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Building Europe on a Weak Field: Law, Economics, and Scholarly Avatars in Transnational Politics¹

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The present article mobilizes the concepts of “weak field” and “avatar” to explain Europe’s historically variable meanings, analyzing two successful reinventions (as a “community of law” and a “single market”) and one failure (“social Europe”). Focusing on law and economics, the authors first show that the weak field of EU studies serves as a crossroads between nationally anchored scholarly professions and Europe’s political field; second, they show that under certain conditions legal and economic constructions have exerted performative effects via scholarly avatars. Depending on their strategic positioning, scholarly avatars facilitate symbolic exchange across political, technocratic, and scholarly boundaries and endow theoretical constructions with performative potential.

INTRODUCTION

The model of Europe that emerged just after World War II bears very little similarity to its present-day incarnation. Despite the imagery of a

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linear progression in many narratives of integration—an imagery that is immediately invoked by the term “integration” itself—Europe originated as a pacific project and was then reinvented at least twice between the 1960s and the 1990s, each time in the image of a qualitatively distinctive kind of government.² In the 1960s, Europe emerged as a “community of law” that would promote political unity and economic rationality by reconciling national legal and regulatory institutions; by the late 1980s, Europe reasserted itself as an economic entity—a “single market”—whose central function was to liberalize, impose budgetary restraint, and maintain low-inflation monetary policy. While legal and economic justifications have always existed side-by-side within the European project, the question of “integration for what?” had fundamentally different answers in these two periods. In today’s crisis-ridden context, new answers to this question may yet emerge.

Lacking the well-institutionalized political, professional, and bureaucratic apparatuses that insulate long-established nation-states from radically novel performative interventions, Europe’s definitional vulnerability sets it apart. Yet European integration does bear similarities to Western state-building processes, including an interconnection between the construction of governing institutions and the production of a specifically “European” scholarly knowledge. Stated differently, European integration is wholly comparable with other cases of state formation in terms of the centrality of “knowledge-bearing elites” (Reuschemeyer and Skocpol 1996): very often bureaucrats are scholarly lawyers, economists are political appointees, former officials become lobbyists or found think tanks, and high-ranking European technocrats move between official positions and academic appointments.

Since this kind of hybridity is pronounced in European spaces, we invoke the term “scholarly avatar” to denote Brussels’s ubiquitous scholarly-professional colonies. Incorporating the avatar concept from the sociology of professions (Abbott 1988, 2005) into a field-oriented analytical framework, we analyze Europe building as a “palace war” (Dezalay and Garth 2002, 2011) that is comparable to other processes of state formation, with distinctive features that include a peculiar definitional instability that, we argue, can be understood by attending closely to the formation and strategic locations of scholarly avatars.

Depending on their strength and positioning, scholarly avatars have played important roles in Europe’s historical reinventions that are largely overlooked in existing sociological perspectives. Accordingly, our ap-

² We use the term “Europe” to denote a cultural category, an emergent polity, and the institutions of the European Union; we do this partly to simplify, since these institutions have had many names since their initiation. We discuss this further below (see pt. 4).

proach to the question of Europe's definitional instability and historical reinventions tracks the development of scholarly avatars between the field of European scholarly expertise and Brussels's political and bureaucratic spaces, attending to the conditions under which they acquire broad definitional powers. We pursue these questions here by focusing on law and economics, both because of the key historical roles they have played in the making of modern nation-states and because the history, language, and content of the European project clearly signal their political significance.

Conceptually, we argue that the question of Europe's definitional instability can be answered by jointly mobilizing the concepts of *field* and *avatar*, focusing on the relationship between Europe's political field and its field of scholarly expertise (or, in shorthand, the "field of EU studies"). We explore, first, the particularly weak character of the field of EU studies.³ One marker of the field's weakness is that the orienting stakes of scholarly production about Europe are often external: scholars of Europe are rarely oriented toward the pursuit of a career as strictly "European" scholars, partly because there are few professional avenues that allow it.

These observations lead to the crux of our argument. The implication of the weakness of the field of EU studies is that those who participate in the construction of theories of Europe are often invested in multiple sorts of professional arenas—academe; national governments, parties, and politics; international organizations and financial institutions; and European political and technocratic careers—rendering the field more of a crossroads than an endpoint. This fosters very real sociostructural ties between scholarly disciplines and European politics that have, under certain conditions, generated performative processes—that is, processes in which the "instruments and practices" of a profession help to constitute both identities and institutions (MacKenzie, Muniesa, and Siu 2007, p. 4). At the same time, the field of EU studies' weak boundaries and its lack of an autonomous center (dominated by no particular profession or discipline), combined with an unusual unsettledness of the European political field itself, help to generate performative processes in European politics that are both more volatile and, sometimes, more potent than in national political fields; that is, the weakness of the field helps to explain why Europe exhibits a peculiar definitional instability.

Against this theoretical background, we show that when European scholarly avatars have been well established in strategically powerful locations—the European Commission and the European Court of Justice, especially—they have been important forces driving the importation, le-

³ On the "weak field" concept, see Topalov (1994) and Vauchez (2008, 2011).

gitimation, and enactment of particular models of Europe: first as a community of law, then as a single market. We also show that the failure of social Europe can be explained by the absence of a powerful scholarly avatar on the ground in Brussels. Scholarly avatars can facilitate vital processes of symbolic exchange and translation across scholarly, political, and bureaucratic boundaries, not only helping to construct theoretical models of Europe but also helping to make them meaningful in political and bureaucratic arenas, and even playing key roles in their enactment in European law and policy. We thus argue that scholars and scholarship have been *constitutive* forces in European integration, conditional on the strength, strategic locations, and mediating, brokering, and translating activities of scholarly avatars. The weak field of EU studies and the scholarly avatars it tends to seed are thus central for understanding both Europe's peculiar definitional instability and the specific modes in which it was reinvented between the 1960s and the 1990s.

The article proceeds as follows. After reviewing the relevant literature and developing our theoretical framework, we support our claim of the weakness of the field of EU studies and pursue an analysis of its implications for Europe's historical reinventions. We mobilize biographical data, official reports, archival and historical records, interviews, and secondary sources to show that Europe's historical reinventions as a community of law and a single market were built on the colonization of Europe's bureaucratic and political crevices by legal and economic professionals (scholarly avatars). In each case, scholarly avatars served the critical function of facilitating symbolic exchange and endowing theoretical and political constructions with shared meaning. We provide historical evidence that the type of avatar colony (i.e., the scholarly discipline to which it was tied) helps to explain the particular forms in which Europe has been reinvented and that the establishment of avatar colonies in powerful positions in Brussels is a necessary but not sufficient condition of the reinvention of the European project. Finally, to strengthen our case, we provide a counterfactual analysis of a performative bid for "social Europe" that has thus far failed, partly as a result of the absence of a strategically positioned avatar in Brussels able to build its symbolic integrity and mobilize political and bureaucratic action on the basis of a shared vision.

CONCEPTUALIZING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Ideational and Sociological Accounts

Since social constructivism entered European studies,⁴ it has become generally accepted that “ideas matter” in causal analyses of European processes (Risse-Kappen 1995; see also Checkel 1999; Christiansen et al. 1999; Diez 1999). Accounts of integration centered on interests of different sorts—the oft-referenced debate between a “neofunctionalist” view in which European actors drive integration in a functional spillover process (Haas 1958; Schmitter 1970) and the “intergovernmentalist” position that heads of state use Europe to rationally maximize national economic interests (Moravcsik 1998)—were displaced by ideational and institutionalist explanations. While entire chapters of handbooks declared communicative and discursive practices constitutive of the social identities of European actors, an emergent ideational literature offered new interpretations of Europe as a project fundamentally shaped by political actors’ cognitive lenses (McNamara 1998; Parsons 2003; Jabko 2006). In the meantime, sociological institutionalists offered syntheses that blurred the hard structural/ideational distinction found in ideational political science approaches, emphasizing the importance of cultural frames in Europe-building episodes (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996; Diez 1999; Fligstein 2001; Stone Sweet, Sandholtz, and Fligstein 2001; Fligstein and Stone-Sweet 2002).⁵

These emergent research agendas, however, share the problem of relying on a broad and undifferentiated understanding of ideas and cognitive schemes, tending not to consider specifically scholarly ideas—much less scholarly professions—in Europe’s political processes. Meanwhile, the notion of “epistemic communities”—famously defined as a “network of knowledge-based professionals” (Adler and Haas 1992) and used to analyze scientific and technological expertise—has proven less useful in the analysis of expertise in general. The epistemic communities notion is particularly *en vogue* in the literature on governance, but like its ideational counterparts, it makes no distinction between forms of knowledge.⁶ In our view, the problem of nondifferentiation of ideas and inattention to their scholarly and professional origins is related to a limitation of the existing ideational literature, which has thus far had difficulty moving beyond the basic proposition that “ideas matter” to an understanding of

⁴ Constructivism’s arrival was marked by a special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy* (Christiansen, Jørgensen, and Wiener 1999).

⁵ For a variant of institutionalist explanation in political science, see Pierson (1998).

⁶ This is particularly problematic in the European context, where the commission has been very active in blurring the borders between scholarly and experience-based expertise (Robert and Vauchez 2010).

the interconnected processes by which ideas are produced, imported into political and bureaucratic spaces, and translated into categories of perception and programs of action.

The sociological variant of institutionalist analysis comes closest to our approach, emphasizing social movement–like processes in which institutional entrepreneurs mobilize cultural frames—often in response to some real or perceived crisis—in order to initiate, reinvigorate, or redirect Europe building. In this body of work, “cultural frames” can work as institutional catalysts in negotiations with no joint choice set (Scharpf 1988; Padgett and Ansell 1992; Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth 1992; Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996). We agree with this basic argument as well as the institutionalists’ field-based conceptualization of Europe (Fligstein and Stone-Sweet 2002; Fligstein and McAdam 2011). Still, institutionalist analyses largely overlook dynamics that we treat as central: the production and valuation of cultural frames at the intersection between the scholarly and the political.

More specifically, while rightly emphasizing the entrepreneurial manipulation of meanings in order to foster coordination, the institutionalist approach does not attend to either symbolic production or the valuation of particular frames over others. The institutionalist analysis of Europe’s 1980s single market initiatives, for instance, treats the “market” as a stable, transhistorical, treaty-based category in European politics, ignoring that in fact the “single market” denoted an entirely different object than the “common market” of Europe’s past (discussed further below). Simply by acknowledging this difference, we are presented with the problem of understanding why the meaning of the “market” changed, which in turn requires consideration of the distinctive history and disciplinary affiliations of the market concept, the expert-heavy processes by which “the economy” is constituted as an object (Polanyi 1944; Mitchell 2002, 2005; Fourcade 2009), and the ways in which producers of knowledge about economies and markets are connected to (or are themselves holders of) political and bureaucratic power (Markoff and Montecinos 1993; Hira 1998, 2007; Fourcade 2006). By emphasizing “state and firm actors” as Europe’s most important entrepreneurs in the single market initiatives (Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996, p. 6) and treating the “market” in “single market” as a stable cultural frame, the institutionalist approach heads off such considerations.

Beyond the study of market making, institutionalism’s general emphasis has been on resources situated within the European political field, including those produced by entrepreneurial actors in the European Commission. In a broader historical view, however, we question whether actors within the European political field are the central *producers* of cultural frames in European politics, though they may be very important *con-*

sumers. We also point out that neither the European political field nor the commission was born as a closed, *sui generis* institution: both were built on the back of existing “systems of professions” (Abbott 1988) that were nationally well established—though beginning to internationalize—by the time of the birth of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951.

Specificities of Our Approach

Our approach departs from institutionalism in two respects. First, we view the field of EU studies as a multifaceted, cross-professional site of production of cultural resources that intersects with, but is distinctive from, the European political field. By “political field” we mean a system of relations in which actors struggle over political authority, partly in the form of authority over policy agendas and governing bureaucracies. In Bourdieu’s conception, political struggles continuously aim “at transforming the relation of forces which confers on this field its structure at any given moment” (1991, p. 171), seeking a definitional “monopoly of . . . the legitimate principle of di-vision of the social world,” that is, the “power of making people see and believe, of predicting and prescribing, of making known and recognized” (p. 181). Further, we propose that the cultural resources that get mobilized in political struggles are more likely to become bases for actors to exert definitional monopoly (or, in the language we use here, a “theory effect”) to the extent that scholarly avatars form strong, strategically situated, sociostructural ties between scholarly and political fields.⁷

Second, we take it as given that cultural frames are not created equal, asking how certain frames come to be endowed with shared symbolic meaning across scholarly professions and political arenas, acquiring a privileged status over possible alternatives. We suggest that the probability of a frame’s success is linked to how it was produced, by whom, and in what field of competition; what prestige investments lay behind it; how the field of scholarly production is structured; and the ways in which it is linked to political spaces. We see our arguments here as non-exclusive of the institutionalist approach, complementing its insights by bringing to light important, underemphasized causal dynamics behind Europe building that are decidedly cultural, and specifically scholarly, in nature.

⁷ We use the term “scholarly” advisedly, referring to actors who are invested in the production of scholarly knowledge—marked by the pursuit of academic capital (publication, degrees, honors, and academic posts)—regardless of whether they are credentialed academics or self-understood scholars.

Our approach also has a synthetic aim, bringing an emergent Bourdieu-inspired political sociology of the European Union (Vauchez 2008, 2011; Georgakakis 2009, 2012; Bigo and Madsen 2011; A. Cohen 2011, 2012; see also Kauppi 2003; Dezalay and Madsen 2009; Favell and Guiradon 2009; Mangenot and Rowell 2011) into closer dialogue with Anglo-American institutional approaches. Both draw on the concept of field to understand Europe's trajectory, but the two bodies of work have been noted for developing in parallel to, rather than in dialogue with, each other (Favell 2006). Last but not least, our approach has strong affinities with, and draws directly from, an emergent strain of EU historiography that places particular emphasis on the professional and academic trajectories of European actors (Leucht 2007, 2009; Kaiser 2008; Knudsen 2009).

Our focus on the intersection of the political and scholarly as the key site of Europe's construction is rooted in the recognition that the very same intersection has been crucial for Western state building. Yet, as a mid- to late-20th-century and cross-national phenomenon, Europe's scholarly political intersection is also unique in ways that are significant for the analysis of performative processes in European politics. We attend to this specificity in the next section.

BUILDING EUROPE ON A WEAK FIELD: THE POLITICAL AND THE SCHOLARLY AS LINKED ECOLOGIES

The general claim that state formation has cultural, religious, and disciplinary bases is well established (Weber 1978; Mitchell 1991, 2002; Meyer et al. 1997; Steinmetz 1999; Wagner 2001; Skowronek 2002; Gorski 2003; Jasanoff 2004),⁸ although this has not been a dominant perspective in the literature on Europe.⁹ Law and economics in particular have been essential tools of state building since the birth of modern politics (Foucault 1970, 1991). By emphasizing their roles, we deliberately imply that European "integration" (we prefer "Europe building" or "European formation") can be situated comparatively relative to historical processes of state formation.¹⁰ We also echo recent arguments set forth by Andrew Abbott, Marion Fourcade, Yves Dezalay, and Bryant Garth that scholarly contests

⁸ Philip Gorski is particularly articulate on this point (Gorski 2003, pp. 22–28).

⁹ For an exception, see Marks (1997).

¹⁰ While international/transnational political institutions could be our main comparative reference, this seems a somewhat arbitrary move. In a field-based concept of the state as a site of the accumulation of the means of physical and symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1994, 2012), Europe can and should be situated with respect to both international institutions and nation-states, remaining mindful that their boundaries are more fluid than a comparative framework tends to allow. For present purposes, we find state building to be the most fruitful reference point.

and state building are always interconnected, shaping and informing each other (Dezalay and Garth 2002, 2011; Abbott 2005; Fourcade 2006).

Thinking in this way casts European formation as a process (as opposed to a stable end point; see Steinmetz 1999, p. 9) that is comparable to its national predecessors but that nonetheless has its own distinctive markers. These include Europe's construction across and above established nation-states from the wartime period and, initiated with the explicit aim of peacemaking by nonmilitary means (especially with the failure of the European Defence Community in 1954), its disconnection from the traditional stately enterprise of war making (Tilly 1990; but see Mérand 2008). Uniquely unsettled among Western state formation processes, Europe's jurisdictions are weakly defined, its end goals remain uncertain, and its basic meaning is unusually vulnerable to contestation.¹¹

Europe's definitional unsettledness is not for lack of arguments about what it should become, but the fields of cultural production in which such arguments are formulated have specificities of their own. The first specificity is a fractured structure: as opposed to the genesis of European states in which both governing bureaucracies and scholarly disciplines autonomized (Bourdieu 1996), Europe's scholarly field remains a fractured amalgamation of primarily national disciplinary expertises alongside emerging networks of actors with various sorts of credentials (Wagner 2001; Charle, Schriewer, and Wagner 2004). Particularly in the case of economics, Europe's scholarly field is interconnected with transnational social scientific networks built on and through postwar international institutions, but, again, these networks remain deeply tied to national disciplines and, in any case, have been vulnerable to political interruption (Heilbron, Guilhot, and Jeanpierre 2008). The second specificity is the absence of an autonomous pole in which self-regulating scholarly actors pursue "European knowledge for its own sake." One effect of this is that European scholarship is also closely anchored to Europe's political and bureaucratic spaces by actors who both produce scholarly models of Europe and—by necessity—pursue professional rewards outside the field of EU studies.

The field of EU studies' fractured structure, lack of autonomy, and close interconnection with European politics signals that Europe is being built on the back of a weak field of knowledge production.¹² The deep

¹¹ Meaning that one of actors' main orientations in the European context is the production of stabilizing rules and that, given Europe's more or less permanent state of flux, cultural resources are particularly central (Stinchcombe 1965; Swidler 1986; Fligstein and Mara-Drita 1996).

¹² We would like to note here the affinities between our use of the weak field concept and other research that centers on the interstitial spaces between more tightly bounded fields (Stampnitzky 2010; Medvetz 2012).

and multiple ties between European scholarly production and European politics that are, in a sense, produced by the weakness of the field of EU studies can be understood as “hinges” or “avatars”: a group of actors from one ecology, transplanted and established in another, producing “linked ecologies” (Abbott 2005).¹³ This linkage both fuels the creation of jurisdictional vacancies—that is, the establishment and expansion of policy domains—and struggles to control them (Abbott 1988; Fourcade 2006). As scholarly experts debate theories of Europe and import them into its political spaces, they participate in this competition and effectively define the relative position of their professions and the value of their own credentials.¹⁴ Thus, as Fourcade rightly argues, “Europeanized professions are becoming important players in the process of construction of Europe as a supranational political entity—just like national professions, in an earlier era, participated in the construction of national political institutions” (2006, p. 149; see also Evetts and Dingwall 2002).

Following Breslau’s (1997) argument that theories are putative models of organization with social and moral ramifications that include a particular allocation of authority,¹⁵ the Europeanization of scholarly professions creates a reservoir of symbolic meanings and empirical artifacts that is essential for Europe’s cultural production (see also Favell 1998). This does not mean, of course, that European scholarship is untethered from national disciplines, nor does it imply that any theory can or will exert a “theory effect” (i.e., a transformation of “the vision of social world as well as simultaneously . . . the social world itself,” tending to produce “practices to conform to this transformed representation” [Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 133]). Rather, we locate scholarly production about Europe in a weak field of EU studies—the markers of which we outline below—and argue that this weakness matters for whether and how scholarly avatars develop. Following on this, our specific claim is that *the probability of a theory effect is conditioned by avatars’ positioning in Brussels: the policy domains under their jurisdiction, their authority over policy-making processes, and their nodal positioning in Europe’s political and bureaucratic arenas*. We explore this claim in the following section.

¹³ Though Abbott rejects any strong parallel between his ecological model of professions and a field-based theory, we see similarities between the two rooted in a shared emphasis on distinct but overlapping competitive spheres, in which competitions in one sphere may drive processes in others (Abbott 2005).

¹⁴ In this regard, the present contribution is no exception.

¹⁵ A similar point has been made with regard to economics by the “moral markets” scholarship and particularly in work on the performativity of economics (Callon 1998; MacKenzie and Millo 2003; Fourcade and Healy 2007; MacKenzie et al. 2007).

ANALYSIS: EXPLAINING EUROPE'S REINVENTIONS, 1960s–1990s

The following analysis mobilizes the perspective laid out thus far using a wide variety of sources: official reports, archival records, biographical sources, secondary literature, and interviews (sources are noted throughout). It is organized in four sections. We first defend our claim that the field of EU studies is a weak field, noting that law and economics are two of the field's dominant players and that, although each is "Europeanized" to some extent, they remain nationally anchored. We then analyze Europe's constitution as a community of law and a single market, tracing the processes by which scholarly avatars from each profession, via the field of EU studies, Europeanized and acquired performative potential in European politics.

Our strategy for showing the significance of strategically placed scholarly avatars in each of these cases is to lay them out in three moments: *initial failures*, in which the legal and economic scholarly professions were neither aligned with the European project nor professionally connected to it, and thus played merely an ad hoc legitimating role; processes of *coalescence*, in which scholarly avatars established themselves in strategic locations within Europe's political and bureaucratic spaces; and, finally, *theory effects*, in which scholarly avatars became able to perform crucial functions of symbolic exchange across scholarly, political, and bureaucratic boundaries, such that certain models of Europe became natural categories of vision and division in European politics. These three are presented heuristically in figure 1, with the organizations anchoring the field of EU studies in the cases of law and economics—the Fédération Internationale pour le Droit Européen (FIDE), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Research Department, the Committee of Central Bank Governors (CCBG), and the commission-based Monetary Committee (MC)—shown (explained further in the analyses to follow).

A brief, final analysis focuses on a counterfactual in order to bolster our claim of the centrality of scholarly avatars and the conditionality of their performative effects: a failed effort to reinvent Europe as a welfarist entity ("social Europe") launched by sociologists, political scientists, and heterodox economists in the 1990s, which can be partly explained by the absence of a fully developed and strategically positioned scholarly avatar able to sustain and enact it.

Before we proceed with our analysis, the reader may find some brief historical background helpful. Europe is a treaty-based entity that now governs more than 500 million in 27 countries. It has undergone a number of revisions and expansions.¹⁶ In 1951, six countries signed the Treaty of

¹⁶ Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom joined in 1972; Greece in 1979; Spain

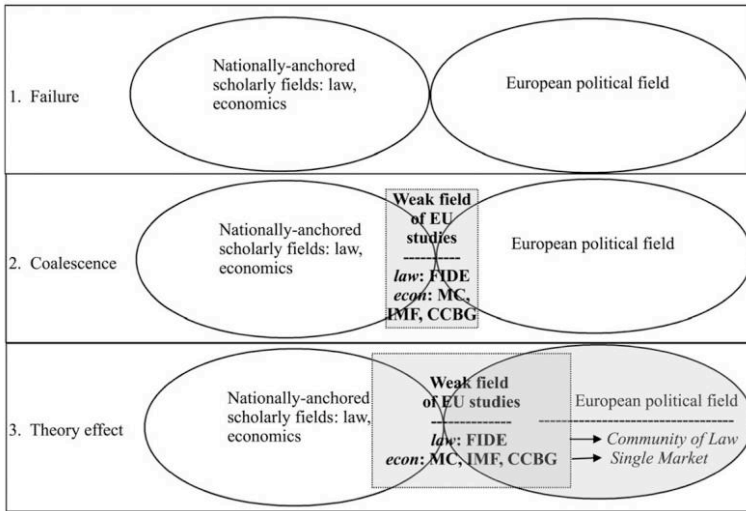


FIG. 1.—Failure, coalescence, and theory effect. FIDE = Fédération International pour le Droit Européen; MC = Monetary Committee; IMF = International Monetary Fund Research Department; CCBG = Committee of Central Bank Governors.

Paris (France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands) and established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC was governed by a High Authority, a Common Assembly (a “lower house” of sorts but lacking legislative authority), a Council of Ministers (an “upper house” made up of heads of state, with ministerial configurations—now the “council”), and a Court of Justice (ECJ). The European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom (dealing with atomic energy) were created with the 1957 Treaties of Rome (effective 1958). With them the EEC and ECSC European Commissions were established (replacing the ECSC High Authority); the Assembly also acquired legislative authority and became the European Parliamentary Assembly. The EEC, ECSC, and Euratom came to be referred to as the “European communities” (the “communities,” or EC). The communities merged in 1967, merging the commissions and councils of the ECSC and EEC into singular entities. The first significant amendment to the 1958 treaties came in 1987 with the entry into force of the Single European Act (explained further below). The entity now called the European Union did not exist until 1992 with the Treaty of Maastricht (or the Treaty on European Union).

and Portugal in 1985; Austria, Finland, and Sweden in 1995; 10 primarily former communist countries in 2003; and Bulgaria and Romania in 2005.

Part 1: The Weak Field of European Scholarly Expertise

In some important respects the field of European scholarly expertise looks very much like a recognizable academic discipline, marked by the emergence of European diplomas, academic chairs, and academic journals, along with an “imagined community” of scholars (Keeler 2005; Popa 2007; Robert and Vauchez 2010). As of the year 2004 the field featured 496 commission-funded Jean Monnet Chairs dispersed across Western countries (42% in law, 24% in economics, 26% in political science, and 8% in history; Bélot and Brachet 2004), two specifically European academic institutions (the College of Europe in Bruges, founded in 1949, and the European University Institute, established in Florence in 1975), university-based research institutes, a variety of masters-level courses of study, and a number of national and transnational learned societies (the British University Association for Contemporary European Studies, or UACES, established in 1969; the French Commission pour l’Étude des Communautés Européennes, or CEDECE; the German Arbeitskreise für Europäische Integration, or AEI; Keeler 2005). Just as nation-states have “trained, organized, controlled, employed and honoured those who have possessed, generated or applied . . . knowledge” about them (Burrage 1992, p. 168), European institutions have invested in networks of academic specialists that help to ground their existence.¹⁷

The field nonetheless exhibits marked signs of weakness. First, European academic bodies have close affiliations with European politicians and appointed officials, not to mention sponsorship and financial support from European institutions. The CEDECE, for instance, was created by former minister and law professor Pierre-Henri Teitgen using subsidies provided by the European Commission’s secretary-general, Emile Noël; the AEI was created in 1969 with the support of Walter Hallstein, former president of the European Commission. European academic fora also exhibit an unusually large nonacademic presence: one study shows that nonacademics wrote 25% of the articles in the main EU law journals between their first year of issue and 1995, a much higher proportion than national law journals; of the journals’ 32 most prolific authors, only eight had never worked for one of the EU institutions (Schepel and Wesseling 1997, p. 174). Think tanks, long marginal in Europe, have blossomed in Brussels over the past decade: often led by former commission officials

¹⁷ This has accelerated since the 1980s: the EC under Jacques Delors established a special Forward Studies Unit in 1989, which was then institutionalized as the Prodi Commission’s Group of Policy Advisers in 2000 and finally the Barroso Commission’s Bureau of European Policy Advisers in 2004.

and cofinanced by the European Commission,¹⁸ they specialize in narrowing the gap between traditional research, interest groups, and administrations by building knowledge-based networks that crosscut EU institutions, consulting, lobbying, and professional groups (Plehwe 2010).

Reflecting the heterogeneity of the field, European scholarship displays a strong valuation of applied over theoretical knowledge, deviating from the priorities of established academic disciplines in Europe. Attentiveness to the EU's policy agenda and calendar is particularly valued. The field's heterogeneity is immediately clear to any new entrant; for instance, if searching for an "expert on Europe" via the website of the UACES (which publishes one of the premier European journals, the *Journal of Common Market Studies*), one finds that "since 1969, UACES has brought together academics involved in researching and teaching on Europe with practitioners active in European Affairs" (<http://www.expertoneurope.com/AboutUACES>). Even as the commission orients European scholarship via its Framework Program for Research and Development (Popa 2007), academics shape Europe's policy priorities from within the political field. This has been strikingly demonstrated by a study of Europe's constitutional conventions, which found that 21% of the participants from member states had a PhD, 40% of which were in law, and 30%–40% of whom had worked in higher education as professors or researchers; 46% of participants from candidate countries held PhDs, of which 44% were in economics (half earned in the United States; A. Cohen 2010, p. 114).

Still, Europe has no academic community with autonomous certification capacities, nor is the study of Europe building "owned" by any particular discipline (the top contenders being law and economics; see Lastenouse 2003). Partly as a result of the resistance of national academic professions to Europeanization (Olgiati 2008), the production of European knowledge is relatively open and vulnerable to invasion by actors with a wide variety of credentials. Stated in the terms of the sociology of professions, there is no "control over the production of producers" in the field of EU studies.

Finally, European scholarly production remains fractured because it is based in preformed national disciplines. European law, arguably the most "European" discipline, still confronts the authority of nationally based legal academia over the production and evaluation of legal scholars. EU legal scholarship remains nationally segmented: in 2005, 20 of the 27 articles published in the main French EU law journal (*Revue Trimestrielle*

¹⁸ Examples include Bruegel, a think tank in Brussels first chaired by Mario Monti (current Italian prime minister and a former commissioner); and Notre Europe, a think tank created by former commission president Jacques Delors and headed for a time by the late Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, a former director-general of the commission's Directorate for Economic and Financial Affairs.

de Droit Européen) were written by France-based scholars, and 38 of the 39 papers of the German EU law journal (*Europarecht*) were written by Germany-based scholars (de Witte 2012, p. 13). The internationalization of European economics, meanwhile, runs up against a different set of obstacles: although graduate training programs in economics are increasingly “globalized” and “Europeanized,” the discipline remains linked to political and organizational structures of the state and, more important perhaps, has been driven by the practices and standards of American economics (Forte 1995; Rothschild 1995; Fourcade 2006, 2009).¹⁹

The distinction between political authority and scholarly expertise in Europe is blurry enough that, in 2001, the European Commission itself wondered aloud whether the difficulty of distinguishing between the authority of political leadership and European experts constituted a problem of institutional design: “It is often unclear who is actually deciding—experts or those with political authority. At the same time, a better-informed public increasingly questions the content and independence of the expert advice that is given” (European Commission 2001, p. 19).²⁰ In light of the signs of weakness just outlined, this admission strikes us as one marker of a polity that is deeply intertwined with its field of expertise and therefore cannot assume, as conventional nation-states might, that its own authority holds independently of the expert professionals that back it. The effects of this become clearer in the cases of Europe’s historical reinventions as a community of law and as a single market, detailed in the following sections.

Part 2: Inventing Europe as a “Community of Law”

While very detailed and technical on the essential aim of removing customs barriers and promoting freedom of circulation for goods and services, the Treaties of Rome were terse on the question of Europe’s legal and institutional architecture. As a result, established scholars of international law regarded the institutions it created with skepticism. This changed, however, via a new association that interlinked European legal scholars, the commission, and the ECJ, taking as its specific goal the construction of a legal-scholarly paradigm that could lend scientific legitimacy to Europe’s young institutions. It was only after this legalistic colonization of

¹⁹ In Rothschild’s words, “the ‘trouble’ with European economics . . . is not that such a thing does not exist at all, but that the (useful) diversity of European thinking communicates . . . to a great extent via America which thus dominates the choice of subjects and methods” (1995, p. 275).

²⁰ In 2002 a follow-up appeared on the “collection and use of expertise” (European Commission 2002).

Europe's political and bureaucratic spaces and the intensive symbolic transactions it made possible that the commission and the ECJ built and sanctified a community of law doctrine that promoted a supranational interpretation of the treaties as a de facto constitution under the guardianship of the ECJ. Europe's legal-scholarly avatar has since become so foundational that Europe's political agenda often manifests as a series of legal rather than political projects, including a convention on the drafting of a European Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000), the Convention for a European Constitution (2002), and the construction of a European judicial space.

Initial Failure: Europe's Legal Science at the Cradle

Although European legal traditions have a long history of transnational academic exchange, no unified "European legal science" existed in the 1940s. At this time international law was the authoritative science of international government, having built its scientific credentials and transnational presence in the interwar period (Sacriste and Vauchez 2007). However, the ECSC was of little interest for international law, which did not see in it a reproducible or promising model for regional political integration. Renowned professors such as Henri Rolin, George Scelle, and Charles de Visscher, all of them uncontested interpreters of international law (Koskenniemi 2001), pointed out the scientific weaknesses of the concept of "supranationality" on which the High Authority (the moniker of the commission before 1958) had grounded its identity vis-à-vis other European organizations (e.g., the Council of Europe, founded in 1949, and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation or OEEC—later renamed the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development or OECD—founded in 1948). Taking supranationality to be essentially a political concept, legal scholars were also deeply critical of the technocratic bias of the ECSC—an organization led by unelected experts tasked with the "rationalization" of Europe's coal and steel market (Scelle 1953).

Attempts by leaders of the European Parliamentary Assembly and the High Authority—most of them trained in law schools, which were at the time the central breeding grounds for political and bureaucratic elites (Gaxie and Godmer 2007)²¹—to obtain acknowledgment and support from international legal scholars failed most strikingly at the Stresa Congress of May–June 1957. Driven by the High Authority, Stresa brought together

²¹ Out of the 100 commissioners between 1952 and 1967, 50 were trained in law and 19 in economics; 22.5% of the legally trained commissioners were practicing legal professionals (MacMullen 2000).

several hundred participants and was among the first large-scale academic initiatives of the new European institutions. Participants included well-known international law scholars and ECJ judges, members of the High Authority, and the ECSC Parliamentary Assembly, who gathered for a week to discuss the future of the ECSC (Centro Italiano de Studi Giuridici 1959). It was organized in hopes of insulating the High Authority from criticism by acquiring support from the “big shots” of international law, but the lawyers in attendance would not grant any special legal significance to the ECSC, which they viewed as similar to the other international projects of the age. European officials found themselves unable to cultivate and promote legal-academic production that could authoritatively back the self-proclaimed supranationalism of the ECSC’s institutional framework (Bailleux 2010).

There was another body of legal knowledge that European officials could use to build their efforts: comparative law. The blossoming of new international organizations in the postwar period (the Western European Union, the OEEC, the Council of Europe, The Hague Conferences, etc.) consolidated a transnational network of legal scholars with a number of active learned societies (mainly the Association Internationale de Droit Comparé and its national antennas), academic journals (including the influential *American Journal of Comparative Law*), and centers in which scientific expertise on international codifications was produced (particularly Unidroit, an institute for codification of private international law, created in Rome by the League of Nations). Despite their many national and political differences, comparative law practitioners were united by the core belief that lasting and legitimate international regulations—charters, codes, or bills—required a scientifically tested method for identifying a *jus commune* beneath the diversity of national legal traditions. It seemed natural that comparativists, just as they had populated and equipped other international organizations, would take up the challenge of providing Europe’s emerging institutions with expertise in the drafting of “European laws.” Since the Rome treaties repeatedly appealed to the “harmonization,” “approximation,” or even “unification” of national legislation, many comparative law scholars hoped for a general program of harmonization for European private law (Unidroit 1957).

Hopes for this European *jus commune* (itself a romanticized legal image of the medieval period) were quickly dashed, however, by the long political crisis of the mid-1960s (sparked by the “empty chair crisis,” in which Gaullist France blocked European-level political decision making and exposed Europe’s fragile dependence on the goodwill of member governments). Comparative law’s uses in this context were limited: highly technical in content and developed specifically as instruments for policy makers, it proved useful for providing the commission’s new

directorate-generals (DGs) with a method for drafting European regulations, but many European lawyers acknowledged that, in this context, comparative law could not provide Europe with an overarching, integrative master frame.²²

Coalescence: Europe's Marbury vs. Madison

Failing to get academic endorsement from international law experts and confronted with the shortcomings of comparative law, Europe lacked the legitimacy of strong academic backing. Even worse, the classic international law approach to European treaty building (producing, for instance, the Treaties of Rome as traditional interstate agreements) presented more than just a theoretical barrier, tending to position the commission as a mere secretariat of member-states and depriving the ECJ of any legal authority over national-level courts.

Unsurprisingly then, European officials deliberately cultivated an ad hoc group of trusted legal experts that eventually proved critical in securing a radically new interpretation of the Rome Treaties as a *de facto* constitution for European citizens (a community of law). In the years following the Rome Treaties' entry into force (1958), the relationship between European institutions and legal scholarship changed: rather than the mismatches and conflicts characterizing their relationship in the past, a dense network formed across Europe's legal and political sectors that was anchored to some of Brussels's most powerful locations. This was made possible by the nomination of Walter Hallstein, an established German international law professor and Germany's leading negotiator of the Rome Treaties, as the first head of the commission, as well as the choice of Michel Gaudet, formerly the legal adviser of Jean Monnet at the High Authority, director of the commission's Legal Service.²³ Concerned by the fragmented structure of posttreaty Europe—that is, as three communities (ESCS, Euratom, and the Economic Communities) governed by three sets of rules—Hallstein and Gaudet were keen on building overarching, cross-community legal and political rationales that would “un-

²² Among others, ECJ president Robert Lecourt asserted the failure of “general harmonisation not only of a considerable part of the economic, social and fiscal legislation of Member States, but also of the private law that is used as a transactional framework,” which had been substituted by a “minimalist conception of the rapprochement of legislations” (Lecourt and Chevallier 1965, p. 147).

²³ Often considered the “eleventh commissioner,” Gaudet was the only high civil servant allowed to attend the meetings of the College of Commissioners. Gaudet conceived of his Legal Service, the only transcommunities department at the time, as having a special mission to promote “a *common spirit* in the interpretation of the treaties and in the effort of building European institutions” (Gaudet 1958).

veil” the underlying unity and uniqueness of Europe’s constitutional and legal architecture.²⁴

Rather than calling upon skeptical international lawyers, in 1962 Hallstein and Gaudet promoted the creation of a new association, the FIDE, with the explicit aim of facilitating exchanges across political, bureaucratic, and scholarly boundaries (Vauchez 2010). A continuation of the Legal Section of the Mouvement Européen with connections to the representatives of then-emerging specialized academic institutes and journals,²⁵ the group drew together a variegated set of in-house lawyers working in the ECSC and EEC institutions as members of the commission’s Legal Service, legal advisers to the DG for Competition (which dealt with competition policy), and judges and law clerks at the ECJ. FIDE was hybrid in nature, halfway between a learned society engaged in an open discussion over the legal status of the Treaty of Rome and a “private army of the European Communities” (to quote its first president; Hendrickx 1962, p. 614): 24 of its 56 “active members”²⁶ belonged to the editorial boards of one or more European law journals, and 28 were working for European institutions (as judge, civil servant, parliamentarian, commissioner, etc.). Compared to established international learned societies such as the International Law Institute, FIDE’s members were not as prominent or prestigious, but they shared a strong commitment to the political advance of integration and a genuine interest in building new legal rationales that would present Europe as a radical novelty in international politics.

FIDE quickly became a crossroads, fostering cross-sector exchanges between academia and Europe’s political and bureaucratic institutions. Under the guise of building a “European rule of law,” established law professors met with corporate lawyers; pan-European leaders mingled with the directors of the commission’s DGs; and members of the European Parliament debated with prominent diplomats from national foreign offices. In other words, this emerging transnational field of Europeanized law was weak in structure: the borders between academic and extra-

²⁴ Hence the interest shown by Hallstein and his cabinet in the narrative of European integration built by American neo-functionalists who were doing the first fieldwork in Brussels and Luxembourg (White 2003)

²⁵ Institutes of European studies were being created at the time in various law schools: in Brussels in 1961, Paris in 1963, Liège in 1964, etc. The first journals devoted to EC law were launched in the same years in the six member states: *Rivista di Diritto Europeo* (1961), *Common Market Law Review* (1963), *Cahiers du Droit Européen* (1965), the *Revue Trimestrielle de Droit Européen* (1965), and *Europarecht* (1966).

²⁶ By “active members” of the FIDE ($n = 56$), we mean the group of players who took part in at least two of the three main international conferences on EC law in the 1963–65 period.

academic practice, science and reform, law and politics were fuzzy, expressing the structure of transnational legal arenas situated at the intersection between Europe's legal, political, and administrative sites (Vauchez 2008). The interstitial positioning of the FIDE network was essential for shaping and imposing a common theoretical framework of understanding of three otherwise separate European entities (the "communities": the ECSC, EEC, and Euratom) as elements of a single community of law, in which law—and particularly the ECJ—became the core of Europe's symbolic infrastructure (Alter 2009).

The coalescence of Eurolegal professionals around the community of law paradigm was catalyzed by an ECJ decision issued in February 1963 (*Van Gend en Loos*), the oft-cited basis for a "direct effect" of the European treaties (a critical issue of international law at the time).²⁷ Despite a dense mythology that casts *Van Gend en Loos* as a European version of *Marbury vs. Madison*, the decision was in fact both cautious and ambiguous and did not in itself establish a full-fledged doctrine of European legal integration. Its interpretation as a foundation for constructing Europe as a community of law was instead produced through the interplay of legal-academic studies, political mobilizations, administrative reactions, and judicial decisions that followed the decision and helped to broaden its scope.²⁸

Indeed, *Van Gend en Loos* was immediately taken into an interpretative tide sparked by a handful of ECJ judges, joined by their law clerks and the commission's legal service headed by Michel Gaudet—all of them FIDE members. A number of special FIDE-sponsored congresses (October 1963 in The Hague; June 1964 in Paris; April 1965 in Bruges) were held on the matter, gathering a "group of EC law specialists, some being actual 'Founding fathers' of the Community, others being former or current members of the Court of Justice [ECJ], high civil servants of the EC or university professors" who embodied "the wheeling flank of the army of European jurists" (De Vreese 1965, p. 400). With most of ECJ judges and the commission's legal advisers present, these congresses sanctioned the far-reaching consequences of *Van Gend en Loos* as an unveiling of the authentic (constitutional) nature of Europe.

Thanks to their many connections to European political and administrative elites, this radically new legal interpretation resonated well be-

²⁷ The "direct effect" means that the treaty confers rights and imposes obligations directly on individuals that the courts of member states are bound to recognize and enforce. It runs counter to the traditional "international law" principle that looked primarily to states as the bearers of rights and obligations.

²⁸ A fine-grained analysis of the academic, bureaucratic, and political mobilizations sparked by the *Van Gend en Loos* decision is offered elsewhere (Rasmussen 2008; Vauchez 2008).

yond the legal sphere. FIDE legal entrepreneurs alerted both the commission and the European Parliament, both of which were keen on investing *Van Gend en Loos* with political importance, especially since their efforts to “deepen” integration were being systematically obstructed by French diplomacy and by the many divisions undermining the pan-European movement (for more details on this, see Palayret, Wallace, and Winand [2006]). In June 1964, commission president Walter Hallstein took advantage of *Van Gend en Loos* and its broad legal interpretation to present to the European Parliament his “theses” on the constitutional nature of the Treaty of Rome. In an official publication of the commission a couple of months later, Hallstein framed this interpretation by coining Europe as a “Community of Law” (Hallstein 1964)—an expression he had already used, but vaguely, in 1962. Hallstein’s effort to ground Europe’s institutions in a general legal theory was followed by the European Parliament under the lead of Fernand Dehousse, a member of the European Parliament. A law professor who headed the Institute of European Legal Studies at the University of Liège and a founding member of FIDE, Dehousse wrote a report on the matter for the European Parliament’s Legal Committee (issued on March 15, 1965), presented as a “cry of alarm” that insisted on the political necessity that national supreme courts endorse an interpretation of the treaty in which Europe was, by nature, a community of law with supranational authority over its national members (Dehousse 1965, p. 21).

The synchronization of meanings and alignment of agendas across Europe’s academic, judicial, administrative, and political institutions hints at FIDE’s interstitial position. Bringing together its cross-sector membership on a regular basis, FIDE conferences and congresses at the national and transnational levels were essential levers of interorganizational exchange and symbolic alignment. Some members of FIDE were particularly central to brokering between levels (national, European) and across institutions (commission, ECJ, Parliament, etc.): the activities of Fernand Dehousse in Parliament, Robert Lecourt (president of the ECJ and a former member of the *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales*, the Christian-Democrats’ European association), and Walter Hallstein and Michel Gaudet (at the commission), situated at the crossroads between Europe’s scholarly, political, and bureaucratic fields, helped to produce common cognitive and normative frameworks of European legal integration. As they managed their personal “holdings” of memberships and networks, they generated diffuse, seemingly spontaneous, and natural forms of coordination, acting as the de facto “special functionaries coordinating the game” that Norbert Elias (1978, p. 86) referred to in his sociology of complex social settings. Europe’s legal reinvention after *Van Gend en Loos* had no specific author but was nonetheless designed concurrently

and collectively through the interplay between academic and extra-academic, legal, and extralegal realms, all of which overlapped with the FIDE-based transnational legal network.

Theory Effect: Europe as a Constitutional Settlement

The definition of Europe as a community of law quickly became a common base from which a variety of European institutions, professions, and individuals built their identity. As its underlying doctrine was authenticated, developed, and polished through the growing caseload of the ECJ,²⁹ commission policy instruments,³⁰ professional identities,³¹ political watchwords, and academic textbooks, European law transitioned from a mere instrument at the disposal of European statesmen and diplomats to Europe's constitutive categories of vision and division, bounding its actors' representations of what is thinkable and doable.

The legalistic colonization of Europe became particularly visible in the late 1960s with the negotiations for membership of the United Kingdom. While legal stakes were virtually absent from the debates that surrounded Britain's failed accession requests in 1962 and 1967, by the early 1970s Europe's specific legal identity had become—in the European Commission and the ECJ's points of view—nonnegotiable, even though its status as a community of law was not written in the black letter of the treaties. Indeed, the day before the official signing of the Acts of Adhesion on January 19, 1972, the commission issued an opinion indicating that entering the European communities also meant accepting the existence of a “legal order” base on direct effect and the supremacy of European law over national legislation (European Commission 1987a).

Equally, when it came to delineating the United Kingdom's commitments as a new member, the commission—and later the ECJ—drew not from the prior diplomatic commitments of Europe's six founding member states but rather from a definition of “Europe” as an objective set of legal obligations (treaties, EC norms, ECJ case law, etc.) that, from that point forward, denoted a singular ensemble: the *acquis communautaire*. Now a ubiquitous term in the European political field, the *acquis* was in fact a novelty: promoted by Europe's institutional representatives and FIDE

²⁹ On the lasting effects of *Van Gend en Loos* in structuring EC case law and defining the Rome Treaties as “the constitutional charter” of the European communities, see Stone Sweet (2004).

³⁰ Others have documented the way the commission built its own policies along the lines of this narrative; see Börzel (2006) and Alter and Meunier-Aitshalia (1994).

³¹ On the role of *Van Gend en Loos* as an “original prophecy” in the revival of a transnational legal community that shared core European legal principles and beliefs, see Vauchez (2012).

legal circles (Pescatore 1981), it referred to the vast array of texts produced under Europe's aegis since the ECSC's founding—a sort of arithmetic sum of member states' legal obligations, placed under the protection of the commission and the ECJ. Chosen as the working basis for Europe building that stretched well beyond enlargement negotiations (Wiener 1998), the term inserted itself into its most banal operations; it was measured and estimated through a number of statistics and databases (Celex, Eur-lex); and it came to qualify as “the constitutional operating system . . . , axiomatic, beyond discussion, above the debate, like the rules of democratic discourse, or even the very rules of rationality themselves, which seemed to condition debate but not to be part of it” (Weiler 1997, p. 98). Naturalizing the link between European law and the European project, the *acquis* is a symbolic representation of a stable and holistic Europe (a community of law), its legitimate form (constitutional), the guardians (the ECJ, the commission, and legal professionals) tasked with ensuring its integrity in all circumstances, and the competences (legal skills) necessary to engage with it.

Part 3: Economics and the Reconstitution of Europe as a Single Market

Even as Europe was being reformulated as a community of law, another reinvention was in the making.³² Though frequently associated with a small set of entrepreneurial commission officials and business groups,³³ in fact Europe's 1980s rebirth as a single market was made possible by a long process of economistic colonization—itsself tied to an emergent, Europeanizing field of international economics—that had begun at least two decades before. Connected directly to changing economic conditions and monetary instability and built from bases in transnational institutions that had varying links to the commission, Europe's economistic reconstruction was in some ways very different from the case just analyzed. The basic sequence of precolonization failure, coalescence, and postcolonization reinvention is, however, strikingly similar.

Early Failure: The Selective Mobilization of Economics before 1970

Economists were selectively involved in Europe building from its beginnings (Leucht 2007, 2009; cf. Moravcsik 1998; Akman 2009), but they

³² Biographical data in this section are from various sources, including published works, interviews, biographies, newspaper obituaries, and *Who's Who* directories. A matrix of biographical data is available from the authors.

³³ On the role of the European Round Table of Industrialists in the single market program, see Cowles Green (1995).

were at best supportive of integration in a very limited form. The main movers of integration at the time were diplomatic statesmen and international businessmen (Monnet himself was an international financier, among other things), aiming for long-term pacification, growing partly from a federalist politics rooted in wartime resistance. Various sorts of academics participated, but economists among them disappointed federalist statesmen by advocating a limited vision of integration that amounted to little more than economic cooperation (Lipgens 1982, pp. 334–41; Dumoulin 1987). German ordoliberalism,³⁴ notably Ludwig Erhard,³⁵ viewed the effort as protectionist and initially sought to keep Europe's political development to a minimum; the Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen rejected claims that customs unions would produce benefits due to economies of scale (Grin 2003).³⁶ Theoretical discussions of the issue were inconclusive and self-contained.³⁷ Jacob Viner was an early but skeptical contributor (Viner 1950; Krauss 1972);³⁸ James E. Meade (London School of Economics [LSE]) was conditionally optimistic (Meade 1955) but later argued that Western Europe should establish flexible exchange rates rather than pursuing a common currency (Meade 1957). Neither had any particular connection to Europe building (Badel 1999).³⁹

Left with little choice, early federalists mobilized the authority of selected professional economists—most of whom were also high-profile national public servants—to create the Treaties of Rome.⁴⁰ Monnet's "Action Committee for a United States of Europe," for instance, included

³⁴ Ordoliberalism was a legal-economic school of thought based in Freiburg that combined legal theory with classical economic liberalism; it was connected to an international network of liberal thinkers that would later form the Mont Pelerin Society (Mudge 2008).

³⁵ Erhard "opposed a 'small Europe' customs union with strong institutions, fearing that such an arrangement would evolve into a closed trading block" (Moravcsik 1998, pp. 100–103).

³⁶ Economists were also involved in the question of a common agricultural policy, or CAP; we focus on customs union here because it sat at the heart of the European project rather than dealing with a specific policy domain. In any case, as in the case of the common market, economists were not unified behind the CAP and were selectively ignored for political reasons (see Knudsen 2009, p. 63).

³⁷ On this see McNulty (1975); an ISI Web of Knowledge search on July 2, 2010, for "customs union" in economics between 1950 and 1974 produces 33 results.

³⁸ Trained at Harvard (1922), Viner was connected to, but not truly of, the now-infamous Chicago school (Valdès 1995, p. 58; Overtveldt 2007).

³⁹ Meade was closely engaged with British politics (Weir and Skocpol 1985; Fourcade 2009).

⁴⁰ Uri and Marjolin's involvement was an instance of a widespread incorporation of economists into national and international bureaucracies during the postwar years (Nelson 1987, 1989; Bernstein 1989; Ikenberry 1992; Markoff and Montecinos 1993; Coats 2000).

Pierre Uri (a philosopher by training and economic director of the ECSC)⁴¹ and Robert Marjolin (a Yale-trained economist and the first general secretary of the OEEC; Yondorf 1965). Along with the German diplomat Von der Groeben (associated with the ordoliberals; Akman 2009), Uri then became part of a 1956 committee, headed by Paul-Henri Spaak (the Belgian foreign minister), to report on the feasibility of customs union (Laurent 1970, p. 375).⁴²

The Spaak committee was predictably divided on customs union; in the end Spaak ensured that Uri had overriding authority to draft the final report, resulting in a draft that “shocked” the other committee members by articulating a pro-customs-union position in formal economic terms (Rutten, in Deschamps 2006). Spaak reportedly pushed the report through, brushing aside more than 200 proposed amendments in the process, directly informing the treaty establishing the EEC, which called for a “common market” characterized by harmony and stability,⁴³ the abolition of member states’ customs duties and a common external tariff and trade policy (customs union), elimination of quotas, removal of “obstacles to the free movement of persons, services and capital,” fair competition, and the coordination of members’ economic policies to correct disequilibria in balance of payments (among other things). In short, the building of a European common market progressed in spite of economic orthodoxy rather than because of it.⁴⁴

Coalescence: Europe’s Economist-Avatar and “European” Economics

The EEC Treaty made no mention of monetary unification, yet during the 1960s and 1970s the question of monetary union in some European political circles was not *if*, but *when* and *how*. This development had particular sociostructural bases: the formation of a weak field of European economics on the one hand and the construction of an economist-scholarly avatar in Brussels on the other.

⁴¹ Uri “took up economics only after the anti-Jewish laws of the Vichy Government during World War II forced him out of his university post as a philosophy professor” (R. Cohen 1992). He was a student of François Perroux (Sorbonne, Collège de France), who believed in political intervention to temper and mediate economic processes (Grin 2003, p. 100).

⁴² Spaak explicitly viewed the project as a matter for political, not economic, expertise; see “Discours de Paul-Henri Spaak,” Strasbourg, October 21, 1955, <http://www.ena.lu/>.

⁴³ Article 2 of the treaty stated, “It shall be the aim of the Community, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increased stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between its Member States.”

⁴⁴ On this point, see also Taugourdeau and Vincensini (2008).

The combination of monetary instability and classical liberal traditions has long been a driver of internationally oriented economic scholarship (de Marchi 1991). By the early 1900s a number of academic centers focused on international economics, including the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in Oslo (1913), the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) (1920), and an array of business cycle institutes in Berlin, Sofia, Vienna, Paris, Louvain, Warsaw, and New York. Interconnected via a series of conferences connected to the League of Nations (especially its Economic Intelligence Unit in Geneva), these centers provided a basis for new thinking about the economic “order” as a normative and legal framework but, unable to either facilitate or enforce coordinated decision making by national governments, had no means to fulfill this vision (de Marchi 1991, pp. 143–52).

An international economic order ultimately found expression in postwar international financial institutions that, especially in the case of the IMF’s Research Department, reestablished a basis for international economics. Among better-known economists who would pass through the IMF was the Harvard-trained Yale professor Robert Triffin, who spent time at the IMF Research Department from 1946 to 1948 and famously argued later (in 1960) that the gold standard would collapse, advocating for a new international monetary unit and central bank. Another central figure was the MIT- and LSE-trained economist Robert Mundell, who was recruited into the IMF’s Research Department in 1961 to develop his notion of an “optimum currency area” for a Washington-based audience.⁴⁵ The first economist to develop “basic equilibrium equations for the open-economy macroeconomic model with capital mobility,” Mundell showed why a policy of low interest rates and a taxation-supported budget surplus could not work in an open economy with fixed exchange rates (2000, pp. 218–19); he also argued that there was such a thing as a regional-level optimal currency area characterized by internal factor mobility, citing Europe’s common market as a likely prospect (Mundell 1961). In short, Mundell laid the important theoretical groundwork for a new field under the heading of “international macroeconomics,” situating Europe as the focal case.

A flurry of scholarly activity ensued—including conferences, published collections, and new international economics journals—and intensified with the post-1968 breakdown of Bretton Woods. According to one observer, “the holding of conferences on the international monetary system

⁴⁵ At MIT Mundell was influenced by Paul Samuelson, among others; at the LSE Mundell sought guidance from both Lionel Robbins (a recruiter of the “Austrian School” into the LSE) and James Meade (Mundell 2000; on the LSE as a site for Austrian School economists, see Bockman [2011]). He was appointed to the University of Chicago in 1965.

by academic economists with an occasional admixture of central and commercial bankers” became a “new industry” in the 1960s (Kindleberger 1971, p. 127). Not long after submitting a “Plan for a European Currency” (Mundell 1969) to the commission, Mundell himself institutionalized a regular gathering of economists focused on the international monetary system just outside Siena (Santa Colomba) at what would become “Palazzo Mundell.”⁴⁶ Other markers of the intensification of scholarly activity in international economics included the first issues of the *Journal of International Economics* in 1971 and the *World Economy* in 1977, not to mention a new set of positive economic arguments on increasing returns and economies of scale by Paul Krugman that had direct implications for the European project (Krugman 1979).

The European Commission was linked to these developments in international economic theory via DGs that had been colonized by economists and advising networks that were often conduits into commission positions. Robert Marjolin was the first head of the DG for Economic and Financial Affairs (DGII); the DG for Competition (DGIV) was headed by Von der Groeben and “owned” by young, former German civil servants trained in law and economics and having affiliations with the Freiburg-based ordoliberal school of thought (Seidel 2009, pp. 131–32; see also Leucht 2009).⁴⁷ The economists who came to occupy these commission posts then facilitated the construction of an economist-avatar using their crossover positions, rendering them increasingly central by enacting policy on the basis of emerging economic theories. For instance, the commission’s economic DGs set its sights on monetary union well before the instability of the late 1960s, in the absence of any sort of political agreement on the question: in 1963 Marjolin proposed the establishment of the CCBG (in 1964) that, he speculated, could become an embryonic Federal Reserve (*Agence Europe* 1963; Dichgans 1966); in a 1966 report, “Development of a European Capital Market,” an expert committee argued for a European capital market and noted that exchange risk would persist until “formal monetary union has been achieved” (EEC Commission 1966). (The report was pursuant to art. 67, which called for the abolition of restrictions on the movement of capital but made no reference to monetary union.) Von der Groeben echoed DGII’s positions in 1968 (von der Groeben 1968);

⁴⁶ See <http://robertmundell.net/history/the-santa-colomba-conclusions/>. Palazzo Mundell remains a site for gatherings of economists.

⁴⁷ DGIV’s reputation for academic culture was remarkable enough to earn Directorate A the nickname “l’Université” (Seidel 2009, pp. 136–37).

Raymond Barre,⁴⁸ a member of the 1966 expert committee calling for monetary union, became the commission's vice president for economic and financial affairs in 1967 and then, on the heels of monetary instability in 1968, submitted his own plan for greater monetary and economic cooperation (Barre 1969).

Commission-based economists were also principal members of important advisory committees, linking them to ministries of finance, private and central banks, and various national academic centers. Central among these was the treaty-based MC. Made up of officials who were at once economics professors, bankers, and ministers of finance (Ludlow 1982; McNamara 1998), it was, in one member's description, a "club of like-minded personalities with the same backgrounds, the same professional interests and the same kinds of problems" that constituted "an international monetary fraternity within the capitals of Europe" (Oort 1978, p. 11). Through the MC, DGII developed ties with a number of U.S.-trained and IMF economists: Mundell made his 1969 report to DGII via the MC; Oort, the MC member quoted above, was a chairman of the committee and a former economics professor at the University of Michigan with a master's degree from the University of Chicago; Yan van Ypersele, a 1970s MC member, was a Yale-trained Belgian economist (a student of Triffin's) who had worked at the IMF in the late 1960s.

Positioned at the crossroads between nationally anchored and U.S.-centered disciplinary economics, the IMF, central banks, and ministries of finance, European economist-officials were now increasingly able to mobilize economic theory to validate a new European-level drive for monetary union. Recognized positions on the question—an "economist" position that economic policies had to be aligned before monetary union and the "monetarist" position that monetary union would help to produce economic convergence⁴⁹—turned on the issue of how rather than if. Arbitration was very much a theoretical and empirical matter: a concert of reports on the question in the late 1960s—by Barre (referenced above), Mundell, Uri,⁵⁰ and Giscard d'Estaing (French minister of finance)—offered a range of proposals, often with reference to the new economic

⁴⁸ Barre, an economist at Sciences Po from 1959 to 1962, author of a popular economics textbook, and an importer of Hayek into French economics, was among France's "liberal currents at the margins of the administrative field" opposing Keynesian orthodoxy and would administer "a dose of monetarism" as minister of finance (1976–78) and prime minister (1978–81) during Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's presidency (Fourcade 2009, pp. 215–21).

⁴⁹ Economists noted at the time, with annoyance, that the terms were used in ways that were inconsistent with their academic meaning (Ludlow 1982).

⁵⁰ By this time Uri was working at the Paris-based Atlantic Institute.

orthodoxy.⁵¹ In response, the council assembled the “Werner group” and placed it under the leadership of Bernard Clappier of the Banque de France (and chairman of the MC), who was reportedly strongly influenced by Barre (Dyson and Featherstone 1999, pp. 107–8).⁵² The Werner group proposed European monetary union in stages; the council approved the proposal in 1971.

Still, in the 1970s economics’ performative reach was limited. During his commission presidency (starting in 1977), Roy Jenkins, advised by Triffin and van Ypersele, used international economic theory to back an effort to achieve monetary union, helping to produce a European Monetary System in 1979 (after the failure of the “snake” in 1973). Yet a true single currency was not on the horizon, nor was there any broad vision of Europe’s priorities and direction (Ludlow 1982).

Yet the development of a European economic scholarly avatar expressed a different phenomenon: the formation of a weak field of European economics, populated by actors whose trajectories stretched across commission DGs, banks, Atlanticist and international institutions, ministries of finance, and academic centers. Its crystallization was marked by appeals on matters of European policy to a public beyond the commission, as in the so-called All Saints’ Day Manifesto of 1975 (in the *Economist*, calling for a European currency).⁵³ A steep increase in Europe-based centers of economic research with two specifically European anchor points also expressed the field’s emergence: London’s Centre for Economic Policy Research, or CEPR, established in 1983, and the European Economic Association, originating in Brussels but now in Milan, in 1984 (intended as counterparts to the NBER and the American Economic Association).⁵⁴ Brussels’s economist-avatar was now linked not only to

⁵¹ Giscard d’Estaing (1969) specifically references the work of Fritz Machlup, who was among the economists working on international monetary questions alongside Mundell in the 1960s and a founding member of the Mont Pelerin Society. Noted as a central player in Europe’s monetary politics, Giscard d’Estaing was at one time the only political participant in a 1960s conference organized by Mundell (Kindleberger 1971; Moravcsik 1998, pp. 295–308).

⁵² Certain figures are so often cited in accounts of Europe’s efforts at monetary cooperation—Oort, Clappier, van Ypersele, and others—as to prompt Ludlow to comment that “it is remarkable how the same names appear again and again” (Ludlow 1982, p. 19; see also Dyson and Featherstone 1999).

⁵³ Among the authors were Niels Thygesen, a former head of the IMF’s Monetary Division; Giorgio Basevi, a DGII economist with a master’s degree from the University of Chicago; and Michele Frattiani, who would become a DGII adviser in 1976. A smaller group followed up with two reports to the commission (European Commission 1976, 1977).

⁵⁴ Centers of European and international economics roughly doubled between the 1970s and the 1990s (author calculations).

international economic institutions but to a specifically European field of economic expertise, weak because of the hybridity of its members and the U.S.-centricity of economics, specialized in international macroeconomics,⁵⁵ and focused on European-level policy questions.

Theory Effect: Europe's Reinvention as a Single Market

After roughly two decades of evolving ties between economics and European politics, Europe became a single market in two strokes: the 1985 Single Market Project (SMP)—which consisted of around 300 deregulatory proposals—and, to facilitate its fulfillment, the Single European Act (SEA) of 1987. The first significant amendment to the treaty since 1958, the SEA gave special treatment to single market initiatives in the form of majority rather than unanimity voting, effectively enshrining market liberalization as Europe's most basic purpose. This institutional transformation was closely followed by the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht (TEU) and monetary union, via a new European Central Bank (ECB) with a mandate to control inflation and maintain price stability.

Explanations of the SMP/SEA, the TEU, and the euro tend to treat them as a single package—the latter two emerging from the former—that was produced primarily by a coalition of commission-based institutional entrepreneurs, especially President Jacques Delors (1985–95), his British vice president, Arthur Cockfield, and a powerful corporate network that solidified in the 1980s. This coalition was central, but the “big bang” of Europe's reinvention as a single market had been cultivated well before it arrived on the scene via a complex symbolic exchange in which commission-based economists helped to structure the terms of debate internally (via commission reports) even as, externally, economist-advisers infused political-bureaucratic tropes with academic legitimacy and technical specificity via expert panels and official reports.

A prime example of this process was a coordinated effort to specify the “costs of non-Europe” in the 1980s, building momentum in advance of the commission's 1985 report on *Completing the Internal Market* (written primarily by Cockfield) and then helping to sustain it. Initially articulated by Étienne Davignon, commissioner in charge of the Internal Market, the term became the central refrain for a 1983 report by Michel Albert (a former head of the French Planning Commission from 1976 to 1981, where

⁵⁵ The largest single percentage of economists associated with the CEPR specializes in international economics (24%; <http://www.cepr.org/research/resfel.asp#Financial%20Economics>, author calculations).

he worked with Giscard and Barre)⁵⁶ and James Ball (then dean of the London Business School; Albert and Ball 1983). Prepared for the European Parliament, it paired tabulations of the costs of non-Europe with ominous warnings that a European-level liberalizing project was the only alternative to economic decline, mobilizing a host of statistics provided by DGII statistics (the “European Economy” series) and the OECD. The Albert-Ball report helped to build a sense of urgency around the commission’s 1985 report *Completing the Internal Market* (European Commission 1985), which went beyond traditional understandings of the common market in terms of tariffs by calling for the elimination of “non-tariff barriers.” Soon after Cockfield himself took up the costs of non-Europe theme, prefacing a 1988 report with the somewhat astonishing statement that its estimations of the hardships that the absence of Europe-as-liberalization would produce could be taken as “confirmation of what those who are engaged in building Europe have always known” (Cockfield, in Cecchini 1988). Complemented by an economic analysis of more than 200 pages from DGII on the “Economics of 1992” (European Commission 1988), the commission’s economist-avatars provided technical backing, via a formidable range of statistics, for what was in fact a novel formulation of Europe’s essential meaning.

The activities of Europe’s economist-avatars also help to explain how momentum was maintained to 1992 and beyond, cumulating in the birth of the euro at the start of the new century. After the SMP/SEA, new commission reports mobilized economic theory to explain and interpret the implications of the single market, reissuing the call for monetary unification as a necessary complement to the liberalization of capital markets (made law in 1988; European Commission 1987*b*). The authors of an influential report calling for economic and monetary union (the “Delors report”; European Commission 1989) included figures who had contributed to past reports and sat on committees that are, by now, familiar: Niels Thygesen, an author of the 1975 All Saints’ Day Manifesto; William Duisenberg, a former head of the CCBG (who shared an office during his early 1960s IMF days with van Ypersele, chairman of the MC); and Alexandre Lamfalussy (an author, with Barre, of the 1966 expert report from DGII on liberalizing capital markets). The 1990s move beyond the single market—and especially toward the creation of the euro and the ECB—was thus a final stage of an effort that had been initiated by economist-avatars who first became active in European politics at least two decades earlier.

The final success of this effort had everything to do with economist-

⁵⁶ Albert was a graduate of the École National Administration and a member of the Council for Monetary Policy of the Banque de France in 1994.

avatars' strategic positioning. Economist-officials connected to 1960s and 1970s monetary debates were, by the end of the decade, some of the most prestigious and well-known figures in European politics. For instance, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa—director-general of DGII from 1979 to 1983 and chairman of the commission's Banking Advisory Committee from 1988 to 1991, not to mention a graduate of Bocconi (in Milan, where the European Economic Association would later be based) and MIT and a former head of the Bank of Italy (1968–78)—was by several accounts a key mover behind European monetary union, bringing a fresh round of economic expertise to Brussels (informal interviews, Brussels, 2007). It was under his supervision that the “Economics of 1992” report was generated by DGII. Meanwhile, under Delors (himself an adjunct economics professor),⁵⁷ both economic and finance ministry-based credentials became dominant forms of expertise in the commission. In the first case, economic credentials overtook legal expertise in the commission for the first time in its history (Georgakakis and de Lassale 2008). It also became more common for former ministers of finance to head the commission's DGs (MacMullen 2000, p. 46). In short, the momentum behind Europe's reinvention as a single market depended on a European economist-avatar duly established in both leadership positions and the technocratic rank and file.

Part 4: A Counterfactual Case: Social Europe

The community of law and single market paradigms are not the only scholarly constructs available in Europe's political spaces: in March 2000, the European Union's national leaders announced that its “new strategic goal for the next decade” would be to “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” with “more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (European Council 2000, p. 2).⁵⁸ Initiated by national leadership and informed by sociologists and heterodox economists,⁵⁹ the “Lisbon strategy” was understood by its progenitors as a continuation of efforts to define and enact “social Europe” (or a “European

⁵⁷ Delors had been an adjunct professor of economics at the University of Paris (1973–79) and served at France's central bank and as the minister of finance under François Mitterrand (1981–84).

⁵⁸ Italics and boldface have been removed from the quoted text.

⁵⁹ Initiated by the EC (Europe's agenda-setting body) under the presidency of Portugal's center-left Antonio Guterres, the advisory team included U.S.-based, Spanish-born sociologist Manuel Castells, neo-Marxian French economist Robert Boyer, Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Danish economist Bengt-Åke Lundvall, Swedish sociologist Göran Therborn, and British economist Robert Lindley, among others (Rodrigues 1999).

social model”) that dated at least to 1997,⁶⁰ when the Treaty of Amsterdam enshrined full employment as a European imperative and featured a “social protocol” that identified social protection, “social dialogue” (corporatism), human capital investment, and poverty remediation as priority concerns.

Many scholars involved in the effort to articulate Lisbon as a welfarist project had been or were currently expert advisors to the commission, and so, in addition to technical expertise, they offered modes of expression that resonated with the language of EU policy making. In short, social Europe had academic legitimacy, anchoring in a scholarly network with ties to Brussels, and was an established stake of the game.⁶¹ What social Europe lacked, however, was an avatar basis on the ground in Brussels that could sustain Lisbon’s symbolic integrity as a social initiative, translate that understanding into a unifying cultural frame, and mobilize action on that basis. In contrast to the positive cases above, the late 1990s articulators of Lisbon as a social initiative were neither integrally connected with Brussels-based officials and technocrats nor themselves in commission-based positions of authority.

Unsurprisingly, then, once its translation and enactment were handed over to the commission, Lisbon’s meaning broke down; the initiative bifurcated across a liberalizing versus social axis that reflected internal divisions among rank-and-file commission economists. The two sides were not evenly matched. Consistent with other research that documents the relative weakness of social DGs of the EC that intensified after the single market era (Robert 2007), economists in the DG for Employment and Social Affairs who might have advanced Lisbon as a social initiative found themselves overwhelmed by more powerful counterparts in rival DGs who interpreted Lisbon in an essentially different way (interview, DG Employment and Social Affairs and DG for Economic and Financial Affairs, spring 2004). In the view of these more powerful avatar factions, Lisbon’s social language was simply a gloss on its true aim, which was

⁶⁰ These terminologies are traceable to Mitterrand, who oversaw a 1981 initiative to establish a “European social space” that proposed a series of Keynesian measures in government spending, worker participation in multinational firms, shorter working hours, and improved social security (Levy 1999; Grin 2003). Efforts to build political momentum behind a social vision of Europe were reinforced by Delors himself in a 1993 white paper on *Growth, Competitiveness, and Employment* (European Commission 1993).

⁶¹ Martin Rhodes—who worked in an advisory capacity for the commission during Guterres’s tenure—proposed that Lisbon should be understood as Europe’s “Maastricht for welfare,” maintaining that “social protection issues will move much closer to the center of European policy making” (2000).

to advance Europe's ongoing project of liberalization and market building (interview, DG for Economic and Financial Affairs, spring 2004).

Lacking a scholarly or professional avatar network that could sustain and unify its meaning, the vision of Lisbon as a social initiative failed to acquire currency within the upper ranks of the commission. The social scientific claims behind Lisbon's formulation—for instance, claims of protective social policy's economically functional role within Western economies (the notion of “productive social policy,” articulated by Nordic sociologists)—violated high-ranking commission technocrats' sense of the possible and were dismissed as political hand-waving (interview, secretary-general, spring 2004). This left those with an understanding of Lisbon as a social Europe initiative outside of the commission—like the European Trade Union Confederation and social nongovernmental organizations—without leverage. Accordingly, they complained that Lisbon's social policy initiatives had been segregated within the weakest DGs of the commission and that, as a result, Lisbon lacked symbolic coherence: “There are people [in the Commission] working on social policy and strengthening that, and then there are people working on competitiveness and the internal market, and strengthening the economy. And very rarely do the two things meet. And if you look at the reports which try and bring them together, they look kind of like Frankenstein—they're stuck together, and they're clearly from different worlds” (interview, Social Platform, spring 2004). Marking the absence of a powerful avatar basis in Brussels that could sustain Lisbon's initially welfarist impetus, the expert panel charged with evaluating Lisbon in 2004 featured only one of the academics involved in its initial formulation. Rebranded as a “growth and jobs” strategy in 2005, Lisbon's meaning as a social initiative ultimately evaporated.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: EUROPE'S PAST AND FUTURE REINVENTIONS

Going beyond the basic insight that “ideas matter,” we propose that the collaborations, contests, and multiple investments of the actors who articulate and put ideas into play must become central to the historical analysis of Europe's variable constructions over time. On the other hand, if it is the case that important phases of the integration project are attributable to “skilled social actors” who “mobilize cooperation among others by generating and propagating cultural frames” (Stone Sweet et al. 2001, p. 8), we highlight that processes of generation and propagation, when successful, have occurred among scholarly-avatar networks that link Europe's political and bureaucratic spaces to scholarly disciplines, facilitating complex processes of symbolic exchange in which political

concepts become scholarly and vice versa. Focusing an analytical lens on the production of cultural frames in scholarly arenas, the linkages between those arenas and European political space via a weak field of EU studies, and the processes by which economist-avatars sacralize and help to enact new models of Europe, we have shown that major episodes in Europe's construction coincided with, and were in many ways built on, the population of Europe's bureaucratic and political crevices by legal and economic scholarly professionals. We thus argue that European studies is, by its very nature, a crossroads for symbolic exchange that lies at the heart of the European project (Madsen 2006, 2011).

A key implication of our analysis is that "Europe" would not exist in its present form in the absence of processes of exchange across political and scholarly boundaries, via scholarly avatars. We directly claim that "Europe" would today have a completely different meaning and material existence in the absence of either legal and economic theories or strategically situated avatar communities that translate, import, and enact them; accordingly, we argue that the absence of a strategically situated scholarly avatar in the case of social Europe is part of the reason for its failure to materialize. In order to move toward a critical and sociologically informed body of scholarship on integration, we hope that field-oriented scholars concerned with integration specifically and state building in general—particularly those with an eye to transnational politics—will engage with these contentions.

Our approach has broader implications for how we might expect European integration to unfold: its ongoing development is dependent on the structure and positioning of its avatar networks, which are (if anything) increasingly disjointed and polycentric. Here the claim of European studies as a "weak field" becomes especially central. Integration thus far has been accompanied by the formation of specialized arenas of study that, in comparison with national counterparts, have no autonomous or authoritative center. Unlike many existing understandings of European integration as a progression or forward-moving process, we argue instead that the European "imagined community" (Anderson 2006) will remain discontinuous and polymorphous for the foreseeable future.

A field-based approach that focuses on the scholarly-political intersection and the fragmentary nature of inter- and transnational fields also has implications that extend beyond the study of European integration. Thus far, sociology's theoretical toolbox for studying the power-knowledge nexus has been defined with natural reference to nation-states, highlighting that their rise has gone hand-in-hand with the formation of specialized bodies of knowledge and knowledge-bearing professionals, leading to the eventual autonomization of both nation-states and social scientific disciplines. Yet a narrative of interdependency to autonomization fits awk-

wardly with transnational and supranational contexts, which may exhibit characteristics of joint state and discipline institutionalization that look quite familiar and yet do not follow the historical progression familiar to scholars of the modern state (Vauchez 2011). Our approach provides a way of analyzing transnational settings without imposing a misguided teleological reasoning: integration can be usefully situated with respect to historical state-building processes, but it cannot be studied as an early phase in the construction of a conventional nation-state.

Finally, it is worth noting that the very feature of integration that we highlight—a profound scholarly-political intersection—tends to produce a chronically obstructed gaze on Europe by generating a perplexing inseparability of scholarly terminology about integration from political terminologies of integration. As a result, the simplest questions regarding the European Union (what is it?) remain unsettled. Meanwhile, existing understandings of integration tend to ignore or downplay the unsettledness of the meaning of Europe as a mere analytical quandary: the “dependent variable problem” (Rosamond 2000, pp. 11–14). We hope to move toward a line of analysis that might offer a less obstructed view.

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