Introduction

Transnational political networks play a central role in shaping the political process within the present-day European Union (EU). This process is characterised above all by a high complexity of institutional procedures and policy issues. It involves national governments and supranational institutions like the European Commission and the European Parliament (EP), but also a large number of political and societal actors from political parties to socio-economic interest groups and non-governmental organisations that have developed from the new social movements of the 1970s. As scholars of public policy first observed in relation to national political systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s,[1] increasingly complex regulatory issues and growing domestic distributional conflicts have increased the importance of access to information, technical expertise and the ability to muster political support and create societal coalitions for policy options for influencing increasingly informal processes of coordination and decision-making. This informal coordination tends to marginalise parliaments as the traditional sites of deliberation and legislative decision-making. These conditions apply even more in the EU of twenty-seven member states, where no political actor or collective interest can easily dominate policy agendas. Indeed, national political actors and collective interests stand no realistic chance of influencing the policy-making process significantly unless they are well connected across borders in transnational political networks, from the more formalised cooperation of EU-level political parties with a general stake in EU politics to highly informal expert networks within a specific policy sector, or what Peter M. Haas first called an 'epistemic community'.[2]

[1] See by way of introduction, Karen Heard-Lauréote, 'Transnational Networks. Informal Governance in the European Political Space', in Wolfram Kaiser and Peter Starie (eds.), *Transnational European Union. Towards a Common Political Space* (London: Routledge, 2005), 36–60.

[2] Peter M. Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Co-ordination', *International Organization* 46 (1992), 1–35.

As Beate Kohler-Koch and others have argued,[3] the EU is and has no government in the sense of the exercise of clearly defined powers by state institutions in a hierarchical institutional system. Rather, it is a multi-level system of governance with supranational, national and subnational decision-making forums and actors in which political networks of one hue or another play a crucial role in vertically linking these different levels, and horizontally connecting member state governments, supranational institutions and non-governmental actors at the EU level. The term network governance seeks to capture the informality of the political process within the formal constitutional framework of the EU. Importantly, however, it also attempts to cover dimensions of governing Europe that extend beyond decision-making at the EU level, especially processes of socialisation and political transfer. Such processes are partially instigated and definitely facilitated by supranational integration as well as feeding back into this process, but they mainly take place in trans-governmental and trans-national spaces. In short, transnational political networks play a crucial role in a European political space characterised by 'hollowed-out', more and more decentralised nation-states and fluid decision-making structures within a supranational political system.[4]

Defining governance as 'the practice of coordinating activities through networks, partnerships and deliberative forums', Paul Hirst has non-chalantly claimed with the historical innocence of a political scientist that this form of governance by networks has 'grown up on the ruins of the 1970s'.[5] In this perspective, the shift to governance in the present-day 'centre-less' European society occurred with the collapse of the unitary nation-states with state-centred government after the oil crisis of 1973, when economic growth across western Europe slowed down, unemployment rose massively, inflation went up and budget and state deficits soared. In the period of accelerated globalisation thereafter state institutions were less and less capable of securing lavish welfare state provisions, progressively losing their regulatory competence and legitimacy. Yet the first car-free day in 1973 was no more the zero hour of European governance

[3] For an overview see Beate Kohler-Koch and Berthold Rittberger, 'Review Article: The "Governance Turn" in EU Studies', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (2006), 27–49.
[4] Cf. John C. Peterson, 'Policy Networks', in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez (eds.), *European Integration Theory* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), 117–35. Still useful, Tanja Börzel, 'What's So Special about Policy Networks? An Exploration of the Concept and Its Usefulness in Studying European Governance', *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP) 1–16 (1997): http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/1997-016a.htm. Accessed 1 February 2007.
[5] Paul Hirst, 'Democracy and Governance', in Jon Pierre (ed.), *Debating Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19.

signifying – from this often normative perspective – the end of the dark middle ages of centralised nation-state government than the German capitulation on 8 May 1945 marked a totally new beginning for the German and other western European democracies. After World War II the western European nation-states were not as hermetically sealed off from their international environment and their political systems and governments not nearly as autarchic, hierarchically structured and capable of stringent decision-making as Hirst's notion of their later 'ruins' would have us believe. In fact, national governments realised quickly after 1945 how interdependent the western European economies were. When Jean Monnet developed the plan for the European integration of the coal and steel sector in early 1950, it reflected in part his realisation that the French national modernisation plan for unilateral reconstruction had failed. The smaller Benelux economies depended even more on a German economic revival for their own welfare. At the same time, national political systems were also undergoing change. The neo-corporatist political structures of the Netherlands and Belgium were characterised by complex institutionalised coordination between state institutions and societal 'pillar' organisations. At the same time, the postwar political systems became more pluralistic with greater contestation of policy principles and ideas, especially in the larger western European countries – Germany,[6] Italy and France – which experienced sharp left–right political divides and confrontation over domestic and foreign policy. At the same time, political leaders had to manage at times fragile coalitions which also complicated decision-making, not least in foreign policy. This was no longer treated as the domain of small elites of diplomats defining and negotiating cohesive 'national interests'. Instead, European policy in particular was closely intertwined with domestic political party priorities and social group interests. These postwar circumstances were very propitious for the formation of cross-border links and political networks like transnational Christian democracy to influence especially the incipient integration process which started at the inter-governmental level with the creation – induced by the American Marshall Plan – of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1948.

The role of these early postwar transnational networks was discussed by neo-functionalists like Ernst B. Haas in his book *The Uniting of Europe*,

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[6] Throughout this book the term Germany is used for the western zones of occupation and the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 onwards.

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published in 1958.[7] With their enthusiasm for the integration process and without access to sources other than those publicly available like policy statements and parliamentary debates, however, the neo-functionalists put too much emphasis on the formal institutionalisation of transnational cooperation. They also argued without much empirical evidence that the political collusion between especially transnational business and supranational institutions was driving the integration process forward, as both actors acquired a self-interest in upgrading policy-making to the new European level. They largely failed to capture the informality of the activities of transnational networks such as political parties. Instead, they basically treated them as nation-state type actors, only operating at the new supranational level, without bringing out the specificities of their transnational cooperation and integration. Focused on explaining supranational integration, moreover, the neo-functionalists also did not establish the crucial links between this new supranational level and the national levels of politics and policy-making.

Aside from misguided assumptions about semi-automatic functional 'spill-over' from one economic sector to another and from economic into political integration, however, neo-functionalist theory in its early days and its application to empirical case studies from the 1950s also operated on the assumption of a dichotomy between political forces interested in driving the integration process forward on the one hand and reticent nation-states and their governments on the other, who were fighting a lost battle. In this form, early neo-functionalism disintegrated with the Empty Chair crisis in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1965–6, which seemed to demonstrate the resilience of the nation-state, and it was later even dropped altogether by one of its founders, Haas. Its deficiencies led to the discarding of the transnational dimension of integration by most later theories, especially the state-centric liberal inter-governmentalism of Andrew Moravcsik[8] developed from Stanley Hoffmann's earlier dissident realism.[9] Even political scientists, who have used the network concept for understanding present-day EU governance more recently, have not revisited the origins of European Union in the first two decades after World War II.

[7] Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe. Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950–57* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004 [1958]).
[8] Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London: UCL Press, 1998).
[9] Stanley Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation State and the Case of Western Europe', *Daedalus* 95 (1966), 862–915.

The early historiography of European integration was similarly char-
acterised by a strong normative overdrive. In a Hegelian perspective,
European integration appeared as the linear ascendancy of federalist ideal-
ism over the nation-states and their internecine wars. Walter Lipgens – the
first holder of the Chair in European Integration History at the European
University Institute from 1976 to 1979 – founded this historiographical
tradition.[10] A Catholic historian, who published critical essays about
Bismarck's Prussian-dominated creation by stealth of the German Reich
in the nineteenth century, and an active member of the European
Movement and the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), he
fervently supported Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's policy of Western
integration. To him, the formation of a geographically limited core
Europe of the integrated European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC),
founded in 1951–2, and the EEC, created in 1957–8, signified a morally
superior attempt to overcome the nation-state. In a revealing passage in
an article published in a German pedagogical history journal, Lipgens
wrote that school teachers should discuss European integration as 'the
most successful peace movement to date'. They would need to imprint
on their pupils' minds that 'all deficiencies and weaknesses, the talk of
Brussels bureaucrats and crises . . . result almost without exception from
areas where integration has not gone far enough'.[11] Lipgens was particularly
fascinated by the contributions of the resistance movements and the
European movements to the European 'idea'.[12] Crucially, however, he
was not very concerned about, and failed to establish, causal links between
these movements' ideas and proposals and the actual process of core
Europe formation comprising France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands,
Belgium and Luxembourg. As a result, contemporary historians – like
political scientists – subsequently also abandoned all attempts to trace
transnational dimensions of European integration.

In view of this and similar cheerful narratives of the origins of European
Union, Hans-Peter Schwarz predicted as early as 1983 that historians would
in future deconstruct the idealist interpretation of integration 'with similar

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[10] See in greater detail Wilfried Loth, 'Walter Lipgens (1925–1984)', in Heinz Duchardt *et al.* (eds.),
    Europa-Historiker. Ein biographisches Handbuch, vol. I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,
    2006), 317–36; Wolfram Kaiser, '"Überzeugter Katholik und CDU-Wähler": Zur Historiographie
    der Integrationsgeschichte am Beispiel Walter Lipgens', *Journal of European Integration History* 8
    (2002), 119–28.
[11] Walter Lipgens, 'Der Zusammenschluß Westeuropas. Leitlinien für den historischen Unterricht',
    Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 34 (1983), 345–72.
[12] See in particular, Walter Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, vol. I: *1945–1947* (Oxford:
    Clarendon Press, 1982 [German 1977]).

cynical joy' as American revisionists in the 1960s writing about the alleged responsibility of US capitalist foreign policy for the start of the Cold War.[13] Shortly afterwards, without sharing the neo-Marxist assumptions of William Appleman Williams and other left-wing US historians of the Cold War, but with at times even greater cynicism, the British economic historian Alan S. Milward reconceptualised the origins of European integration as the result of the inter-state bargaining of 'national interests'. Milward replaced Lipgens' transnational movements with the nation-states as the only relevant and apparently cohesive actors, and ideas with material interests as the only motivating forces that have ever mattered in the integration process. In his first book,[14] Milward argued that the Schuman Plan of 1950 resulted from a search by western European governments for an economic peace settlement through integration to control Germany. In his second book, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*,[15] he maintained much more provocatively that the core motive for European integration was not to overcome the nation-state, but to strengthen it. In this perspective, the formation of the ECSC and EEC stabilised the nation-states through the Europeanisation of welfare policies that no single state alone could have sustained in the longer run.

   Bringing states back into the history of European integration, as Milward did, was crucial. After all, it was national governments that negotiated what Moravcsik has called the 'grand bargains' like the ECSC and EEC treaties. It is also important to consider the role of economic motives for integration in the analysis of the origins of European Union. After all, the integration process started with the creation of customs unions, first for coal and steel in the ECSC and then for all industrial and agricultural products in the EEC. Milward wrote transnational actors out of the history of integration altogether, however. Concentrating on the overriding importance in his view of material economic interests for national preference formation, moreover, he also confounded ideas and idealism, as in his superficial discussion of the European policies of leading politicians such as Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Paul-Henri Spaak.[16] Yet, as Markus Jachtenfuchs has argued in his study of the history of constitutional change in the EU, 'actors guided by ideas are not blue-eyed idealists who take decisions without considering their impact on

[13] Hans-Peter Schwarz, 'Die Europäische Integration als Aufgabe der Zeitgeschichtsforschung', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31 (1983), 566.
[14] Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945–51* (London: Methuen, 1984).
[15] Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[16] Ibid., chapter 6.

welfare and influence'.[17] Despite the emphasis on the economics of inte-
gration, Milward's analysis of what he has recently rephrased 'national
[integration] strategies'[18] still has profoundly realist connotations.
Although he has argued that 'the process of integration is not separable
from the evolution of domestic politics',[19] domestic politics mostly comes
alive in his books through the eyes of policy-makers in state institutions,
especially bureaucrats in ministries. Milward has not captured the nature of
the domestic politics of integration well enough, let alone the significance
of transnational networks for its contestation at domestic and European
level. Where Lipgens failed to show causal links between transnational
movements, their ideas and governmental decision-making, Milward –
juggling with economic statistics – has also largely failed to establish causal
links between shifts in trade or the musings of minor civil servants in
economic ministries about them and the integration policies of European
states.

At least, Lipgens and Milward have attempted to transgress the national
perspective in reconstructing the origins of European Union. Some
younger scholars are beginning to write about the history of the present-
day EU as the evolution of a political system with complex institutional
structures, multilateral bargaining by member-states, supranational insti-
tutions that were not easily controlled by governments and the growing
role of transnational political and societal actors in shaping the emerging
EEC policies.[20] For much of the last twenty years, however, most con-
temporary historians wrote about national policies 'towards Europe' based
on one set of government sources only.[21] This dominant approach has been
steeped in the most unreflected manner in 'realist' assumptions about the
autonomy of foreign policy-making elites in defining and negotiating
'national interests' of a mostly foreign and security policy type. European
integration appears as controlled by political leaders and foreign ministries
with fixed preferences. This 'Gaullist' historiography, in which unspecified

[17] Markus Jachtenfuchs, *Die Konstruktion Europas. Verfassungsideen und institutionelle Entwicklung*
(Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2002), 261.
[18] Alan S. Milward, *The Rise and Fall of a National Strategy 1945–1963* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 6.
[19] Alan S. Milward, 'Conclusion: the value of history', in Alan S. Milward *et al.*, *The Frontier of
National Sovereignty. History and Theory 1945–1992* (London: Routledge, 1993), 187.
[20] See, for example, Piers Ludlow, *The European Community and the Crises of the 1960s. Negotiating the
Gaullist Challenge* (London: Routledge, 2006). See also the contributions to Wolfram Kaiser,
Brigitte Leucht and Morten Rasmussen (eds.), *Origins of a European Polity: Supranational and
transnational Integration 1950–72* (forthcoming).
[21] For an overview see Wolfram Kaiser, 'From State to Society? The Historiography of European
Integration', in Michelle Cini and Angela K. Bourne (eds.), *Palgrave Advances in European Union
Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 190–208.

actors like 'France' (and other countries) sometimes appear capable of 'thinking' and 'feeling' (and probably making love, too), shockingly makes little difference in its analysis between the 'concert' of the Great Powers after the Congress of Vienna in 1814–15 and European policy-making by elected governments in pluralist democracies within the emerging highly institutionalised supranational and transnational political space.

The present-day EU penetrates its member-states and national societies and affects European citizens in such an all-pervasive way that it should be unacceptable to write about postwar (western) Europe without elaborate and intelligent reference to the integration process, as Tony Judt has largely done, for example.[22] Yet the historiography of European integration has been so conceptually underdeveloped and, for the most part, boring to read that it has remained marginal in research on contemporary European history – and this exactly at a time when modern European history even of the nineteenth century, which was treated for too long as a period only of national integration and conflict, has been reconceptualised as the over-lapping and 'networked' history[23] of socio-economic, cultural and political phenomena transcending, and of individuals and social groups linked across, national boundaries. It is vital therefore to move decisively beyond nation-state-centric approaches to understanding the increasingly inte-grated western Europe after 1945 and to connect it for the first time with the political and societal history of (western) Europe more generally. One important path towards such better integration, and the approach of this book, is the study of transnational networks of political and social groups that engaged with, and influenced, European integration while remaining embedded in national political and cultural contexts. Rejecting Lipgens' and more recent normative assumptions about the superior democratic quality *per se* of the involvement of 'civil society' actors in European policy-making, moreover, this new focus needs to target the most relevant net-works. They were not the resistance and European movements, but, at least in the early postwar period, political parties and party leaders. Only they could use various channels to translate transnationally deliberated and negotiated ideas and policies into national governmental policy-making and European-level decision-making, while providing the crucial link with

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[22] Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Heinemann, 2005).
[23] Cf. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung: der Ansatz der histoire croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 607–36.

national polities to guarantee the ratification of treaties and enhance the democratic legitimacy of integration. Of these party networks, transnational Christian democracy was hegemonic in western Europe in the first twenty years after World War II. It dominated the formation of the ECSC/EEC core Europe with fundamental long-term repercussions for the present-day EU.

Transnational Christian democracy was not limited to the national parties or the European-level predecessors of the present-day European People's Party (EPP). Their congresses were forums for intensive communication and exchange of ideas, but their resolutions had a more declamatory character. Christian democratic leaders also met informally in many different contexts, most importantly in the so-called Geneva Circle, however, and when they engaged in inter-state cooperation and negotiating, they never made a clear-cut distinction between their political party and governmental roles either. Transnational Christian democracy was thus an only partly formalised and institutionalised web of multilateral and bilateral contacts and communication. This network fulfilled multiple functions, not least creating political trust, deliberating policy, especially on European integration, marginalising internal dissent within the national parties, socialising new members into an existing policy consensus, coordinating governmental policy-making and facilitating parliamentary ratification of integration treaties. These and other functions together provided crucial guarantees for the exercise of what political scientists have called entrepreneurial leadership by politicians like Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer, for example, by limiting their domestic political risks in a decisive way to facilitate bold and at times extremely controversial policy choices.

For reconstructing transnational Christian democracy as a political network, it is paramount to overcome the prevalent national fragmentation and introspectiveness of most research on political Catholicism and Catholic and Christian democratic parties as they developed from about the mid-nineteenth century. Recent collaborative comparative research has underlined once more the national, and even regional and local, specificities of their development.[24] More often than not the impression of national difference fades out in European comparisons of this kind the

[24] Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2004); Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout (eds.), *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918–1945* (London: Routledge, 2004); Emiel Lamberts (ed.), *Christian Democracy in the European Union [1945/1995]* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997); Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (eds.), *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918–1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

extreme heterogeneity of the national parties themselves. A fresh look at Christian democracy from a transnational network perspective suggests, however, that particular sections of these confessional or people's parties often had more in common with similar groups in other national parties than with their favourite enemies within their own party. This in turn impacted on the evolution of the Christian democratic network with indirect consequences for the way European integration developed after 1918 was controlled by left-Catholics with a primary interest in national welfare state policies, their intensified postwar networking was dominated by middle-class liberal-conservative elites with a common project for creating an integrated Europe based on a curious mélange of traditional confessional notions of occidental culture and anti-communism and broadly liberal economic ideas. These elites initially were not even in the majority within some national parties, let alone in domestic politics and parliaments. By utilising their transnational cooperation effectively, however, they succeeded to a very large extent at implanting their core ideas in supranational European integration.

With this much more comprehensive concept of transnational Christian democracy, which transcends the national fragmentation, this book will also take a fresh look at the role of particular values and guiding ideas for European integration, which were deeply embedded in the collective historical experience, societal structures and political interests of Christian democracy. Just as historical and sociological institutionalists have rightly argued that the politics of the present-day EU cannot be understood without reference to its historical development since 1945, this book demonstrates that any explanation of the origins of European Union after World War II needs to address the long-term continuities and change from the nineteenth century through to the postwar period to understand the formation and evolution of the ECSC/EEC core Europe. The roots of transnational Christian democracy's broad constitutional ideas and preferences for European integration were embedded in their largely shared collective experience of the overbearing centralised liberal nation-state, their regional political anchoring and identity, their preferences for societal – and political – organisation in line with the principle of subsidiarity derived from Catholic social teaching and federalist thought as it largely developed inside the intellectual tradition of personalism – and this combined with the borrowing of essentially liberal interwar ideas about functional market integration as a suitable mechanism for eventually bringing about political integration as well. At the same time, the