. A truly universal museum, critics argue, should take a universal approach to cultural values and not merely a Western – or rather, European – perspective.

Protectionism and superiority

To Brazilian museologists, the debate on universal museums is based on past actions (legitimacy) and future benefits (preservation). What is lacking, in their opinion, is the effect that universal museums have in the present. As many of the artefacts that universal museums display originate from other parts of the world, the heirs to this heritage have little or no contact with it and are therefore deprived of the knowledge that they could glean from it.

Knowledge is just one side of the coin. The descendants of those who produced the artefacts on display at universal museums do not share in the profits generated by the exhibitions either. In addition, many universal museums take a highly protectionist approach when asked to loan major artefacts to museums in their countries of origin. To Brazilian museologists, this echoes the values of the colonial past and suggests a thinly veiled presumption of superiority on the part of universal museums.

Experience and diversity

Indeed, the colonial period had a profound impact on Brazilian society and its views on culture. European values inspired Brazil's fledgling and tumultuous democracy and provided a reference for its

artistic tradition. The country's pioneering art museums were set up in accordance with the European model.⁵⁷ Consequently, collections at the main museums have European works or pieces that directly allude to European culture and aesthetics instead of focusing on local culture. This alienates the general public. The collections are therefore considered elitist by the majority of citizens, while the elite themselves compare the collections with those in Europe and consider them unimpressive. It is a lose-lose situation. Not surprisingly, Brazil has encountered great difficulties in building collections, funding exhibitions and attracting visitors.⁵⁸

The quote by Hélio Oiticica with which I started should be understood in this context. The *Environmental Program* for which he is famous encouraged people to appropriate elements from their surroundings, objects and public spaces such as the street, the beach or a vacant lot. Art became interactive. It was an innovative approach

⁵⁷ The Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo was founded in 1905 with government funds.

⁵⁸ In contrast to European surveys regarding museums' visitations, aimed at the economic impact of the museum industry, Brazilian surveys are focused on understanding the composition of their audience (gender, age, ethnicity, monthly income, occupation), and the reason for their visit (school, tourism, spontaneous) aimed at supporting the creation of public policies for the cultural field (*Pesquisa perfil opinião* (2008). Brazil: Ministério da Cultura, Ibram, Observatório de Museus e Centros Culturais. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/jwzyka8> – accessed on 12 July 2013). Figures appear in the analysis of distribution of Brazilian museums per region. São Paulo state's gross domestic product (GDP) represents 33.1 per cent of the Brazilian GDP (SEADE, Fundação Sistema Estadual de Análise de Dados (2010). Available at <http://tinyurl.com/mbmgl2e> – accessed on 6 August 2013). This is the state with the largest population in the Federation, and also that with the highest per capita income. This is where the largest number of museums is located, as well as the largest number of visitors. That state hosts 517 of the 3,025 Brazilian existing museums; 25.5 per cent of them are located in the state's capital city. About 17.5 per cent of the state's population (40 million) have visited one museum in 2010, corresponding to 7 million visitors to 517 museums.

that changed the perception of art and the concept of museums, galleries and exhibitions.

Since then, Brazilian museums have changed to become places that strive to create interaction with the public, through educational programmes, group visits and informative guides. Like the entrance to most museums,⁵⁹ these additional services are free of charge. This makes collections accessible to as many people as possible and enables museums to truly connect with the public.

Democracy and integration

As a result of this new approach to art, heritage and museums, Brazil has seen growing numbers of and diversification within visitors and museological institutions.⁶⁰ There has also been a significant expansion of the artistic sector.

Unlike the universal museums, Brazilian museums do not aim to generate profits for themselves but to create benefits for society in general. Although resources are scarce, access to museums continues to be free, as this serves to bridge social divisions and encourage integration. In doing so, it encourages democracy.

⁵⁹ In the state of São Paulo, 54 per cent of museums have educational sectors. In them, 80.5 per cent of visits are monitored: 96.5 per cent for children; 83.1 per cent for adults; 71.1 per cent for seniors. These data are similar to national figures (*Museus em números* (2011). Brazil: Ministério da Cultura, Ibram, 2 vols, 463-4. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/d3a9y39> – accessed on 12 July 2013). Entrance is free in 81.3 per cent of the museums in São Paulo state. Among those charging an entrance fee, 25 per cent charge less than \$1.00; 6.3 per cent charge more than \$5.00 (*Ibid*, 2011: 453).

⁶⁰ In the state of São Paulo, 47 museums were founded between 1981 and 1990; 63 between 1991 and 2000; and 41 between 2001 and 2009. 21.9 per cent of the museums in São Paulo state are private (*Ibid*, 2011: 446-7).

Do universal museums do this too? Although their exhibitions enable ethnic cultural groups to visit and appreciate their heritage, I doubt whether visitors see themselves represented in what is exhibited. Universal museums do not promote identification. When artefacts are extracted from their primary context and stripped of their original intentions, it is difficult to connect with them. In addition, the way in which the artefacts were acquired in the first place can easily raise feelings of anger and resentment among ethnic cultural groups. Rather than feeling represented by their heritage, they are more likely to feel victimised by the museum that puts it on display.

Simply opening the doors to collections is not enough. It requires cultural and political action too; educational and inclusive activities aimed at generating knowledge and integrating audiences. Only when every citizen in Paris, London and Berlin feels represented instead of outraged by the heritage that their museums preserve can the 'Big Three' truly call themselves 'universal museums'.

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Europe and the collaborative approach to foreign policy

A perspective by Renée Jones-Bos

An airport is a bad place to be hungry. You can buy something to eat at one of the food courts, but the sandwiches are overpriced and the quality is mediocre at best. From a business point of view this makes sense. You are confined to a restricted area. The people who run the food courts are well aware of this situation. They have an oligopoly. You can take their offer or leave it. For most of the twentieth century, the way we theorised about foreign policy was similar. Some states had power; others did not. The states with power determined which products and services, ideas, culture, structures for international cooperation and values were on offer; the other states could take this offer or leave it.

Foreign policy in the twenty-first century operates like a different kind of airport. We are no longer confined to a restricted area, but we now find ourselves in an open market space. There are no longer any iron curtains that limit our movements: burgers with a milkshake, *pains au chocolat*, Chinese dumplings, Indian curry and Brazilian

barreado are sold side by side. More competition results in lower prices, which has major consequences for hungry passengers and vendors alike.

Merely putting your food on sale is no longer enough in the twenty-first century; you have to persuade customers to buy your products. In a cut-throat market, you also have to bring down your distribution costs and make sure you have access to all the resources you need. In this kind of market the smartest thing to do is work together, not just with suppliers or service providers, but also with customers. You need to offer them perks and bonuses that go beyond just eating the food you put in front of them.

In this article, I describe how I see Europe's future in the world. I start by describing the world in the twenty-first century and the developments that have put Europe in the global position we are in today. I then propose three kinds of offers Europe can still make to the world. Even in an open market, Europe's airport restaurant should do alright.

How we got here

From the sixteenth century onwards, Europe led the way in the global market; over the course of the twentieth century, it was superseded by the US. After the Second World War, there were only two flavours left in the marketplace: burgers or blinis, bourbon or borscht. The world had become bipolar.

In the decade that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, the US was the single most important power in the world, politically, economically and culturally. And after 9/11, the financial crisis and the 'Rise of the Rest', the global marketplace has changed once again. Now Europe's restaurant is only one among many. We live in a multi-polar world, which means competition is fierce. Europe is struggling to maintain its position. The world is changing and the old certainties are gone. We

can safely assume that China, with its huge population, will overtake the US and become the world's biggest economy. India is also regaining the economic position it enjoyed prior to the colonial period. This shift in economic power will also tilt the future global political and cultural balance.

Meanwhile, Europe itself has become the subject of fierce debate in EU member states. Some have come to see Europe as the Trojan horse of globalisation; others see it as a threat to the member states' national identities. European solidarity is being questioned in much the same way as the social contracts within each of our societies have been criticised.

Europe's role in world affairs is under pressure from without and from within. It is the latter phenomenon that we should focus on when considering the reasons for Europe's current relative decline. The rise of countries like China and Brazil is not something that only affects the status of Europe. It is a global phenomenon, impacting on the position of the US as well. It should therefore be addressed at a global level. "With great power comes great responsibility," wrote Spiderman creator Stan Lee, quoting Voltaire. The same holds true for emerging world powers. Two particular challenges come to mind:

- How to rebalance global governance, in particular the United Nations, the international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to reflect the rise of new powers?
- How to strengthen cooperation and benefit from the opportunities that the rise of countries like China, India and Brazil offers?

In the context of this article it is appropriate to focus on the second challenge. Cooperation with emerging world powers is intrinsically linked to regional cooperation within Europe.

European integration

After the horrors of the Second World War, Europe started a process that was unprecedented: European integration. Six European countries decided to work together on a scale that the world had never seen before. Today the European Union has 28 member states. EU citizens can travel freely, enjoy the same rights and be governed by a common body of law in the largest European political space that has ever existed. Bigger than the Roman Empire, the Napoleonic Empire or any German empire, that space is still growing – peacefully.

Despite the recent crisis, the EU still has the biggest economy in the world, bigger than that of the US, China, India or Brazil. Together, the countries of Europe offer the world a market of 500 million consumers with middle-class incomes. The EU's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in terms of purchasing power is still nearly four times that of China, three times that of Brazil and nearly nine times that of India.

The benefits of European cooperation have been enormous. Europe has mostly lived in peace for 60 years. We have changed the way the world thinks about security. We have replaced balance-of-power politics with a model in which internal security is guaranteed by working together. And while the member states have invested in social security, Europe has created a single internal market. Our economies have prospered, and at the same time we have expanded our relations with the outside world.

Joseph Nye famously divided power into two categories: hard power (the power of coercion and payment) and soft power (the power of persuasion and attraction). Dominant powers wield economic, military and political force (instruments of coercion and payment) but also use culture and values, ideas and knowledge (instruments of persuasion and attraction).

European hard power (e.g. financial support for agricultural and regional development) and soft power (bolstering democratic values and strengthening the rule of law) made the EU the logical home for the former satellite countries of the Soviet Union. European hard and soft power is much less effective, however, when it comes to influencing the behaviour of countries outside Europe.

The current European debate about the nature of Europe should be seen in this light. In the longer term, individual European countries are too weak to protect their societies against the negative effects of globalisation. A Europe that is economically weak and politically divided will be unable to influence other powers, let alone control them. More investment in Europe – political and institutional – is necessary to secure all our national interests in the most effective way. We have to show our own people that the EU is defending their interests and offering protection in times of change. This calls for a strong European democracy, transparent decision-making and more effective institutions. The EU can only be a credible partner for the new powers if the people of Europe support the European project. And for Europe to be credible – not just for its own citizens but also in the wider world – there must be no misunderstanding about the protection of fundamental freedoms and democratic principles in Europe.

Moral appeals alone are not enough for Europe to exercise influence in third countries; they can only be effective when backed up by power. This should not be read as a plea for more hard power, as European hard power – in the form of aid and trade instruments – is already substantial. Rather, it is a call to reap more benefit from the EU's soft power, by enhancing the appeal of European justice and fairness, elegance and charm. We need a Europe that is seductive and persuasive, without being pedantic. Europe should be a repository of skills and a fount of wisdom, or at least of knowledge, not just benefitting Europeans but all who want to work with Europe.

What Europe has to offer

First and foremost, it is worth emphasising that Europe is the cradle of the ideals of individual freedom and equality, of democracy and the rule of law. Europe learned the importance of these ideals the hard way. Fascism and communism have strengthened our conviction that democracy and the rule of law prevent war, that individual freedom must be protected and that equality is a must. These values are the foundation of European cooperation. At the same time they are equally attractive to people in the rest of the world, from Syria to Tibet and from Egypt to Ecuador.

Democracy and human rights form the basis for stable and competitive market economies. India and Brazil have chosen this path. China still has a one-party system, but it is moving towards civic participation in its battle against corruption and pollution. We can support these developments from the Netherlands and from Europe at large by standing by our values.

Europe's second major contribution to the world is economic: our common market contributes to the growth of the world economy. We can spur global growth through collaboration with others, by concluding free trade agreements, as we hope to do with India and MERCOSUR – the Southern common market – in the near future, and promoting free markets.

It is true that our share of the world economy is shrinking, but what does this mean in practice? Europe is getting a smaller piece of the pie, but the pie itself is now bigger. China is growing so fast that its contribution to the world economy is soon expected to equal that of the US. India and Brazil keep growing as well, and behind them are other emerging economies. By 2030, most of the world's population

(4.9 billion people) will belong to the middle class,⁶¹ for the first time in history.

So if Europe's relative importance is decreasing, we are getting giant markets in return. Europe can continue to prosper, but to do so we have to increase our competitiveness through innovation and sustainable solutions, by creating jobs and getting our finances in order, by putting power in the hands of those who can maximise results and minimise bureaucracy. If we take the Netherlands as an example, we can see that the innovative power and the ideas we need are very much present, in Dutch companies and at universities like Delft and Wageningen.

Europe's third contribution to the global marketplace is our tradition of cooperation. Europe has a long history of tackling problems on a scale that transcends national borders. The Dutch play a part in this tradition, incidentally, from the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 to the International Criminal Court in The Hague today. In a world in turmoil, Europe can provide a safe haven. Europe can be a constructive force when problems transcend the boundaries of countries and continents.

Take food, water, the climate and international security. Over the next 40 years, it is estimated that demand for fresh water will rise by 50 per cent, demand for food will rise by 70 per cent, and demand for energy will nearly double. These global public goods are under pressure in our globalised world. Europe can and must contribute to their governance.

Europe as a model for collaborative power

To meet these global challenges, we need new forms of cooperation, between states and with companies, researchers, non-governmental

⁶¹ <http://www.oecdobserver.org>

organisations (NGOs) and the public. With our 60 years' experience, Europe can help to develop new forms of cooperation in the world. The late Dutch diplomat Max Kohnstamm wrote that this was Europe's intention from the start. European cooperation was never an end in itself, but a model for dealing with issues that no country could solve on its own. As the British historian Timothy Garton Ash said recently, "The EU today is an experimental laboratory of the future of the world". But Europe needs more coherence if we want to play an effective role on the world stage.

Anne-Marie Slaughter coined the phrase 'collaborative power' as an alternative to the traditional classification of hard and soft power in a globalised world. We live in a networked world. We face global issues. No one state can either police the world or save us from climate change. Cooperation is the key. Of course, hard and soft power still play an important role, but we have to collaborate to be successful in the multi-polar world we live in. As Slaughter puts it, "Consider the power of water. Each drop is harmless; enough drops together can create a tsunami that can level a landscape."

Collaborative power demands a new mind-set, and this is where Europe comes into the picture. Europe is reinventing itself. Driven in part by external circumstances such as the financial crisis and the emergence of new world powers, Europe has to find its place. We need to show the world that we still matter, but we cannot do this by forcing anything on other states. Hard power alone does not suffice; it never did. We need to cooperate, which is a two-way street. Europe is itself a laboratory for collaborative power.

Europe has spent most of the last 60 years creating a new model for international cooperation. This has been successful in many respects. But it has also led to our withdrawal from the global spotlight, even though we have been active as individual nations. Nevertheless, Europe still has a lot to offer in today's global marketplace: most

importantly, the ideals of freedom and democracy, our economic market and our age-old tradition of tackling issues on a global scale.

This brings us back to where we started: Europe cannot force its values on anyone. Europe will only succeed in spreading our values if the rest of the world sees the benefits that our values can bring. Setting preconditions is not always the best approach in this multi-polar world. You won't sell anything at today's global airport by simply telling people how good your food is; you have to persuade your customers to taste it and buy it. And ideally they'll like it so much that they'll try the recipe at home.

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Alternative
afterword:
New format,
new
narrative?
A critical
reflection

Downsizing – Europe's friends and the new narrative

Berthold Franke

Male, 69 – this is the picture of the average intellectual *de nos jours* who thinks about Europe. Incidentally, this average age of some of the most prominent writers on Europe in recent times (Ulrich Beck, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Guy Verhoeffstadt, Jürgen Habermas, Claus Leggewie, Geert Mak, Robert Menasse, Oskar Negt, Martin Schulz)⁶² is exactly the same as the age of the Rolling Stones, whose European convictions are not known. Nothing against elderly gentlemen in political journalism; they are for the most part agreeable and clever authors who are trying to understand a crisis and outline their aims. Indeed, the majority of them even venture a degree of commitment and pathos that is untypical of their age group; after all, their subject is a major one. And

⁶² Beck, Ulrich. (2012) *Das deutsche Europa*. Suhrkamp: Berlin; Cohn-Bendit, Daniel/Verhoeffstadt, Guy. (2012) *Für Europa!* Hanser: Munich; Habermas, Jürgen. (2011) *Zur Verfassung Europas*. Suhrkamp: Berlin; Leggewie, Claus. (2011) *Der Kampf um die europäisches Erinnerung*. Beck: Munich; Mak, Geert. (2012) *Was wenn Europa scheitert*. Munich; Menasse, Robert. (2012) *Der Europäische Landbote*. Zsolnay, Vienna; Negt, Oskar. (2012) *Gesellschaftsentwurf Europa*. Steidl: Göttingen; Schulz, Martin. (2013) *Der gefesselte Riese*. Rowohlt: Berlin.

so they analyse, appeal and polemicise for the renewal of the project of European unity and – they miss the target.

It is very likely that the age and origins (the left and liberal pro-European milieu) of these more or less randomly chosen authors are actually part of the problem they are discussing. Their critical interventions show that Europe has, by stealth, become a project for well-meaning, and probably not just since the crisis. Notwithstanding all their analytical skill and noteworthy individual *aperçus*, one thing stands out from their texts: political helplessness. In spite of differing perspectives and methods, the chosen contributors to the debate all end up in the same place: with an alarming diagnosis (mostly as a *pot pourri* of democratic deficit, a return to national positioning, and failing elites in media and politics) and the lack of concrete and realistic proposals.

The symptoms are pointing towards a firm conclusion: whilst the European Union, conceived by visionary statesmen from the war and post-war generations, is being governed during its greatest crisis by a circle of national leaders rushing breathlessly from one summit to another with their eye mainly on national electoral arithmetic, the democratic Europe of the intellectual friends of Europe has become a utopia, existing on a higher plane, of more or less frustrated veterans. In the meantime, their much invoked “Europe of Citizens” has to get by without its sovereign citizens who, in many member states, have turned away in disappointment – either because (in the richer countries) they believe that Europe takes too much or (in the poorer countries) that it does not hand out enough.

The almost hopeless lack of prospects in current Brussels politics, found primarily in the undemocratic onward march of the intergovernmental executive and then in the lopsided institutional framework of the Lisbon Treaty, has been described and lamented often enough: the EU constitution is dysfunctional; enlargement

happened too quickly; parliament has too few rights; the Council's (i.e. the member states') default position is to nullify all other institutions and deliberately make weak, self-centred decisions; the big dominate the small; the Franco-German engine is stuttering, etc. Whilst not incorrect, none of this is particularly illuminating. All that is offered by way of a solution is the refrain of the call to re-enthuse mentally exhausted citizens and their political elites, as though nice-sounding appeals were the answer. Similar interventions, however well intentioned and argued, echo emptily for the most part and serve to intensify the pervasive feeling of helplessness, rather than avert it.⁶³

And so there is a call to action. It has become practically impossible to keep track of all the alliances, initiatives and networks – established as adjuncts to, or offshoots of long-established and traditional pro-European associations and foundations – which compete with each other in enthusiasm and the will to mobilise for the future of Europe.⁶⁴ Some of these are more thoughtful, some are trendier. Others are glossy in format and financed by powerful partners. Others still have a grassroots' appearance. But they mostly have two things in common: an Internet campaign (manifesto with petition, or such like) and a series of international conferences ending up in Brussels, where the gang of usual suspects, predominantly elderly gentlemen, shows up, preferably in the company of great artists or the intellectual mandarins of European thought. There you can hear the familiar croaking of the 1968 veteran C-B responding to the assessment of European cinema given by the director W; the friendly but serious words of the ex-President of the Commission P in response to the cultural critique offered up by the major international architect K. All streamed live and made available subsequently as a Podcast or even as a paperback,

⁶³ With refreshing frankness, Cohn-Bendit/Verhofstadt (*ibid.*, p. 71) describe their contribution as "Preaching in the desert".

⁶⁴ Listed here are three examples of the more intelligent offerings in this field:

www.europa-neu-begruenden.de, www.asoulforeurope.eu, <http://tinyurl.com/khqznlf>

translated into many languages and with a worldwide distribution. It all ends up with recommendations that usually call for an important follow-up conference the next year.

This all may be very stimulating at first, particularly for a newcomer in Brussels. Yet even after two or three of these events, you start to feel uneasy. In a way it is all correct and positive, but it has been said much too often. There is nothing that really grabs your attention; nothing new under the sun. Quite the opposite: the inflated number of like-for-like campaigns makes the disjunction between ambition and outcome even more striking. You sense the purpose and you are depressed. It is an experience you could repeat during some 300 to 400 comparable events on Brussels' annual calendar (not to mention the dizzying daily EU business of conferences, seminars and debates). Most sobering are those not uncommon moments when young people are singled out for attention in a cringe-worthy, patronising tone. In these cases, you would rather listen to the completely unpedagogical views of those Europeans qualified to speak through their historical experience of the immediate post-war period. However, they are not in their late 60s but, like Jacques Delors and Helmut Schmidt, between 85 and 95 years old.⁶⁵ The next morning the helicopters will whirr over uptown Brussels – heads of state and government will fly to the next summit and stumble their way through the latest, breathlessly assembled rescue scenario.

'Something must be done'

A paradigm from the circle of those authors who feel called upon to save Europe is offered by the Austrian novelist Robert Menasse. After proclaiming over many years the arrival of a major novel from the Brussels' EU milieu, he has now appeared on the scene with more

⁶⁵ Cf Helmut Schmidt and Jacques Delors on: <http://tinyurl.com/nyfnwwf>

modest writings on the theme.⁶⁶ At the heart of his less analytical than declamatory essay is the attempt to cut the Gordian Knot through a kind of ‘something must be done’ circumvention, by simply calling for the abolition of the European nation states, which he sees as the incarnation of corrupting nationalism. Menasse’s argument is an exemplary illustration of the dilemma that many other authors, though arguing differently, find themselves facing. The national egoism of the member states must be broken by the unification of European nations within, as ever, a supra-national structure. Menasse elegantly ignores the fact that this is not possible by democratic means, since the agenda of member states is becoming more and more national as they pay heed to their own voters who view such designs with ever increasing scepticism. The background to the current crisis is not just that rich countries are turning their backs on Europe because they do not want to share, but also that poorer countries, or rather those more harshly affected by the crisis, are increasingly suspicious of further integration because – having made the precise connection – they perceive the EU as the agent of their own demise. Seen purely in institutional terms, the problem lies not with EU member states, which have become detached from their people, but with those who are far too anxiously keeping an eye on their voters.

Menasse’s intervention clearly stems from a deep fixation not only with his own homeland but primarily with Germany⁶⁷ and leads to nonsense of an elevated kind. Nation, nationalism and the German

⁶⁶ Menasse, Robert. (2012) *Der Europäische Landbote*. Vienna, cf. also Robert Menasse/Ulrike Guérat (2013) ‘Es lebe die Europäische Republik’ in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 March 2013.

⁶⁷ Sample: “After the experiences of the first half of the 20th century... one would not have thought it any longer possible that in today’s Germany a hate figure could be produced so quickly, so fanatically and to such effect, which binds in nationalistic hatred practically everyone from industrialists to benefit claimants within a *Volksgemeinschaft* and seeks to punish by every means the ‘foreign parasite’ leeching on the ‘healthy German’ national body.”

thirst for power are lumped together and the cry goes out in the highest pitch of indignation (“Wage war on the palaces!”) for an earth-shattering blow of liberation to be struck against the current policies of the European Council and, above all, German dominance there. The nation of Europe is proclaimed – and with it somehow the end of small-state mentality, apparently to be dissolved by a “Europe of the regions”.

This is left unexplained but bears the imprimatur of Austro-German dreams. It is no coincidence that he generously ignores examples from other parts of Europe, for example Poland or Great Britain; his theses would, at best, give rise to the shaking of heads in the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands or even Portugal. And this is not because the people there are still living under some nationalistic delusion, but because they have other experiences than, say, the Austrians and Germans, whose peculiar affinity reveals itself especially when expressing deep intellectual unease about their own nations.

Those who speak of Europe should know that there are other national histories than those of the two states that derailed Europe’s destiny 100 years ago, and which have learnt from this and subsequent catastrophes to doubt the concept of the nation. Menasse’s essay is thus an example of a neo-political Romanticism that ultimately manifests itself as a completely unpolitical affectation, namely dissatisfaction with reality. This leads to rather bizarre moments during the author’s public appearances in Brussels when he ends up by pouring balsam – in the form of effusive praise – on the tortured souls of his audience, a gathering of EU officials and lobbyists. This is how it goes: unjustly bad-mouthed from all quarters as Eurocrats, they are – as patient gardeners in the vineyard of European unity – the true vanguard in the struggle against the media and the powerful (in particular a certain powerful female!) who, blinded by the delusion of

nationalism, are obstructing and betraying the wonderful work of European unification.

These tidings from the Vienna *Kaffeehaus* are mainly intended to illustrate a rejection of reality found within the pro-European milieu. This, irony of ironies, coincides with a worrying development in wide circles of the Brussels' establishment, who see themselves as the misunderstood spearhead of progress hindered in their task of bringing about European happiness 'only' by the member states. To use hyperbole, we might speak here of a type of Bolshevik siege mentality as the consequence of blocked EU democracy. However, the situation is considerably more complex; at the very least, it is paradoxical. So, on the one hand, European citizens find it unreasonable that important aspects of the EU's future hang by a silken thread from the statement of some red-robed Karlsruhe judges. On the other hand, it is a provocation to every democrat (cf. the agreement of Greek voters to the rescue package) when a club of heads of state and government acting outside parliamentary control fundamentally interfere in the sovereignty, finances and fates of millions of EU citizens without consultation.

Jürgen Habermas grasps this point precisely when he ascribes the current European misery to "the structural defect of an incomplete political union in the riptide of technocracy". His analysis of the disastrous politics of the EU member states, with all their attendant constitutional faults, leads to the plea to switch to "another way of doing politics which shapes the mindset" of the political elites. Despite the accuracy of his diagnosis of a democratic "trap" (Claus Offe) into which Europe has slipped through the "tranquillising interference" of its politicians, particularly the German Chancellor, in the end he has to admit: "Every democratic country gets the politicians it deserves. Expecting behaviour outside the norm from politicians is somewhat

unusual.”⁶⁸ The problem is accurately demonstrated by Habermas’ own idealistic, logically circular diagnosis: “In the absence of politicians willing to act, we demand some!” Could it be that an old German motif, at least a Hegelian trope, is making an appearance here, with disagreeable reality once again being held up against noble ideas?

Politicians usually behave, as Jürgen Habermas certainly knows, in a rational and predictable way. Their first priority is to be voted back into power. This insight from the empirical theory of democracy that has been in circulation since Schumpeter must also be borne in mind when making a normative analysis. Thus his core democratic idea, namely that the political elites should dare to combine their fates with the project of a further deepening of the EU through national plebiscites held together with any forthcoming national elections, although essentially appealing, is based on an unrealistic foundation. The problem of the post-national position lies, together with (cf. Menasse) a questionable underestimation historically of the role of the nation state in bringing about democracy, law and freedom in the fact that the nation state must itself act one last time to abolish itself, at least in the process of handing over sovereignty. As things stand there would be 28 such acts in the EU. Habermas’ intended transition of the EU from “elite mode” to “citizens’ mode” is based on a paradoxical premise, that is, the democratic legitimisation of a project that the citizens are justified in regarding as elitist in conception.

Finding a new narrative

If “hard politics” cannot provide an answer, interest turns to the so-called “soft factors”; the appeal to culture is made. “La culture nous sortira de la crise”, was a headline in *Le Monde* (4 December 2012), and

⁶⁸ Habermas, *ibid.* p.9; Habermas, Jürgen. (2013) Ein Fall von Elitenversagen in *Der Spiegel*, 5 August 2013; Habermas, Jürgen. (2013) *Im Sog der Technokratie*. Suhrkamp, Berlin; and Offe, Claus. (2013) Europa in der Falle In: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 1/2013.

Brussels' speech writers sort their ready-made texts for the usual Sunday features on culture and politics ("The Good, the True, the Beautiful in Bad Times"). Yet there is a repeated misunderstanding that stems from a specific aspect of Brussels' institutional landscape. For the EU is essentially made up of sectors. Forestry, fishing, energy, etc. structure the Commission. In the same way, culture is understood primarily as a sector, i.e. a system operating within its own economic and communicative parameters. The possibility for culture to be the framework that governs the entire game (society, politics, economics), and for cultural impulses to simply be administered like a healing medicine to another badly functioning system (for example, the EU policy of unification) is not provided for in this imaginary world derived from the flow charts of the European Commission. For this is how it is supposed to work: people, institutions and nations fail to understand each other properly, so you dispense a bit of culture (Beethoven, Rem Koolhaas, Sasha Waltz), and the problem is solved.

Culture is a life form. Put in more complex terms, culture is the process of formatting and passing on collective realms of experience. Cultures can be described as the formats of experiential worlds, as communicative spheres of understanding with a defined lifespan and range. This means, however, that culture is not *per se* innocent, nor is it a panacea – quite the opposite. Culture parallels all the errors, inadequacies and limitations of the European process, for example, when political cultures give expression to the return to national thinking. To this extent, Europe is first and foremost a cultural process, but one that eludes the administrative interventions described.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, we are very much on the right track, as illustrated in an international survey carried out by the Goethe-Institut in which

⁶⁹ On the concept of culture in the EU cf. Franke, Berthold. (2011) *Kein Allheilmittel*. In ifa (ed.): Kulturreport, Stuttgart, p. 170ff. The EU's cultural programme for the coming financial period 2014-2020 is very clearly weighted towards "Creative Industry". Here the Commission finds everything it needs for a sector: companies, training, production and jobs.

“culture” appears as the most frequent answer to the question about concepts associated with Europe.⁷⁰ A discourse on Europe that is both aware and critical of its own cultural sources and aims might provide the starting point for a new impulse towards integration. This is the real core of hope in culture. For the time being, an answer is awaited in Brussels, but still under a misunderstanding; this is particularly clear in the ongoing search for the narrative.

It has long been invoked, desired and heralded: this new “story”, the narrative that identifies with the project and will inspire Europe, its political leaders and peoples. The candidate for the Chancellor’s position wants it; the Sunday supplements want it, as does – it goes without saying – the European parliament. José Manuel Barroso himself now wants it, and he does what presidents do in such cases: he sets up a committee. People are already hard at work in the President of the Commission’s “Bureau of European Policy Advisors”.⁷¹

The old narrative (in essence the story of nations that slaughtered each other over generations and then, having finally learnt their lesson, came together in peace to cooperate) is exhausted; it has been “narrated to death”. And now, shortly before the end of his term of office, the President wants to step up to the microphone and reveal the new narrative, written following intensive consultations by a panel of experts. It is that urgently needed story; a fresh, dominant narrative that will reignite the enthusiasm of European citizens, above all the

⁷⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/lx535bv>

⁷¹ Among the aims of the project: “To produce a new Narrative on Europe based on the principle of ‘peace through trade’, to create a narrative which will place Europe in a global context according to the new world order, to revive the European spirit and bring the EU closer to its citizens, to show the value of the EU to its citizens, to identify the cultural values that unite citizens across border, to finally formulate this narrative in a manifesto.”

<http://ec.europa.eu/bepa>

younger generation, by encapsulating their origins and future in a short text that is vivid, intuitively persuasive, and understood by all.

If only it were so easy! “Narratives” that give sense and identification are not constructed, certainly not by an authors’ collective in Brussels. Rather, they emerge from concrete historical experience, as can be fruitfully studied in the old European peace narrative that is inherently so self-explanatory that there was never any need to note it down officially. Narratives must, if they are to capture people’s attention, describe a positive future and they must also be simple, short and plausible. To achieve their effect they do not even need the written form, but function essentially as an implied distillation of historical experience and future description that is accessible to all, comprehensible and ever present without needing to be cited from the archive. Furthermore, narratives are not constructed and then disseminated; rather they are gathered simultaneously from many places in reality and told. They bring spontaneous enlightenment and multiply to become a common store. In short: narratives are simply there and explain themselves; they are found, not created.

Clearly, if the crisis is economic, then a narrative must have something to say about it. The EU evidently finds itself in the trap of a deep-seated economic dilemma arising from the clash between global capitalism and an unfinished association of developed nation states, which – despite a supra-national link – are still competing with each other. The process of economic globalisation under the auspices of capitalism has led, almost perforce, to a mechanism for continual deregulation – a phenomenon described by the economist Wolfgang Streeck, with reference to a key text of the old star of the neoliberal school Friedrich von Hayek, as “Hayekisation”.⁷² Streeck claims that competition between nations operating according to the law of the market economy has emasculated the welfare state, and in

⁷² Streeck, Wolfgang. (2013) *Gekaufte Zeit*. Suhrkamp: Berlin.

contradiction of, or at least complementing the often diagnosed Brussels' "regulation frenzy",⁷³ a "deregulation frenzy" has taken hold in the EU. In recent years, this has assumed the form of a dyed-in-the-wool neoliberal programme.

An expert on the Brussels' scene, Jochen Bittner, grasps this precisely when he writes that the EU has applied small regulation to the big (e.g. the banks) and big regulation to the small (e.g. light bulbs), as though the urge to act, having not found a proper outlet in the really important areas, is then directed by way of compensatory action at the "smaller and softer" areas of policy.⁷⁴ And this is exactly the perception of people who suffer from the consequences – for example, in the privatisation of public services – namely, the EU as a "machine of liberalisation" (Streeck). And yet European integration and its strongest economic instrument, the Euro, were supposed to bring "growth and prosperity for all".

It was conceived more from an historical than an economic perspective by François Mitterand, as a means of taming German hegemony once and for all ("la Bundesbank"), and by Helmut Kohl, as the cornerstone of an irreversible process of European unification. Under the conditions of global capitalism that mercilessly forces unequal national economies into competition, the common currency has – with what historical irony! – brought about the exact opposite. That is, the new economic and political dominance of Germany and the disintegration of the EU.

The promise of "growth" as the universal mantra in the discourse on the capitalist economy is thus the actual "narrative" of capitalism. All experts agree that it is currently impossible to conceive of a more

⁷³ Hans Magnus Enzensberger's (not generally well informed) Essay (2011) *Sanftes Monster Brüssel oder die Entrückung Europas*. Suhrkamp: Berlin.

⁷⁴ Bittner, Jochen. (2010) *So nicht, Europa!* Fischer: Frankfurt/M.

balanced form of capitalism in which, instead of bringing about continual progress by increasing the production of goods, there might be, for instance, a reduction in working time. Therefore the credo “no end to the crisis in Europe without growth” is also found in the EU from the right to the Greens. We can add to this a specific element of Europe’s perception of itself. Born in the hour it lost its leading geopolitical role in the Cold War, the Union represented for European nations – including defeated Germany and the victorious powers of France and Great Britain, reduced to second-class powers at least by the time they had lost their colonial empires – a vehicle by which they could still have a place at the top table in the new bi-polar age.

Downsizing Europe

“Size matters” – a concern for the relative or absolute disappearance of European greatness is a driving motive for many of its friends. A spectre is on the loose: the fear of a shrinking Europe, which – compared to the new giants in the Far East and elsewhere – is perforce becoming “the plaything of other powers”.⁷⁵ Thus it is that the president of the EU parliament and full-blooded European Martin Schulz speaks about the “fettered giant”, and Habermas paints a picture of a Europe turned into “a museum or a larger version of Switzerland”. Meanwhile Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Guy Verhofstadt paint a gloomy picture of a Europe still ununited in 25 years time: “Isolated from each other we will no longer have influence; we would be crushed, and our social model would not survive.”⁷⁶ One is tempted to ask: Why should this be the case? Are the Chinese about to launch a military invasion? Are the Indians or Brazilians about to dismantle our liberal constitutions?

Perhaps a glance into European history will help us here. For, just as the birth of united Europe can be regarded as the response to the

⁷⁵ Geert Mak, *ibid.*, p. 138.

⁷⁶ Cohn-Bendit/Verhofstadt, *ibid.*, p. 82; Habermas, *Im Sog der Technokratie* *ibid.* p. 124.

major destruction of the war and the loss of world hegemony, the creation of many European democracies can be ascribed to the loss of previous power and size. Where the rule of law, democracy and civil society begins, we find a surprising number of European countries that “downsized”. Thus we can see, in all parts of Europe, nations whose former territorial and political size have been corrected downwards by the course of history. One thinks first of all of the former colonial powers in the south and west of Europe, from Spain and Portugal to Great Britain, major historical empires that, in their time, ruled the world. In the middle of the continent, we find the remains of the once multi-national hegemonic power Austria, or even Germany with its catastrophically failed ambition to achieve supremacy in Europe. Both these countries now have shrunken territories and significantly reduced power. But the former European superpower Sweden, or Serbia, also know the loss of once enjoyed “greatness”.

It has scarcely been the case that nations and their rulers have willingly given up territory and economic, military or political power. The question is whether it really makes any sense for the aim, purpose and goal of the EU to be to compensate for the world hegemony the continent and its leading powers once enjoyed. Might even European nations, with their particular experience of finally accepting ‘downsizing’, conclude from their more recent and successful history that a shrewd renunciation of ‘size’ provides a very promising model for the future? The probably unavoidable destiny of ‘downsizing’ – a conclusion derived in normative terms alone from a concept of global justice according to which no part of the earth can claim for itself a greater per capita share in world trade than another – should not just be understood as a threat to a European future, but rather as a positive opportunity.

The right conclusions should be drawn from this for the current Europe debate. This would mean firstly a new orientation based on the creative implementation of its not just unavoidable, but also innovative

role as a deliberately downsizing part of the planet. Only with this change of perspective is there the chance of a genuine ‘new foundation’ (Habermas) of the EU: thus, downsizing is not seen as recourse to a small-state mentality, but as a new horizon for the next major steps towards the goal of a united Europe that replaces the old dreams of recapturing ‘greatness’. From its own pioneering experiences of loss of greatness, which were far from intended but more a result of rational cunning, Europe can and must at least extract an indication about how to shape its future in an intelligent way. This project will possibly be of interest to other parts of the world that will have to face similar issues in the not too distant future.

Indeed, it is not just Europe that will have to learn how to downsize in the immediate future; the whole world needs to. It is certain that the party is still going to last a while in the currently “emerging economies” in Asia, the Gulf or Latin America, at the same time offering good prospects for exporters wanting to make a profit. It is just as certain that global capitalism will have run out of breath well before every Chinese and Indian can call a plasma TV and an Audi their own. The bet’s on: within the not too distant future, let us say a few decades, the rules of the world economy will have completely changed simply because of the exhaustion of global resources and the dreadful consequences of the excessive demands put on the environment alone. We shall probably see more ‘communistic’, i.e. politically steered mechanisms. Today’s more or less naive calculation, still underpinning all development scenarios, namely establishing urban middle-classes and infrastructures through free trade and industrialisation based on carbon plus major airport hubs, will no longer add up. Well before China, India or other current champions of growth get even close to the customary standards found only today in the western world, the essential factors on which this development model is built (and that is only a copy of the European/western way, dramatically curtailed) will no longer be effective.

All that is open to debate is whether this happens as the result of brutal struggles for resources or through cooperation. For Europe this means, more precisely, whether the change is tackled immediately with a sense of reality or later – from dire necessity. Instead of succumbing, as is the widespread case particularly in Germany, to the illusion that our economic future can be secured by participating in the industrialisation of hitherto poor countries, Europe has the chance, with its destiny to ‘downsize’, to prepare itself earlier than others for this next step. Therefore, stagnation in population numbers, automobile markets, mass consumption, and the exhaustion of all manner of resources coupled with rising energy prices is, in fact, the good news from Europe. Meanwhile, in the offices on the top floors of world corporations, bosses are dreaming one last time of the capitalist reclamation of hitherto untouched corners and areas of the planet.⁷⁷ The North Americans are sending out invitations to the final round of growth in order to buy perhaps 20 years’ more time with cheap crude oil obtained through shale fracking for their sick economy where, according to the balance of payments figures, more has been consumed than produced for over a generation.

We need less of the same

We need policies and politicians across the world who have more to offer than solving the crisis through ‘more of the same’ and who can organise the withdrawals. If the task of the moment is to maintain liberal civilisation under reduced conditions and to organise the transition from an “expansive to a reductive modernity”⁷⁸ (Harald

⁷⁷ “Myanmar is one of the few white patches on the world atlas of globalisation, a land still unconquered by capitalism. It therefore holds out the promise of a last adventure for entrepreneurs. Myanmar is as big as Texas, has about 60 million people and all kinds of raw materials: oil, gas, gold, copper, jade, tropical timber. There is also its strategic position between India and China.” *Capital*, 5 July 2013.

⁷⁸ Welzer, Harald. (2013) *Selbst denken*. Fischer: Frankfurt/M.

Welzer), then it is the duty of a narrative that comprehends this shift to describe the process of reduction and downsizing as the way to a humane European future. In doing so, we must consider the positive content we described, i.e. that in downsizing lies not loss, punishment, decline, but the key to a new, cooperative, humane and, in the fullest sense, ‘more rational’ future. It is evident that this transformation cannot take place without sacrifice, primarily without abandoning a political culture and all its attendant prejudices that are directed along macho lines at the pursuit of size, dominance and ‘hard power’. For even if downsizing does not make you automatically cleverer, size makes you stupid.

It is evident that no one proclaiming these goals will have the majority behind them from the start, at least not in Europe. But from an outside perspective ‘provincialising Europe’ is not seen as a loss at all but as the restitution of balanced relations.⁷⁹ Therefore we should take advice from outside Europe when describing the demands of the new age – and we will be taken aback when we see how much interest there is. The picture of Europe in the world is still more present, its culture still more influential than even the worst Eurocentrics think. Concrete, cars, the stock exchange, TV, military drills and the classical man’s suit are European inventions with worldwide success (to avoid starting with high culture). Europe continues to have in total the biggest economy, the biggest export market, the best education, social welfare standards and a level of human rights and citizens’ rights that can fire the imaginations of billions of people who do not have them. Therefore, we need not be afraid of making a contribution, even long-term, to the global dialogue about future solutions. The best we have to offer this exchange is, and will continue to be, the potential for a self-critical acceptance of our history and the false developments that have brought us to where we are – a precise instance is the most

⁷⁹ Chakrabarty, Dipesh (2000) *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton University Press: Princeton/Oxford.

frequently expressed criticism made by sceptical observers of Europe about ‘double standards’, e.g. in human rights’ issues.

Capitalism and democracy are also European inventions. If we are experiencing in the EU today a continuous move away from democratisation in our societies through the effects of capitalism, then Europe has the task of finding new ways through its tradition of “constant unrest and culture of questioning” (Julia Kristeva). This critical culture is nowhere more evident than in its application to itself, as Henning Ritter writes, looking back on the past epoch of European hegemony: “The critical questioning of the Eurocentric world picture became the basis of the dominant role of European culture in the world. Self-doubt and the relativisation of its own position created the superiority they wanted to bury.”⁸⁰ If Europe can draw on this tradition and progressively shape the unavoidable process of its downsizing, already well under way, then a smaller Europe – let us venture the claim – will not only find its place in the world as befits its new format, but will also soon recognise in this story its new narrative and be able to offer it as a paradigm to others.

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⁸⁰ Ritter, Henning. (2010) *Notizhefte. Berlin*. Berlin Verlag: Berlin, p. 38f.



EUROPEAN
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The Dwarfing of Europe?

At a time when the European Union – and indeed the whole continent – is going through an identity crisis that goes much deeper than the financial crisis, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) decided it was time for Europe to look at itself in the mirrors offered by other regions of the world, and in particular by the so-called ‘emerging economies’. Europe can no longer reflect on itself just by looking inwards. This collection of essays sheds new light on Europe’s many dilemmas and, by broadening the debate, encourages new understanding of the fundamental issues underlying these dilemmas.