

New Europe Growth to Limits?

Edited by

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Europe is defined by its borders. But which ones? Since 1989, this question has taken on a new meaning for hundreds of millions of people, within and more crucially beyond the EU. As the “European community” has grown, new identities and alliances have formed.

This book is the fruit of the third in a series of important conferences held in Warsaw, Poland that have debated the future of the New Europe and its “growth to limits”. Inspired by the Polish humanist sociologist Edmund Mokrzycki (1937–2001) leading European intellectuals debate the new Europe that is in formation, against the backdrop of the historical Europes that predate the present. Accession to the EU is only one option among many, and may raise more problems than it solves.

The wider rift in Europe is of long standing. It can be traced back at least to the East-West Schism of 1054, a dispute over the Holy Trinity that divided medieval Christianity into Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) branches. For many people, this still defines the cultural limits of European political and civil society.

Poland, for instance, has a strong European identity because of its rich Renaissance culture and Catholic faith.

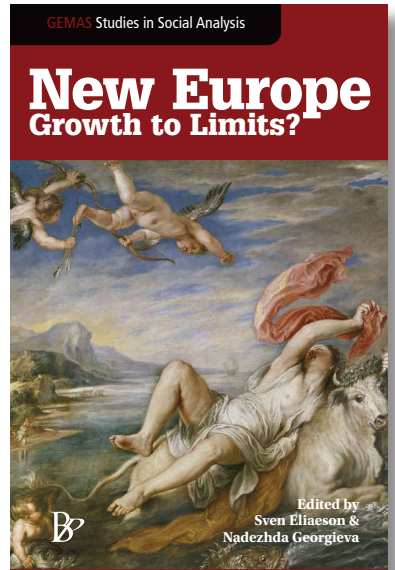
Russia, by contrast, remains an “identity giving other”, despite a history marked by its involvement in the “European concert” and its role today as member of the Council of Europe.

Driving Europe forwards still requires more than a glance in its rear-view mirror. For identity and integration in a global age does not mean that older historical forces are weakened, as shown by the patriotic new “children of 1848”.

Armenia in the near East, as the first Christian state, ought to be closer to EU entrance than Turkey, but depends on Russia for its security policy. Turkey has been an historic European power since the 15th century. Its assimilation into the EU could solve a demographic problem, for the ageing European population is a threat to the maintenance of a sustainable welfare state.

If the EU should overburden itself with more than it can digest a re-born “core” Europe of the original six states might result. However, EU enlargement is probably a unique historical process; and despite the democratic deficit it has been a success story, since war in Europe is no longer possible for infrastructural reasons. Yet this has not stopped the old “great power” antagonisms from re-emerging, as in the Balkans in the 1990s.

The book contains more than twenty contributions based on a symposium at the Centre for Social Studies at the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology at the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw. As Christopher Bryant writes in his foreword: “The new Europe is complex. What and where it is and what it could and should become are contested intellectually and politically. Contributors to the symposium draw lessons from Kant and Marx onwards.... The very notion of growth to limits is also the kind of challenge Edmund [Mokrzycki] would have welcomed. How far can the European Union be extended geographically? How far, too, can the four freedoms and the single market be developed? What are the limits to multi-level governance? What, beyond liberal democracy and a market economy, does the union stand for? On these and other questions the essays in this book offer readers rich food for thought.”



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The future of the European Union looks problematic and difficult. This volume provides an essential source of reference for scholars and policy-makers concerned with helping the EU resolve core issues of where its boundaries should be drawn, how its identity should be conceived and the consequences of enlargement to embrace the former Eastern European states.

Anthony Giddens
(London School of Economics)

The meaning of “Europe” is something that becomes clear—or the contradictions and issues with the idea become clear—at the boundaries of Europe, and especially in the east. This volume contains an excellent selection of deeply thought through papers on this important topic.

Stephen Turner
(University of South Florida)

A richly textured and complex book that, by looking carefully into Europe’s moving borders, helps us to better understand their uncertain narratives and identities.

Victor-Perez Diaz
(Analistas Socio-Políticos Research Centre, Madrid)



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