

A Whig History of European Integration?

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The Hague Summit of 1969 in Comparative Perspectives

Scholarly interest in the Hague summit of 1969 has recently seen a revival, recognising the Hague summit as one of the landmark events in the history of European integration instead of belonging to the dark ages running from the Empty Chair Crisis to the Single European Act (1964-85). The controversy around the assessment of its achievements touches on not only the problem of the periodisation of the history of European integration but also a more fundamental one concerning its narrative. Expanding on Gilbert's 2008 article, the first part of this essay offers to expose patterns of a "whig history of European integration" that underlie certain interpretations. Concretising Gilbert's critique of the progressive tradition in European narratives, the second part of this essay examines the significance and relevance of the Hague summit in 1969, and characterisations of the ensuing decades of the 1970s and 80s in both "whig" and "non-whig" narratives, with relation to the question that to what extent the Hague would still be considered a critical historical juncture had its programme faded in its importance in the European finality. The third part of this essay turns around to argue for the inevitability and the political necessity for "whig narratives" with a view of the legitimising function of officialising such a narrative vis-à-vis the evolving nature and *finalité politique* of European integration.

PART I: Introduction

The Whig Construction of European Integration History

Whig historiography was a concept introduced by Herbert Butterfield in 1931 to describe grand narratives of English history that tend to use the unifying themes of "expansion of personal liberty and of parliamentary authority relative to the Crown" (Cronon 2012) to string together an extensive course of historical events. The term "whig", however, gained extended meaning beyond members of the Whig party, but connotated all histories in which something becomes better over time and so is judged "A Good Thing" (cf. Cronon 2012). "The whig interpretation of history", therefore, is a primarily pejorative term, describing a particular kind of historian's bias grounded on a mentality of making sense of past events in the light of the present. Butterfield argues extensively against a number of features of the so called "whig historiography". This introduction will thus aim to summarise and formalise these features, as well as to locate them in the context of what I identify as a whig construction of European integration history from the Hague summit in December 1969.

The post-Hague period have been assessed in many different perspectives and told in different narratives: Marie-Thérèse Bitsch in "Histoire de la Construction Europe" wraps up everything in between 1973 and 2004 in one part: "Elargissement et approfondissement, de 1973 à nos jours" (Bitsch 2004). Although not unaware of the historical breaks in 1969 and 1984/85, Bitsch clearly envisages a linear advancement from 1973 and "gives more credit to the significance of enlargement over any internal evolution of the Communities" (Marhold 2009, p.6). More radically, Michael Geary in his 2012 article postulates a "slow but continuous advance towards an ever closer and irreversible union" (Geary 2012, p.6) from the Hague to Maastricht (1969-92). Geary, while acknowledging challenges the

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community has faced in the 70s, admitting for example that the outcomes to the enlargement negotiation round 1970-72 was “far from ideal” (ibid., p.16), insists on the continuity and indeed, “irreversibility” (ibid., p. 19) of the process. Also focusing on enlargement, Geary views the European Commission as “policy entrepreneurs” (ibid., p.19) who endeavored to instill the notion of irreversibility into the process starting with the Hague summit, with the Maastricht treaty in 1992 acting as a roadmark of its success. A few others have also recognised the Hague summit of 1969 as the inauguration of a “second generation” in the integration process (Knipping and Schönwald 2004, Mittag and Wessels 2004). A number of scholars on the other hand are disillusioned with this “second generation” thesis. To them, the period between the Luxembourg compromise and the Single European Act (1966-85) has been perceived as the “dark ages” in European integration, plagued by distrust and economic crises (Keohane & Hoffmann 1991; Moravcsik 1998, Weidenfeld 2009). Few, if any of these scholars, though, have extensively confronted the history of integration from a narrative angle. In contrast, Mark Gilbert offers an extraordinarily original argument in his article, “Narrating the Process”, that bridges accounts of European integration from both historians and political scientists and the wider theoretical problem with whig historiography. Gilbert refrains from producing either positive or negative characterisations of events or periods in the process, but focuses on challenging the underlying bias of such positive or negative perception of historical episodes, which he considers essentially a mark of whig historiography (cf. Gilbert 2008, p.641).

Whig historiography is easily distinguished given its inclination towards grand, dramatised narration of a linear progression of events in history. Underlying this phenomenon in its essence are a number of analytical flaws. The first of these is an overestimate of the limits to political will. Institutional and human agency in the whig perspective is emphasised over the forces of circumstances, which means that historical developments are conceived as rationalisable and traceable to the choices, intentions and decisions of individuals and parties back in history. Such a belief in the longevity and strength of institutionalised political will is the determining premise that allows the “presentist” rhetoric that has permeated the whig narrative of English history: “If we use the present as our perpetual touchstone, we can easily divide the men of the sixteenth century into progressive and reactionary” (Butterfield 1931, p.19). Presentism is a triumphalist mentality that conveniently relies on the present morality to benchmark progress. To the whig English historian, “Protestants and whigs have been the perennial allies while Catholics and Tories have perpetually formed obstruction” (Butterfield 1931, p.11). In other words, the survival of Protestant and whig ideals supposedly confers moral superiority on them, and the whig historian is tempted to establish a narrative of volition based on such a correlation.

The opposite to this teleological thinking would be *synthetic*, admitting a plurality of causal dimensions, while viewing the melding of history a cooperative, rather than competitive interplay of these causes. In Butterfield’s own words:

“Instead of seeing the modern world emerge as the victory of the children of light over the children of darkness in any generation, it is at least better to see it emerge as the result of a clash of wills, a result which often neither party wanted or even dreamed of, a result which indeed in some cases both parties would equally have hated, but a result for the achievement of which the existence of both and the clash of both were necessary” (Butterfield 1931, p.13).

In this passage Butterfield discusses the dialectical nature of historical development, dismissing simplistic causal linking between the present and any slice of the past.

The second feature of whig historiography is the presumption of inevitability. The whig historian tends to “impose a certain form upon the whole historical story, and to produce a scheme of general history which is bound to converge beautifully upon the present – all demonstrating throughout the ages the workings of an obvious principle of progress” (Butterfield 1931, p.11). Whig history is structured, intentional, and expects predictability. Gilbert has observed that “this habit of mind is very evident in the orthodox historiography of European integration” (Gilbert 2008, p.647). Here I will tackle specifically the thesis in “The Process of European Integration from The Hague to Maastricht, 1969-92: An Irreversible Advance?” from Geary, as one example of such construction.

It must be said, first of all, that Geary is certainly more nuanced than the typical whig historian – he does recognise for example that “the Community needed a Thatcher-type personality” (Geary p.2012, p. 18) and refuses to give a negative verdict on the 80s based on the difficulties the British membership had produced in the process. Geary

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argues that Thatcher's insistence on the British rebate forced the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which was another source stalling the process (cf. *ibid.*, p.18). However, within this view, Thatcher more of inadvertently advanced the process and was never reconciled to the direction it was going, and integration went ahead "irreversibly" under Delors despite her (Geary 2012, p.14). So in the end, Geary still views Thatcher as a failed force of obstruction whose contribution was after all contained in the linear process of advancement: Her efforts are acknowledged here not because she attempted to divert the process but because her actions nevertheless "augmented the overall degree of supranationality within the community" (Gilbert 2008, p.645). Geary's view of the process therefore is still distinctly linear, and as he describes it, slow, but continuous, and irreversible (Geary 2012, p.6). I will argue that it is precisely the concept of irreversibility of the process that is misleading and on many levels problematic.

In my opinion, such views are prone to a kind of Euro-fatalism, conflating what has been the case and what must have been the case. This corresponds to Butterfield's illustration of the whig expectation of inevitability. Certainly, the concept of irreversibility is a direct reference to the wordings of the Maastricht treaty – it is however two completely different matters, to on one hand recognise that the treaty does not provide for an exit clause, and on the other to claim thenceforth that the process leading up to it was irreversible. The lack of elaboration on this distinction in Geary's article elicits suspicion on its underlying whig bias – that is "a belief that integration represents a trend from which there will be no receding" (Gilbert 2008, p.642). The myth of irreversibility in the institutionalist account does not hold up to a test of factual consistencies. In 1985, that is immediately before the signing of the Single European Act, Greenland became the first and as for now, only member to successfully exit the European Community following a nationwide referendum. This is an unambiguous example of how national sovereignty successfully reversed attempts of supranationalisation. According to Patel and Weisbrode, "Such variations mattered, and continue to matter. They are also a sharp reminder against any simplistic and teleological narratives of European integration" (Patel & Weisbrode 2013, p.5).

Geary also envisions a long policy experiment running all the way from the Hague 1969 to Maastricht 1992, requiring that political leaders "have been consistently motivated in their European policy over decades by the same set of mental priorities and domestic constraints" (Gilbert 2008, p.652). This corresponds to the whig overestimation of the consistency, longevity and strength of institutional will. Little evidence shows that the current settlement even over twenty years after the Maastricht treaty is any nearer to the federalist than it is to the intergovernmentalist ideal of governance. It could even be argued that the principle of subsidiarity in the Maastricht treaty (European Commission 1992), requiring that the Union does not take action (except in the areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level, represents precisely a constraining corrective aimed at checking federal powers in relation to those of nation states. The claim that Maastricht conclusively "proved" the victory of federalist strengths over intergovernmentalist forces is, to say the least, a premature one.

However, it does not follow from this that an institutionalist account would be synonymous with a whig interpretation of this period of history. It is not the intention of this paper to critique a certain school of thinking about European integration based on its "whiggishness", that is to devise a theory differentiating between good and bad narratives using whiggishness as a measure. It does not aim to praise Euroscepticism as the counterpart to whig history, and even less to lump the entirety of either positive or negative assessments of the post-Hague process into one category labelled "the whig interpretation of history of European integration". Rather, it is the aforementioned analytical tendencies, not a certain type of conclusion, that makes an interpretation "whig", the realisation of which is necessary to facilitate an understanding of the deeper problems of "the progressive narrative".

PART II: Problems of the Progressive Narrative

The Problem with Contingency

Whether or not acknowledged, narratives on European integration often assume an "entropy of integration" inherent in the process, namely that the process is to have an "arrow of time" in the direction of further enlargement and deepening. Any move that aims to drive the process away from this direction proper is considered a "non-process"

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and left out of the timeline of advancement. Indeed, as Gilbert observes, the very word “process” conveys “a notion of inevitability”, “predictability”, and “an almost Victorian certainty” (Gilbert 2008, p.642). These narratives could be called all together in the tradition of “the progressive narrative” of European integration, in that they attempt selective, subjective, and in this case, “progressive”, abridgement of historical events.

“Abridgement” may not be explicitly acknowledged in causal or sequential terms. Many times evidence of abridgement is delivered through descriptive vocabularies, through discourses like “Gaullist obstructionism and sabotage” (Geary 2012, p.15), “an opportunity or a threat” (Ludlow 2003, p.11), “les trentes glorieuses” (Fourastié 79, p.45), “the dark ages” (Keohane and Hoffmann 1991, p.8)... These phrasings are highly normative as they confer appraisal and upon certain eras and insignificance on some others. But this partiality should not go ahead unquestioned. Mark Gilbert for example offers the surprising argument that the European council, one of the key EU bodies today and a significant actor in the history of integration, owes much of its original conception to de Gaulle’s “obstructing” manoeuvres.

What, then, is the rationale behind the whig abridgement of the history of European integration? The possibility of abridgement is intimately linked to conception of the European finality. A maximalist, federalist view of the *finalité* is often implicitly assumed in more optimistic narratives on the Hague summit. This is the *finalité politique* that was expected by the Hague in 1969, which formalised the agenda of completion, deepening and enlargement and envisioned the development of the European Monetary Union and political cooperation. Furthermore, it anticipated the democratisation of the European parliament and the development of a stronger and more coherent European foreign policy. On the ground of all these continuities, the Hague qualifies into the abridged history of European integration. However, would the Hague still be considered as progressive, had integration, enlargement and deepening not been understood as the EU’s ultimate agenda anymore?

In *Europe as Empire*, Jan Zielonka made the following conclusions: “The battle over the European Constitution is over. In a sense, this is the end of Europe’s history. *Integration will no longer be a direct function of institutional and legal engineering...* New ways would have to be found to organize the ever larger European space” (Zielonka 2008, p.1). According to Zielonka, the neo-medieval “development” has several implications concerning its governance: “Hierarchical governance” to involve central redistribution from Brussels will have to be abandoned. Parliamentary representation will also likely prove counterproductive in the new neo-medieval setting (cf. Zielonka 2008, p.4). Along this theory, therefore, these changes in the *finalité politique* of Europe could potentially outdate the clearly federalist initiatives put into motion in the Hague. If we prospect a new neo-medieval era involving increasing diversity and flexibility in governance, where what Zielonka calls “Westphalian solutions” (Zielonka 2008, p.5) are not longer applicable, it would seem necessary to recognise that the course of the process has been diverted, and the alleged “irreversibility” legacy from the Hague has to give place to a revitalisation of Gaullist intergovernmentalism. In this case, it should be unrestrained efforts at deepening an ever closer union that is considered obstructing, a point echoed by Moravcsik in his critique of the European constitutional project (Moravcsik 2006, p.237).

In short, terms such as “relevance” and “contribution” are not *prima facie* concepts – instead they are necessarily subject to political contingency: There is no talking of the relevance of an event or the contribution of a personality in the history of European Integration unless they are measured against the state of institutional arrangement and prospect of changes at a given instance, namely the subject they are relevant to – which is constantly evolving during the course of integration. In the case of the history of European integration, Mark Gilbert summarises this contingency in such terms: “European integration is no more exempt than any other historical development from the process of revisionism – which means no more nor less than a shifting conviction of the “nature of the thing” (Gilbert 2008, p.657). Gilbert goes on to exemplify this by reassessing the contribution of two “anti-heroes” in the history of integration: Charles de Gaulle and Margaret Thatcher. Gilbert argues that the European Council, which has been an indisputable motor in the development of the European Community, is a “fundamentally Gaullist concept” (Gilbert 2008, p.647). De Gaulle’s contribution lies in that he insinuated which proved to be a long-standing principle of intergovernmentalism in the European system of governance. Here Gilbert concurs with Ludlow’s conclusion that de Gaulle’s actions such as the Empty Chair Crisis albeit slowed the motion of the integration process but had long term impact on moulding its surviving form (Gilbert 2008, p.648). In a similar fashion, Margaret Thatcher’s unexpected affinity towards the single market programme enabled its priority in the process (Gilbert 2008, p.648). In other words,

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de Gaulle's and Thatcher's actions imposed constraints upon the process, but *these constraints are considered constructive* – they are constructive towards Europe “as it exists today” (Gilbert 2008, p.647), although they may be seen as impediments to the cause of integration in the Orthodox narrative with a maximalist federalist view of the European finality.

Gilbert's perspective therefore prompts the following question: To what extent do the actions of the “anti-heroes” and “lost periods” also ground the pace and nature of integration? And if they do indeed, why are constraints to the process in its history often not considered constructive? These interrogations can unveil some chief problems of “the progressive narrative”. The whig historian of European integration is reluctant to see that the construction of EU institutions is not only the result of conscious engineering from the political will on the Commission's part but also that of multilateral bargaining, constraining, dismantling and rebuilding the institutional settlement. This is what I have called in the first part, a whig overestimation of the continuity of political will. Michael Geary views the success at Maastricht in 1992 as the proof that “the federalist strength could outmanoeuvre the intergovernmental tendencies of member states like Britain” (Geary 2012, p.20). In so depicting the defeating of one party's will over another, Geary's analysis falls clearly into the pattern of teleological, as opposed to synthetic narration of the process. Acknowledging the anti-heroes in European integration necessitates an assessment of the post-Hague period that goes beyond correlating the salience of events and their “progressiveness” but how they enabled features of particular construction of Europe that we have today. This open view of the European finality, in conformity with the Monnet method, requires us to update the definition “salience” as well as tracing it from the events in the process. Probably in the end, a constructive history of European integration is more meaningful than a progressive one.

The Problem of Salience Attribution

The controversy of periodization around the ensuing years of the Hague summit often hinges on this question: Shall we assess the achievements of summits by their consequences or their visions

The first option involves the complex issue of causal attribution. In a system of multi-level governance such as in the European political sphere, the roles of ideas and human agency operate on a multi-causal plane along with institutionalist, structuralist and geo-political factors. Shall we credit the Hague summit in 1969 as the point of relaunch solely based on the fact that its visions corresponded to the ensuing programme? Hartmut Marhold offers a more nuanced analysis: While he recognises that the Hague summit in 1969 “constituted a momentum” for European Integration, he discourages the optimistic thought that equates the end of the de Gaulle era in 1969 with the commencement of “the second generation” of European integration (Marhold 2009, p.25) but instead highlights it as an integral part to the “Golden Age” history at its fading dawn (cf. Marhold 2009, p.19). Marhold is explicit in his rejection of the typing of 1969 as a “departure for the second generation”:

“From now on, European integration was no longer inspired by the Hague momentum, but by concern over the crisis...European integration did not come to a complete standstill, but was now motivated by other challenges than those identified by the end of the 60s. And we must state what, whatever the importance of the steps, tools and instruments, they did not break the spell – ‘Eurosclerosis became the key term for a decade, between 1973 and the early 80s’” (Marhold 2009, p.23).

In short, Marhold disagrees with the periodisation approach from Meyer and concurs with Ludlow in confirming that “it was the single market programme and the SEA which revitalised the EC, seen as a relaunch of the mid-1980s” (Ludlow 2006, cited in Marhold 2009, p.13).

How is Marhold's line of analysis distinct from the whig argument for the “second generation” thesis? First, Marhold does not credit the significance of the Hague 1969 simply because its ideals correspond with those we have today, the same way the whig historian of English history “take the Protestants of the 16th century as men who were fighting to bring about our modern world, while the Catholics were struggling to keep the mediæval” (Butterfield 1931, p.19). Instead he is ready to concede that although the spirit of the Hague and its agenda were later revitalised, this fact would not justify a retroactive abridgement between the Hague summit and later achievements. The Hague's visions have fallen into place in the present, but they didn't produce the present.

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Second, a plurality of factors is acknowledged, which contrasts with the whig approach where set-backs and discontinuities tend to be abridged from the narrative. Marhold does not attribute the crisis in the 70s to the failure to implement the Hague objectives, but observes that they were overshadowed by the emergence of new crises.

Going ahead with Marhold's view that new challenges unexpected in 1969 came to motivate the course of integration from the 70s, we can now consider another causal dimension of the European integration that has to do with external geo-political factors. In their book *European Integration and the Atlantic Community in the 1980s* Patel and Weisbrode have identified a shift in US policy towards European integration from the 1960s to the 1980s (Patel and Weisbrode 2013), elaborated in a range of literature: According to Schulz and Schwartz, "the 1970s was the first decade in which European integration was acknowledged as an impediment to transatlantic relations: the United States continued to support the former rhetorically but did little to encourage or help it in practice, which had not been the case during the 1950s and early 1960s" (Schulz & Schwartz 2010, p.355-73). The support from the US on the subject of European integration has been characterised by Geir Lundestad as going "from bad to worse" from 1977 to 1984 (Lundestad 2003, p.201). Diminishing US support thus poses a potential contender on the table of independent variables in relation to explaining the process in the 70s. Patel and Weisbrode also problematise the ostensible coincidence that European integration has taken a big stride forward at the precise moment of greatest hostility between the superpowers (cf. Patel & Weisbrode 2013, p.3). Could the process have been inadvertently advanced by the inclination towards balance of power at the peak of the Cold War? In other words, could the so-called big-bangs, namely dramatic advancement in the process in the 80s be *over-determined* by "a timely combination of human and structural forces" (Gilbert 2008, p.649), making the possibility of a narrative unlikely?

The conclusion from this section, therefore, is that there is no comprehensive narrative from any singular theory that can contain the complexities of causes and motivations in the process of European integration. Butterfield has in 1931 argued fiercely against salience attribution with respect to the visions we identify in a certain historical event:

"To whom do we owe our religious liberty? We may ask how this liberty arose, but even then it takes all history to give us the answer. We are in error if we imagine that we have found the origin of this liberty when we have merely discovered the first man who talked about it. We are wrong if we study the question in that over-simplified realm which we call "the history of ideas", or if we personify ideas in themselves and regard them as self-standing agencies in history" (Butterfield 1931, p.26).

In the same way, when we ask ourselves "to whom do we owe the achievements of EMU", it is tempting to fall into the kind of whig historical thinking as offered by Carter (Carter 2007, pp.3566-3569) that too precipitately reckons that the Hague "represented a seed that, over the next decades, would result in the creation of the European Monetary Union (EMU) and its common currency", despite having done "very little immediately to forward the issue of economic and monetary union", but nevertheless celebrated solely on the ground that "an idea can prove more important than any immediate action" (Carter 2007, pp.3566-3569). As revealed in Marhold's analysis, the role of ideas and agency can be undermined by political changes on parallel but independent trajectories. This doesn't invalidate the significance of these ideas and individual agency but should rather motivate a more technical as opposed to abridged, or "whig" history, to document not only how past ideals have been relevant and also how they were undermined. Only in such a way is it possible to give a complete narrative faithful to the unabridged history of European integration.

PART III: The Inescapability of Whig History

If the ubiquity of political contingency obliges us to resort to a sort of agnosticism about the validity of any whig narrative on European integration, then it is probably more useful to consider the purposes of such narratives, rather than their truthfulness. In my view, we are propelled to such a move given the nature of scholarship on European integration as an on-going project, which involves the ambiguity of contemporary, as opposed to past, closed history. In this part I will move from discussing the question of validity concerning whig interpretations of the Hague and its aftermaths to a deeper issue about the *raison d'être* of such interpretations in the first place.

What grounds historians when they are seeking reinstatement of the significance of historical events such as the

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Hague summit in posterity, almost 50 years after its happening? To begin such an enquiry we must first understand their motivations. In fact, conscious misconstruction of historical events is deeply engrained in our social traditions: when we celebrate the 14th of July in commemoration of the French revolution of 1789, we are certainly not relating to an episode of Jacobin violence that ended in bourgeois embracement of dictatorial rule under Napoleon – Instead we celebrate the “abridged” history of the French revolution which we identify as the origin of the values of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* that underpin the present-day society of the French republic. This ritual of selectively reinforcing our collective memories belongs to the same species of “the whig narrative of European history” that is the broader context of the subject of this essay: More than an academic endeavour, it is also a social function, a rhetoric instrument that carries political purposes

Summit diplomacy has apart of facilitating intergovernmental bargaining a ceremonial function. I will argue that this aspect of diplomacy is often unduly understated and deserves attention on its own political function. In a 2006 interview with the ex-president of the European Commission Gaston Thorn, it was mentioned that “The atmosphere in The Hague was quite euphoric”, and “the Hague was what we would now call ‘a major European event’” (Thorn 2006). Major supranational summits like the Hague in 1969, before meetings of the European Council were institutionalised, were ceremonies that manufacture and imprint on our collective memories. In this sense, the Hague summit made history not only in the sense that it set out an agenda of long-term objectives to be accomplished over time, but also in the sense that it physically produced a spectacle, a cause of celebration, that left a mark on the recent history of the European community.

What flows from this recognition, thus, is that beyond all narratives, there is in the end the *rhetoric* justification for abridgement. The propagating and legitimising role of summits as a form of diplomacy is an integral part of their legacy. The point I am making here is about the metaphysical relation of the subjects of this essay: besides examining narratives of major summits in European integration, we must realise also that *summits themselves can engender narratives*. Events in the history of European integration, including the Hague summit of 1969, are not only contained in narratives of European integration but aim to invent and update them.

It is useful to conceptualise official discourses on European integration as a political speech-act: in April 2013, the European Commission launched the “New Narrative” project, where it “aims to identify a new, encompassing narrative that takes into account the evolving reality of the European continent, as well as highlighting that the EU is not solely about the economy and growth, but also about cultural unity and common values in a globalised world” (European Commission 2015). The nature of this initiative is a political speech-act in so far that it is performative: it intends a significant part of illocutionary effects, aiming at mobilising our feelings about, conception of and affinity towards the EU, as the same time whilst expressing locutionary utterances describing what the EU is about.

The inescapability of Whig history lies not in the irreversibility of the European project but in the political necessity of its narrative construction. In “Enlargement and the finality of European integration”, Jan Zielonka identifies “cultural identity” and “democracy” as two sources of political legitimacy (Zielonka 2000, p.161). In my view, however, there is another source of political legitimacy that could benefit EU institutions, and this lies in the historical continuity between the past and present arrangements of institutional architecture. We would like to think that the European superstructure that governs us has a history, has been incrementally built up with the presence of consent every step of the way. This rationalisability, or “narratability” of history is important to citizens as it provides for a sense of justice that is situated in the Burkian conception of social contract, which consists in the partnership between generations and the continuity of political institutions. The whig narrative of European integration aims to intimate the present with past ideals because it is politically opportune to engender this sense of justice, which in turn produces the perception of political legitimacy.

The whig construction of such narratives, thus, is so to speak a kind of “necessary evil” motivated by *political pragmatism* – the same pragmatism however must acknowledge the contingency of its own arguments and avoid any sense of whig determinism and complacency, which *will* weaken our knowledge of European integration in the field of *political science*.

It is safe to conclude that new agendas have appeared in our horizon in view of the *finalité politique* of the EU. Most

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prominent of these, in view of the recent waves of economic and political crises, would be the issues of identity and legitimacy. Neither of these was anticipated in Hague in 1969, and indeed the focal points of the summit such as that on building a monetary union has been altogether put into doubt as to whether this is a good idea for Europe after all – Would Europe be better off without the Euro? (Höpner 2014) In short, we find ourselves in 2015 at a post-technocratic phase of European integration. It will be deluded to try to convince ourselves of a whig narrative of European integration where we are supposed to owe our present to the ideals of the Hague summit of 1969. However, it would be equally futile to search for absolute truth in any narrative of the process. Narratives on European integration are constructed, constructible, thus also deconstructible and reconstructible. The evolving nature of European integration and the view of its finality requires the perpetual reconstruction of the reigning narrative of the process. In the end, narrating the process of European integration is part of the process.

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