Reflexive particularism and cosmopolitanization: the reconfiguration of the national

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Abstract *In this article we examine the cosmopolitanization of national memory cultures as a matter of reflexive particularism, referring to negotiations over 'the national' driven by the endogenization of European norms and discourses. Reflexive particularism emerges from a historically specific memory imperative that issues two demands – first, that national polities reckon with the Other, and second, that they engage with, critique and challenge exclusionary or heroic modes of nationalism. Our findings, based on the analysis of official discourse and 60 open group discussions conducted in Austria, Germany and Poland, suggest that reflexive particularism is manifested in an ongoing negotiation between variable modes of national belonging and cosmopolitan orientations toward the supranational or pan-European. More specifically, reflexive particularism is expressed in co-evolving articulations of Europeanness and shared European memory practices that include: affirmative and ambivalent perspectives; sceptical narratives about nationhood (for example those that emphasize legacies of perpetratorship); and a disposition to (ex)change perspectives and recognize the claims of Others.*

Keywords COSMOPOLITANISM, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, EUROPE, NATIONAL IDENTITY, ULRICH BECK, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, POLAND

Debates about the possibility and limits of a shared European culture have become a common theme in public and academic discourse (Berezin and Shain 2003; Katzenstein and Checkel 2009). Europe has become a laboratory for the normative exploration and scientific analysis of new forms of political association and questions

of collective identification (Bruter 2004). Collective memories are typically considered a necessary ingredient for meaningful collective self-understanding (Eder and Spohn 2005; Megill 2007). Shared (European) memories are supposed to function as the political and cultural glue for identifications that transcend the divisions wrought by idioms of nationhood. Yet, the encounter between European and national identifications is frequently cast in terms of mutually exclusive memory cultures, suggesting that memory primarily follows national frameworks (Fogu and Kansteiner 2006). We are not questioning the relevance or even the dominance of national reference frames. What strikes us as problematic about this binarism is that it views the national as separate from and antithetical to the European. This dichotomy, which underwrites much research on the genesis of Europeanness, reflects a resilient 'methodological nationalism' (Beck and Sznaider 2006) bound up with the presupposition that the national remains an isolated yardstick for the study of social, economic, political and cultural processes. Instead, our research on the cosmopolitanization of memory cultures demonstrates how the national and the European are increasingly entwined.

Ulrich Beck's work on cosmopolitanism offers a distinctively viable approach to the preconditions of – and resistances to – the emergence of new sociocultural entities that challenge the national as the irreducible cultural principle of social and political action. As part of a burgeoning social-scientific literature on cosmopolitanism (Cheah and Robbins 1998; Delanty 2005; Garsten 2003; Holton 2002; Rumford 2007; Vertovec and Cohen 2002), Beck underlines the need to develop an analytical idiom for modern society that escapes the limitations of a national ontology. One needs, he claims, to re-examine and reconceptualize it within the alternative epistemology of a new cosmopolitan social science (Beck and Sznaider 2006: 6).[1] Critical cosmopolitanism entails the reflexive interrogation of a historically specific, and thus malleable, concept of the national, and the relational quality of collective self-understanding in the context of nation-transforming idioms.

To that end, Beck introduces the concept of cosmopolitanization, which implies an interactive relationship between the global and the local. Cosmopolitanization is a 'non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived not as cultural polarities, but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles' (Beck 2006: 72–3). More generally, a cosmopolitan perspective seeks to overcome the habit of theorizing globalization in an either–or logic predicated on oppositions in the mould of inside–outside or exogenous–endogenous (Beck 2006). Cosmopolitanism, as an analytic paradigm, highlights the transformative emergence of new social spaces and imaginaries through their very interaction.

Cosmopolitanism does not negate nationalism; rather, particular national attachments are potential mediators between the individual and the global horizons along which identifications unfold. Meaningful identities are embedded in the stories of the communities from which we construct our identities. Particularism becomes a prerequisite for a cosmopolitan orientation. Particular attachments do not obstruct cosmopolitan orientations, but, in many ways, they become mutually constitutive. The social-scientific observer thus best understands new manifestations of the national if

he or she adopts a cosmopolitan perspective. As Beck writes, 'the experience of an actual removal of boundaries, which may in turn trigger a reflex of neo-national closure, requires a cosmopolitan approach for its analysis' (Beck 2004: 133). A cosmopolitan methodological shift acquires its analytical force in elucidating the relationship between processes of actual cosmopolitanization and the persistence (or resurgence) of political self-descriptions normatively underwritten by a framework of nationalism. At the same time, we demonstrate how European tropes become integral parts of national discourses, thus problematizing and recasting the meanings of the national and vice versa.

The limitations of methodological nationalism are also apparent in collective memory studies that remain situated, both theoretically and empirically, within a national container. Fundamental global (and European) transformations that challenge the paradigmatic assumptions and underlying homology of memory and nationhood (Levy and Sznaider 2006a, 2006b), however, have marked the early twenty-first century. As memory generates pasts in response to problems and interests in the present (Halbwachs 1992), we argue that Europeanization is transforming the present as it generates a memory culture that is based on the recognition of competing views of the past and shared visions for a European future.

This cosmopolitanization of European states is driven, among other things, by what we call a 'memory imperative' which marshals a set of political and normative expectations for the handling of past injustices – in the (paradigmatic) European case this refers to the Second World War and the Holocaust (Levy and Sznaider 2006a). The Holocaust has evolved from a European concern into a universal code, one frequently tapped to comment on injustice and human rights abuse as such (in both legal and commemorative discourses). As our findings show, this universal code is subject to particular (country-specific) appropriations. One expects European nation-states to engage with their history in a self-critical fashion. While traditional or heroic narratives deploy historical events in the service of national foundation myths, sceptical narratives may call attention to past injustices committed by one's own nation. To be sure, self-victimizing narratives frequently complement such self-critical approaches. Notwithstanding, this memory imperative has become an important source of state legitimacy and a signature of Europeanness as an emergent cultural–cognitive principle. We describe this process in terms of *reflexive particularism*, referring to deliberative cognitive reflections that can be read as reactions to renegotiations of the national.[2] Through reflexive particularism, the nation-state is being revalued in an emerging transnational European memory scape. One cannot reduce this phenomenon to either the persistence or the demise of nationalism, revealing instead how cognitive and mnemonic practices (can) reinflect the national. Reflexive particularism, then, does not consist of a unified European discourse, but manifests itself in the following repertoires of memory work – affirmative but ambivalent perceptions of Europeanness, sceptical narratives about the nation emphasizing injustice and perpetratorship, and an increased recognition of the Other. While there is no unified (or unifying) European memory, our findings show that there are shared cosmopolitan memory practices.

As EU integration continues to challenge existing categories of analysis, Europeanization provides a formidable opportunity to study new forms of collective belonging. The recent cosmopolitan research on Europeanization has much to offer (Beck 2002; Beck and Grande 2007; Beck and Sznaider 2006; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007; Rumford 2007). As Gerard Delanty points out, 'the cultural significance of Europeanization lies in a certain cosmopolitanism, the key characteristic of which consists of a pervasive and ongoing cross-fertilization of identities and discourses to which can be related a new imaginary, or socio-cognitive cultural model, in which the very idea of Europe itself becomes a reality' (Delanty 2005: 406). Delanty rejects the notion of a 'national Europe' or a 'global Europe' and instead argues that a 'cosmopolitan Europe' is a 'more accurate designation of the emerging form of Europeanization as a mediated and emergent reality of the national and the global. Underlying it is a dynamic of self-transformation' (Delanty 2005: 406).

Even if Europe is undergoing a cosmopolitan transformation on the institutional level, it is far from clear whether this official discourse actually trickles down to how people perceive of themselves. It is problematic to assume that official structures of cosmopolitanism meaningfully bear on the lives of individual citizens and that people espouse the cosmopolitan values promulgated at the state level. A top–down, institutional cosmopolitanism does not enable reliable inferences on popular (dis)identifications with the national – and how these come about (Nash 2007). While the state continues to be an important site for the production of such collective meanings, how politically or culturally salient officially sanctioned memory narratives actually are remains an empirical question. To remedy this shortcoming, it is thus essential to consider the reception of memory practices (Kansteiner 2002).

Recent studies of cosmopolitan orientations have heeded the call to complement the insightful but largely state-centred literature with accounts of people's dispositions. Surveys have primarily accomplished this in a global context (Mau et al. 2008), through case-driven analysis (Kendall et al. 2008; Skrbis and Woodward 2007) and with a European focus (Pichler 2008, 2009; Roudometof and Haller 2007). This literature highlights the broad range and limits of cosmopolitan attitudes, practices, affiliations and competences at the individual level. However, due to the implicit restrictions of survey research operating with set categories and an individualistic bias, these studies do not elaborate on how cosmopolitan dispositions are themselves collectively negotiated and consecrated as part of a political culture. Unlike public opinion, with its subjectivist (and cognitivist) focus, political culture studies broadly understood have intersubjective and intertextual qualities with a strong symbolic dimension (Olick and Levy 1997).

Complementing the valuable insights of the survey literature, we propose a mixed methodology based on the analysis of public discourse and group discussions. We explore the endogenization of the aforementioned memory imperative not only at the institutional level, but also extend it to a *cosmopolitanization from below*. To capture this dimension, we conducted a comparative analysis of group discussions in three countries (Austria, Germany and Poland). This communicative approach allows us to conceptualize different forms of self-understanding as the result of an associative and

intersubjective process, recognizing the 'discursive dimensions of politics, seeing political language, symbolism, and claim-making as constitutive of interests and identities' (Olick 1999: 332). Group discussions provide us with insights not only into different dimensions of cosmopolitanization, but also into how nationhood itself is negotiated with respect to Europeanization.

By situating our analysis in a comparative framework, we capture the path-dependencies referring to the specific characteristics and experiences of mnemonic reference groups. It is crucial to recognize that each community has distinctive ways of (im)mobilizing time. Memory practices are mediated by a group's idiosyncratic historical experiences and resulting cultural dispositions towards the past. Hence, we need to be attentive to the kind of cultural validations specific groups attribute to temporal phenomena such as progress, change, innovation, memory itself, and the basic fact that groups have had different experiences. Moreover, our comparative framework appreciates non-contemporaneities surrounding the geopolitical aspects of how 'Europe' is perceived and experienced in its eastern and western regions.[3] The explanatory value of country-specific cases and their path-dependency is not to illustrate how national frameworks remain dominant or isolated, but rather how European referents are incorporated into the political-cultural scripts of existing nations. This process of reflexive particularism then is driven by a memory imperative and characterized by the need to engage with the history of the Other. Our findings suggest that reflexive particularism arises from the perpetual re-evaluation of the balance between particular attachments and universal orientations.

Data and methods

We draw our findings from a comparative study of how memories of the Second World War inform debates about collective self-understanding and conceptions of Europe in Germany, Austria and Poland. These countries represent variations on how public and private engagements with the past appropriate extensive generalized European imageries. These engagements also throw into relief the variable salience of cosmopolitan orientations in ostensibly national claim-making practices. The choice of these countries is not arbitrary, but responds to our attention to path-dependency and a sustained engagement with the past. Each country has developed expansive and distinctive modes of coming to terms with past injustices. Germany serves as the *paradigmatic* example of '*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*'.[4] In Germany, a founding member of the European Community, conflicting memories of past injustices have shaped debates about national self-understanding. Austria provides valuable insights in the current but *belated* coming to terms with its collaborative role during the Nazi years, propagating the myth of having been 'Hitler's first victims' and underlining its postwar status as a 'neutral' country. Only during the last two decades has Austria, a recent addition to the European Union, begun to confront its Nazi past. Poland is a prime example of how European countries might cope with *dual* memories, simultaneously engaging with its Stalinist past, complicity under two occupations and its own victimhood under both regimes. Giving voice to the East–West memory divide,

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the Polish case also provides an opportunity to consider how these politics of memory operate in an expanding EU.

Since the formation of social memories is a relational process, we tried to examine how they are produced in the interstices of official, public and vernacular memory practices. Official forms of memory entail state-centred discourses, such as parliamentary debates or legislative procedures – alongside official commemorative events (such as monuments, memorial days or foundations). Public forms of memory refer to how specific past events are represented in the media (for example the re-enactment of history in films such as *Schindler's List*, *Pearl Harbor* or the panoply of historical documentaries). Vernacular forms of memory provide a perspective 'from below' and link closely to the collective self-understanding of particular groups (Bodnar 1992). To be sure, as our group's discussions showed, vernacular memories are related to official and public discourse, and they often formulate memory agendas with or against them. Drawing on these distinctions and renegotiating nationhood through rather than against a European prism, we have established a comprehensive picture capturing the contested nature of cosmopolitanization and the instantiation of reflexive particularism.

In the first research phase (2001–5), we conducted a discourse analysis of public and official materials (parliamentary debates and media coverage). We found that public memory in the three countries between 1986 and 2004 underwent significant transformations as the normative command to remember past injustices became a requisite of political legitimacy. We have referred to this change as a cosmopolitanization of public and official memory (Heinlein et al. 2005). The paucity of reception studies motivated the second research phase (2005–9), which the question of whether and how memory tropes from below reflect the transformation of public memory drove. To that end, we explored the endogenization of the memory imperative not only at the institutional level of Europeanization, but also as a cosmopolitanization from below.

Social memory (Burke 1989) includes everyday practices that transport the past and interpretations of the past *non-intentionally*. It is especially in direct communicative practices, like in so-called 'memory talk' (Nelson 1996) or in conversational remembering (Middleton and Edwards 1990), that people learn 'that references to the past are in fact a constitutive part of shared existence' (Welzer 2008: 288). Applied to our project, this means that we identify cosmopolitan expressions from below in the different ways of speaking about the past and how memories are deployed for future possibilities. To that end, group discussions have proven to be a particularly well suited method to investigate how people create meaning in social interaction, how they present and construct identifications. Given the openness *vis-à-vis* the explored themes and the other participants, who largely determine the communicative process and the themes addressed in its course, group discussions facilitate an actual and microgenetic analysis of the origins and negotiations of memory processes in a social context (Lamnek 2005).

To examine cosmopolitanization from below, we conducted 60 one-hour stimulated group discussions in the three countries. To cover a broad spectrum of memory agents we applied a non-probable purposive sampling. First, we defined certain groups by criteria such as age, place of residence, profession, or affiliation with a

particular institution or community (see Appendix). Second, our recruitment of respondents matching these group criteria depended partly on pursuing a snowball method and partly on availability. A degree of self-selection with our respondents thus has to be recognized. At the same time, the group-specific characteristics are an empirical asset for further systematic explorations connecting our findings with future surveys and ethnographic studies.

Group sizes varied between three and eight people, covering a wide range of ages, origins and professional affiliations. Given the broad spectrum of memory actors and the (comparably) low number of group discussions, questions about the representative quality of our findings (with respect to professional occupation, educational background, age, gender or residence) are inevitable. We thus need to stress the exploratory character of our study. Nevertheless, our work suggests that differences between groups *within* a country were much less important than differences of respondents *between* countries. Further research based on larger samples, which, for example, would allow for analytic divisions of autobiographic, historical and professional memory entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on age and occupation/educational level, seems particularly promising.

At the beginning of each discussion, the group looked at several unattributed photos depicting images related to the Second World War, plus one photograph with implicit reference to the European Union. This initiated conversation among participants through a free flow of associations departing from these photographs. The researcher moderating the discussion remained as passive as possible to allow group members to determine the relevance of themes and establish their own agenda. The discussions were then analysed according to a well-tested set of methods, following the precepts of grounded theory and qualitative content analysis (qda) (Jensen 2005). We coded the entire material with the help of qda-software *MAXqda* (Kuckartz 2007), which allows one to process large quantities of data (the transcripts of the group discussions ran to almost 900 pages). Finally, we conducted additional in-depth analyses of particular interview sequences. From a qualitative point of view, it was important for us to identify discussants' central images and views of Europe, European memory and the Other. We paid particular attention to normative orientations and the broader thematic contexts within which they were articulated. From a quantitative standpoint, it was important to identify the relevance and dominance of narratives. Both forms of content analysis relied on a continuous coding of our material and a variety of researchers independently confirming the appropriateness of the coding catalogue. We then triangulated results of our group studies with the findings from our analysis of official and public discourse about the respective meanings attributed to various aspects of the Second World War and Europe, based on newspaper articles, parliamentary debates, secondary literature and surveys directly addressing questions of 'European identity'.

Findings: perceptions of Europeanness

Our analysis of group discussions and official discourse reveals a rich canvas of positive perceptions of Europe. Central to these acclamations are references to shared

cultural and religious roots and a canon of human-rights values. They frequently gloss Europe as synonymous with mobility, exchange and the transcendence of borders. Peaceful cooperation is one crucial dimension of this brand of European self-understanding, articulated and enacted against the backdrop of the aggressive nationalism that drove two world wars. They take Europe as an exemplary case of *having learned from history*. As indicated above, this sort of affirmative stance often assumes the presence or dominance of cosmopolitan orientations, but repeatedly takes sceptical views of European unification, or an insistence on (national) particularism, to confirm the absence of cosmopolitanism. We refute this presumed opposition, finding important cosmopolitan tendencies *within* positions that are suspicious of a united Europe. Hence, we focus our empirical section on these ambiguities rather than on outwardly pro-European expressions.

Ambiguities in official discourse

Despite, or perhaps because of, ongoing political integration, almost all EU members insist on some measure of preservation of their national identities. As negotiations over a European Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty have shown, an ambivalence between nation-centred and European tropes characterizes official European discourse. In Germany, two opposing discursive formations predominate. One valorizes Germany (together with France) as the driving force behind European integration. The other emphasizes Germany's standing as the most populous and richest EU member, but perceives its disproportionate financial contributions to have yielded inadequate returns. Throughout the 1980s, Austria hosted a relative consensus according to which EU membership was incompatible with the country's longstanding neutrality. In a 1994 national referendum, a large majority voted in favour of membership. Since 2000, when the right-wing *Freedom Party of Austria* (*FPÖ*) joined the government and the EU first issued a set of (symbolic) sanctions against Austria as a member state, perceptions of Europe have remained charged. While pro-European voices are eager to underline Austria's European credentials, Euro-sceptics voice complaints that the EU is ignoring Austrian interests and even contravenes them. In Poland, beginning in 1989, almost all political parties strove for EU membership, which upon arrival in 2004 they celebrated as the end of subjugation to the Russian sphere of influence, a 'return to Europe'. Most Poles relate to the positive economic development and increased mobility that EU membership offers. Poland's addition to the EU, moreover, commands recognition from other members as an equal partner on the diplomatic scene. Thus – and Poland is hardly alone in this – it uses the EU to further national interests.

   In all three countries, we find broad affirmation of the European vision, in both official discourses and group discussions. While they dismiss neither the ethos of Europeanness nor a nation-centred framework, they challenge them both. This integrative ambiguity, so to speak, provides a formidable opportunity for the analysis of cosmopolitan dispositions in practice. The main source of this ambiguity is due not to the aspirational language of 'Europe', but to its deficient implementation. Our

findings are divided into four sections – European images, that is how respondents perceive Europe and its vision; European memory, explored directly in our group discussions; sceptical narratives as a Europeanized memory practice; and changes of perspective, or those practices that constitute a more or less conscious engagement with the Other.

European images

Critical references

Our data contain many critical assessments of the European vision. One type leads to an instrumentalist attitude toward the EU. In Poland, for example, membership is often justified as a necessary, yet purely economic alliance. In all three countries, complaints about bureaucracy in Brussels are frequent. Group participants thematize the discrepancy between the aspirational language of a shared European memory and the difficulties involved in putting it into practice. Maren (44), an engineer from an urban area in western Germany made a typical statement: 'I find, from what I catch about the EU, is foremost economic policy, that interests of the economy are executed, especially those of large corporations, and to define socially, culturally, ecologically, democratically, how it should go on, like, how one can coexist peacefully, that this is still lagging behind' (D04, 769).[5] By far the most pervasive trope of Euro-scepticism, however, questions the eclipse of national interests, among them national autonomy and identity, and often accuses the EU of having a homogenizing agenda. Opposition to this agenda, however, is not the same as a rejection of things European. Indeed, many attribute the incomplete implementation of European ideas to the durability of national permutations. Europe is not European enough, the argument runs. Yet, this logic begs the question: is the failure of 'Europe' ascribed only to others, or also to one's own group? In this regard, group responses in Austria and Poland reveal similarities. There is an 'internal' critique of ethno-nationalist rightwing movements in one's own country. Conversely, one finds a wrong, allegedly prejudicial view from abroad criticized for placing these movements in the foreground. What seems as a contradiction is an attempt to present a kind of progressive national identity that is compatible with the European idea.

In Germany and Austria, a reluctance to endorse nationalist tropes openly reflects an unambiguous official narrative about the dangers of nationalism. Opinions like the one from Tomas (50), a high school teacher from northern Austria, are typical: 'I mean that is what Europe needs, that we remember that nationalism was always at the roots of all the wars in Europe' (A15, 323). To be sure, some reject Europe outright, but they are marginal quantitatively insofar as they contradict the official discourse of their respective countries. For the most part, Europe is not a matter of either Europe or the nation, but of Europe as well as the nation. What they are negotiating is the relation between the nation and Europe. For sceptics, this relationship appears inadequately balanced: they perceive Europe as either too weak, because it cannot stand up to the dominance of national interests, or too strong, threatening national identity, culture or interests.

Ambivalent European images

Many interviewees apprehend Europe from a nation-state driven perspective. Images of Europe as a transnational configuration, however, suggest a more finely articulated and ultimately cosmopolitan perspective – as do claims that phrase Europe as simultaneously a federal state and a confederation. Here we find a high degree of congruence among the three countries. Viktor (47), the managing director of a former Nazi concentration camp memorial site in rural Upper Austria puts it succinctly:

> Perhaps 50 years are not long enough, so to speak, one does not have this shared feeling of Europe – at least not in Austria, where this has not been the case for very long. Perhaps it will take another 50 or, what do I know, perhaps even 100 years, until one can say that we consider ourselves Europeans and we have a shared past. But right now, I think, this is not yet the case.
>
> (A18, 209)

He predicates this posited reconfiguration on Europe's relative newness and the fact that, as a political entity, it is still in a state of becoming, a process that is incomplete. Most accounts in this vein refer to the new generation, on the assumption that it experiences and thinks more 'Europeanly' than older generations. As Hermann (83), a grandfather from a small town in Saxony, expressed it: 'I think for a shared European memory it is too early. We are sitting here together with great age differences. And the young are perhaps already thinking differently' (D07, 290).

Some of our discussants even claim that this incompleteness, this seemingly permanent transformation, constitutes the essence of the European project. Even if expressions favouring state associations persist (for example the preservation of national or cultural autonomy, the durability of different linguistic, cultural and historical identities), they nevertheless indicate thorny ambiguities. The key interpretive point is that they usually reject Europe when perceived as a (deluded) attempt to homogenize national differences – that is as something profoundly anti-cosmopolitan. Part of this criticism, however, is a notable approval of the processual character of official European discourses: the 'European spirit' has yet to mature and achieve compatibility with the national.

They often implicitly treat official attempts at Europeanization as synonymous with standardization and homogenization, which they view either as potentially threatening to the particular or simply not feasible. They perceive these as constructed and superimposed from above, lacking any anchor in the population. When the interviewer asked Helga (83), a retired physician from rural North-Rhine Westphalia, 'what exactly should not be forgotten and what should be remembered for the future', she replied:

> The autonomy should not, must not become some mishmash, it must remain different for each country. … Autonomy should, of course, not come at the expense of others, but one must be allowed to preserve. That which is typical

and which is dear to our hearts, that we must be able to preserve and not
succumb to some unitary mash.

(D06, 190–3)

This distinction, between a rejection of EU practices and the normative desirability of
Europeaness is a striking feature in each of the countries. Our respondents
emphasized intra-European differences, but did not counterpoise them against
increasing Europeanization.

European memory

In each group discussion, we ask the participants about the conditions of a collective
European memory. In response, some expressed outright resistance to any kind of
homogenization. For example, Hannes (20), a high school student from rural Upper
Austria, states:

And no shared past, either. I mean, every country simply has. … That's just
the difference between Europe and America, that we have many small
countries with an absolutely distinct culture. … And I think it would be too
simplistic to say the entire past belongs to all of Europe. I believe that one has
to pay closer attention to the culture and the respective countries and respect
and value their pasts and not just slam it together into one mash, that is into
one heap (laughs).

(A01, 272)

For the most part, responses reflect the ambiguities detailed above. Some
respondents assert that a shared European memory is not (yet) possible, but that it
would be necessary in order to establish a unified Europe. When, during a conver-
sation among young Poles on the desirability of shared foundations, the interviewer
asks if Europe needed such a shared memory, Krzysztof (20), a high school student
from western Poland, states:

If we want to create a federal state – I have a feeling that the EU is striving
toward that, which is also shown in the work on a constitution – then there has
to be a historical memory. If it will be a federal state then such a memory is
indispensable. When you say Europe, you mean the EU? Right?

(PL02, 143–4)

One can detect a nascent normativity, one that might tout a fully cosmopolitan
Europe. One can say the same of the affirmative statements, namely those declar-
ations that explicitly welcome the concept of a European memory: memory on this
order is a necessity. It is important, first, to recognize the 'dark sides' of the past; the
memory imperative dictates reflection and learning from history. Second, in view of
the Second World War, one has to do this on a European plane; it cannot confine

itself to a national level. Yet, the difficulties of implementing a shared European narrative remain the most common theme among respondents.

Substantive discussions concern the undercurrents of European cosmopolitanization, namely the tense relationship between particularism and universalism. Even in the sceptical responses, many did not entirely dismiss the concept of European memory: they saw a shared memory as necessary, but not (yet) conceivable in the light of diverse, mutually opposed particularisms, especially those surrounding the Second World War. Here too, many discussants believe that such a shared perspective has a strong generational dimension and could evolve in the future. The affirmative and sceptical dispositions thus show an important affinity: both argue that a European memory has not (yet) materialized. It is striking that many propounding rejectionist positions considered mutual recognition and shared experiences necessary conditions for the formation of a Europeanized memory. We frequently observe a reflexive approach to one's particular position. While not sharing specific pasts there is a tendency to engage with past injustices.

Most do not understand European memory as unified. Rather, they emphasize the coexistence of different memory narratives and different (national) perspectives. The great potential of a European memory is its capacity to incorporate multiple perspectives and manage the inevitable conflicts of different memory narratives. In this light, our notion of reflexive particularism does not infer a seamlessly affirmative view of the universal: specific dispositions, no longer taken at face value, become, through a complicated negotiation process, part of one's own (national) self-understanding. This endogenization of universal values partially requires that we measure others according to our own standards. Deference to the memory imperative has become part of national self-understanding. People sometimes experience universal values as a threat to particularism. Once specific practices (for example the memory imperative) are endogenized, however, they become part of the national self and are consequential beyond (one's own) particularism.

Sceptical narratives

By sceptical narratives we mean suspicion of uniformly positive, often heroic, national imagery and its displacement by a mode of membership that emphasizes the dark side of one's national past (for example perpetratorship, collaboration, passive bystanderism or immoral collusion). In Germany, this entails the aforementioned paradigm of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*; in Austria and Poland, it represents a break with historically prevalent narratives of victimhood. Sceptical narratives tied to the memory imperative provide a negative foil that delineates constructive 'lessons from history'. The sceptical gaze onto one's national past, furthermore, entails normative expectations for one's identity in the present. Tellingly, these normative images are usually not nationally specific, but of European or even universal character. The following argumentative tropes are dominant. Respondents underline the normative significance of the memory imperative: self-critical engagement with one's negative past is considered not only a necessary precondition to avoid repeating old 'mistakes'

and going forward (learning from history), but also a criterion for European identity. As Nadia (18), a high school student from a town in Masuria, northeast Poland puts it:

> What happened in history – regardless whether good or bad – carries some lessons with it. We do learn from our mistakes, but also from those of others, don't we? Therefore, I believe that no one should forget anything, since everything is some kind of an experience for us … because what happened in the past shapes us. The entire history influences how we are today, in what kind of country we live, in what kind of Europe.
>
> <div align="right">(PL12, 266–71)</div>

'Real Europeans', according to this view, cope with their dark past (for example Turkish recognition and 'working through' the Armenian genocide is demanded as a condition for joining the EU). These sceptical narratives are more frequent in Germany and Poland than in Austria.

Yet, there are also significant differences. In Germany, especially, we observe attempts to dissolve the distinction between perpetrators and victims, with a tendency to universalize both roles. Hence, the German respondents' references to perpetratorship often remain abstract, since National Socialism and to some extent *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* continue to impede affirmative identifications with the nation. A strengthened identification with Europe becomes, in turn, a possible antidote or escape route – Germany as merely one member of a benign, post-fascist Europe. Many of the Polish participants vehemently resist this position. For them, clear delineations of historical roles are a prerequisite for shared memories. As Ryszard (46), a firefighter from rural northeastern Poland, puts it, 'we do have a shared past. Just that some were the oppressors and the others the oppressed. That's a shared past' (PL03, 365).

The Poles gear their sceptical narratives towards recognition. This primarily applies to the *co*-perpetratorship of Poles reflected in responsibility for the expulsion of Germans. To engage satisfactorily with history, we asked others (especially Germans) to consider 'historical truth', stressing the extent of Polish suffering and the historical responsibility of Germans. Many Polish interviewees are inclined to defend their status as victims against alleged 'falsification of history' coming from abroad. From a cosmopolitan perspective this suggests that a memory trope originally from Germany (expulsion) is reflected and re-particularized. The Austrian account frequently invokes the decade-long silence about the Nazi past. This unfolds partly in the spirit of self-criticism and partly in rejection of what they perceive as an unjust ascription from outside (often by Germans). Despite these country-specific differences, self-conscious references to the past and to European normative expectations coalesce in a *memory imperative* – visible in almost all the discussion groups.

Change of perspective

By change of perspective, we refer to a primarily cognitive process that involves incorporating the perspectives of others – groups, nations, polities. We examine to

what extent they apprehend and engage with the views of other memory collectives. We distinguish between two analytic levels: the first concerns the mere knowledge and acknowledgment of perspectives other than one's own. Sebastian (39), a lecturer in history from a town in North Rhine Westphalia, offers the following statement:

> We cannot think of Europe or a European cultural landscape without realizing that different nations perceive of this or that event, which should be less significant for us, let's rather say, as so formative; and the view of the peoples perceives differently. So we see the French as the country of 'savoir vivre', wine and stuff like that. And they still quite see us also as causing World War II.
>
> (D14, 105)

A second analytic level reveals active attempts for a dialogical engagement with the standpoint of others. Especially Polish respondents stress the diversity of national perspectives and histories. However, they address these differences in plural terms and evoke them in conjunction with European similarities (shared cultural heritage being the main theme). Poland deems itself an organic part of Europe (perhaps consistent with Central European tendencies to distance itself from eastern Europe). Polish participants endorse the quest for a European memory that integrates different experiences (such as forced migrations), especially insofar as it will do justice to the 'historical truth' and address the wrongs of the Second World War. Generally, in Poland, the search for similarity amid pervasive difference comes to the fore, but Poles reject attempts to singularize or homogenize memory. In our material, Poles exhibit a remarkable awareness of the plurality of historical orientations that mark various European countries. This is particularly strong among highly educated groups. According to Karolina (49), a staff member at a research and educational institute in Warsaw:

> Germans will remember their war experience differently from Poles – that is, closely linked to their situation, with what they suffered back then and what affected us. Probably, it is not about bringing uniformity to this. … One needs to understand these different perspectives to be able to work jointly on themes that are suffused with conflict or with those which are borderline. That is even good and interesting, because one digs deeper and understands more.
>
> (PL13, 132–4)

This quote is emblematic of the link between recognition and acknowledgment and how it serves as a prerequisite for the likelihood of a change of perspective. Members of groups who perceive themselves as victims (in the dual sense of history and of a lack of recognition) are less inclined to ascribe great potential to shared forms of collective memory. In general, the mode we call change of perspective leads subjects to project a 'looking glass self'. Knowledge of other perspectives compels reckoning with them – be it through incorporation, rejection or stereotyping. At times, some even perceive the active change of perspective as a means of combining the memory

imperative, or learning from history, with a European perspective. Irene (20), a university student living in Vienna, says:

> I think that through a common memory one gets different perspectives about events and that it is important that one doesn't always see it from, how shall I say, one's own state's memory, but also has to hear other opinions; perhaps this is good, because it helps to diminish prejudices.

<div align="right">(A14, 142)</div>

In each case, however, we see an intermeshing in which one reconfigures one's own perspective with reference to those of other people – a reflexive particularism.

Discussion

Different topoi of ambivalence characterize reflexive particularism. First, many of the respondents saw the EU as synonymous with homogenization; they perceived its progress as a threat to national autonomy and thus rejected it. The other two expressions of ambivalence lament the incomplete or insufficient realization of European aspirations. They criticize EU institutions for not enforcing their own mandates with adequate force; meanwhile, nation-states and their publics draw fire for insisting on particularist interests, the defence of which prevents further Europeanization. On the relationship of Europe and the nation, reflexive particularism captures a *contradictory simultaneity*: Europe is sometimes too national and not European enough; at other times, it is too European and not national enough.

European identity remains ambiguous and contested, suggesting the difficulty (even impossibility, for some) of creating such a broad platform of identification. In turn, one can interpret this as evidence of the continuing dominance of national self-understandings. Accordingly, there is often a tendency to lock the relationship between the global (European) and the local (national) into a dichotomy of universal and particularist attachments. Application of a cosmopolitan lens suggests a different conclusion. Our research confirms that people still tie their memories of Europe to country-specific narratives and to the respective path-dependencies in which they embed these memories. Yet, despite these differences – indeed perhaps because of them – Europe is beginning to create a *shared mnemonic inventory*. Memories of the Second World War convey powerful messages for most Europeans who reject exclusionary forms of nationalism. Moreover, the normative appeal of Europeanness – despite and, again, frequently because its potential has not yet been maximized or met – is widely accepted. Along with it, a set of specific memory practices has evolved – sceptical narratives about the nation and past human-rights violations; the recognition of other memories; and a robust ability to adopt the perspectives of others. While we cannot speak of a uniform European memory, we do detect a set of shared memory practices with a unifying potential. What matters today is no longer actual historical memory but a particular shared mode of engaging with the past. The moral (and political) desirability of certain memory practices is a potent force. To be sure,

the prevalence of these practices remains essentially contested. Yet, precisely this continuous contestation is spurring a self-conscious engagement with the politics of memory. Affirmation of the European project does not indicate a rejection of the national; and ambivalence towards Europe does not imply a rejection of the cosmopolitan tenets of that project. Instead, as we observe, the cosmopolitanization of European identification finds expression in the increased insertion of European imageries into national life.

By introducing the notion of reflexive particularism, we direct attention to the intersection of multiple analytical scales and levels of cosmopolitanization. Reflexive particularism provides an opportunity to bring together three generative forms of cosmopolitanism, which are expressed in the following research trajectories. *Deliberative cosmopolitanism*, is observed in the self-conscious work of 'memory entrepreneurs' and by elites (Szerszynski and Urry 2002). Several of our groups (namely historians, history teachers and memorial site staff) fall into this category. *Coercive cosmopolitanism*, primarily driven by the legitimating surcharge of the memory imperative, coalesces with a diffuse awareness of global catastrophes and the attendant transnational spaces of social and political responsibility that form in its wake (Beck 2006). *Banal cosmopolitanism* refers to the experience of globality as embedded in everyday life (Beck 2002). This third form involves cultural inter-sections in transnational contexts. It attends to the migration of people, cultures, tastes and other aspects of global interdependency (Glick Schiller and Wimmer 2003; Hannerz 1990; Lamont and Aksartova 2002). Banal cosmopolitanism is advanced through the kind of vernacular expressions we identified in our group discussion and through self-conscious ideologies. Kurasawa demonstrates:

> that cosmopolitanism is, just as importantly, a transnational mode of practice whereby actors construct bonds of mutual commitment and reciprocity across borders through public discourse and socio-political struggle. … Political alliances between individuals and groups from various parts of the world are taking on a networked or web-like character that is itself the undergirding of cosmopolitanism from below.
>
> (Kurasawa 2004: 234)

These different cosmopolitan dynamics are not merely additive, but linking them underlines the multiplicity of scales and the fact that cosmopolitanism is not a prefigured idea but constituted at these intersections.

Bringing together communicative, institutional and vernacular dimensions is in accordance with our findings, indicating that instances or interventions of the cosmo-politan do not suspend the national but circumscribe how it is recast. Moreover, our focus on path-dependency motivates the conclusion that cosmopolitanism itself is being transformed. Contrary to earlier visions of a universal, one-size-fits-all form of cosmopolitanism, a reflexive particularism characterizes cosmopolitanization, which articulates various intersecting historical trajectories and acknowledges multiple circles of identification. To link historically constituted figurations and to move

beyond a uniform conception of identity, we would like to highlight two implications derived from this study for future research in the cosmopolitan vein.

The first is a methodological point. In the context of Europe's cosmopolitanization, reflexive particularism is a self-conscious process that can itself generate new meanings. It accommodates the directives of a *histoire croisée* insofar as it compels the exploration of questions 'concerning scale, categories of analysis, the relationship between diachrony and synchrony, and regimes of historicity and reflexivity' (Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 32). Reflexive particularism in Europe is the result of *intercrossings*. We borrow this term from the work of Werner and Zimmermann who define it:

> as a structuring cognitive activity that, through various acts of framing, shapes a space of understanding. By such means, a cognitive process articulating object, observer, and environment is carried out. The intercrossing of spatial and temporal scales, which can be both inherent in the object as well as the result of a theoretical and methodological choice, is a particularly revealing example of this interweaving of the empirical and reflexive dimensions.
>
> (Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 39)

Reflexive particularism, anchored in the concept of *intersection*, points to the coextensive (and co-evolving) operation of social practices and analytical categories. Reflexive particularism instantiates this approach, challenging methodological nationalism by 'opening up lines of inquiry that encourage a rethinking in historical time, of the relationships among observation, the object of study, and the analytical instruments used'(Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 45). Methodological nationalism has operated within a historically specific epistemological framework of concepts (for example nations and nationalism), and so does methodological cosmopolitanism (for example reflexive particularism). Thus, by historicizing fixed categories of social enquiry, and by calling attention to the fact that interactions (in our case, with the Other and its histories) themselves shape the character of interaction, reflexive particularism opens new avenues to study the balance, indeed the very nature, of change and stability.

The second, related, implication is to push for a more complex understanding of 'groupness' and the ways in which multiple forms of identification can coexist or clash. A narrow understanding of belonging circumscribes much of the debate on cosmopolitan orientations, which no doubt the vagueness of the notion of identity compounds (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). A naturalized image of the nation usually underlies strong forms of belonging, such as communitarianism and ethnic nationalism. By contrast, both its normative champions and nationalist opponents frequently characterize cosmopolitanism as the breaking down of boundaries: people associate freely, unmediated by blinkered categories of nation or group.

Underlying this dualistic notion, however, is an assumption that belonging operates primarily, even exclusively, in the context of communal allegiances expressing thick solidarities. But we ought not succumb to the opposite fallacy either, which presents cosmopolitan identity 'as freedom from social belonging rather than a

special form of belonging, a view from nowhere or everywhere, rather than from particular social spaces' (Calhoun 2003: 532). With respect to habits, institutional practices and the aspirational language that permeates its political and cultural discourses, Europe provides the conditions of possibility for new, diversified spaces of collective understanding. Ultimately, at both the national and cosmopolitan levels, successful identification with distant others is predicated on a balance between thick attachments with concrete others (kin, local) and thinner versions of solidarity (the nation, the global). Reflexive particularism describes this simultaneity and allows us to specify the difficult exploration of collective self-understanding that ensues. Reflexive particularism engages with the nation in two simultaneous, ostensibly incompatible, ways – through the endogenization of European tropes and the boundaries that resist them.

Appendix – Groups interviewed

Group No.	Austria (A)	Germany (D)	Poland (PL)
01	15–25 y.o. countryside	15–25 y.o. East	15–25 y.o. countryside
02	15–25 y.o. Vienna	15–25 y.o. West	15–25 y.o. city
03	40–50 y.o. countryside	40–50 y.o. East	40–50 y.o. countryside
04	40–50 y.o. Vienna	40–50 y.o. West	40–50 y.o. city
05	65+ y.o. countryside	65+ y.o. East	65+ y.o. countryside
06	65+ y.o. Vienna	65+ y.o. West	65+ y.o. city
07	Family 1 countryside	Family East	Family 1 countryside
08	Family 2 Vienna	Family West	
09			Family 2 city
10		Non-German Residents 1	
11		Non-German Residents 1	
12	High school students	High school students	High school students
13	Historians	Historians	Historians
14	University students	University (History) Students	University students
15	History teachers	History teachers	History teachers
16	Politicians (MPs)	Politicians (MPs)	Politicians (MPs)
17			Radical Party (LPR)
18	Memorial site staff	Memorial site staff	Memorial site staff
19	Jewish community	Jewish community	Jewish community
20	Journalists (Daily)	Journalists (Weekly)	Journalists (Daily)
21	Expellees	Expellees	Forced migrants
22	War Children	War Children	
23	Adult education providers	Protestant Academy	
24			
25			Catholic priests
26			German minority
Total	19 groups	21 groups	20 groups

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Beck distinguishes between *normative* cosmopolitanism, which refers to the orientations and actions of concrete actors, and *methodological* cosmopolitanism, which reflects the perspective of the observer and interrogates the conceptual and methodological toolkit of the social scientist.
2. Although there are various forms of particularism that can be renegotiated in a reflexive way (for example on a regional or local level), in this article we concentrate on the reconfiguration of the national in its relation to the European.
3. It is, of course, problematic to homogenize memory cultures by adducing broad signifiers such as east and west. Tony Judt (2005), for instance, points out that the experiences of communism in eastern and central Europe have been rather heterogeneous.
4. Authors often quote *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the German original in English-speaking literature. In translation, the term takes on a dual meaning – 'coming to terms with the past' and 'mastering the past' – thus bearing out the polyvalence of the concept.
5. The abbreviations indicate the country (D = Germany, A = Austria, PL = Poland), the group discussion's number (see Appendix) and the paragraph cited.

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