

The Meanings of Europe

Changes and Exchanges
of a Contested Concept

**Edited by Claudia Wiesner
and Meike Schmidt-Gleim**

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To our Parents

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16 Europe's Ends

Kalypso Nicolaidis



Figure 16.1 Ends vs Ends: The Yin and Yang of European Politics.
Source: Kalypso Nicolaidis.

The ancient Chinese invented words for what we all know: that most things and concepts exist in interdependence with another, through which they are mutually defined.¹ Thus a flower vase cannot be without the void inside. Yin and Yang. Europeans today should be asking two simultaneous questions: What is our community for and where does our community end? Who is us and where is us? Politics and Space. Identity and Borders. Ends and Ends, the ultimate Yin and Yang of European politics.

If we cannot speak of one without the other, we must speak of the whole when asking about European borders. In fact we speak of “European” borders precisely because the European Union (EU) has managed to appropriate *the idea of Europe* as it progressively reaches the confines of its imagined historical boundaries. And this idea of Europe, in turn, is supposed to tell us where Europe, or rather the EU, ends.² But can it really do this for us? Is it not also true that the EU project was predicated on a refusal of teleological discourse and praxis? The EU has been called many things and remains deeply contested as a political form, precisely because it is a project (For peace? Prosperity? Governance among states?) rather than a destination. The political choices that have guided its transformation in the last half century have been about decision-making processes, changing sources of authority

and realms of action, rather than structures and finality. It is precisely because of such a lack of *telos* that it has been so difficult—as well as OK—not to actually name the beast, including in the failed Constitutional attempt. No matter that Europe cannot be labelled as either federal or confederal, it is “uniting in diversity”. And so, the lack of explicit *political ends* to the journey has gone along with an equal indeterminacy in terms of *geographical ends*. Precisely because the European project is an open-ended process rather than a frozen structure, it has also been an open-ended space.

For some, this story, this logic, has exhausted its course. Politics requires lines, red lines and lines in the sand. Presumably, the post-cold war reuniting of the (historical) European continent on the one hand, and the prospect of enlargement to Southeast Europe, Turkey, and for that matter candidates further to the east or south on the other, have indeed resurrected (or created) the issue of European borders and the concurrent issue of European identity as *objects of political controversy*. Somehow, “we” must now decide: What ends will it be?

In this chapter, I argue that, on the contrary, Europe's Ends ought to stay optional and I attempt to “map out” these options—literally (see Figure 16.2). If we believe that the dead must not tie the hands of the living and bind them to their Ends, is it not more productive for us is to confront our various “mental maps” (Wallace 1991) and ask what lies beneath? If this is so, we must first ask why defining Europe's ends matters and what we are trying to achieve. The object of our conversation should not be to produce an answer on what ought to be or could be Europe's “final frontiers” but rather a common language to discuss the issue and beyond, a mapping out of the different *Imaginary Geographies* which coexist in our political space and connect both meanings of these Ends. We may come to agree that maybe our task is not to choose the most desirable, or plausible among such visions, but rather to ask how these visions can coexist in a single and shared European project, on what terms, and for how long. My ambition here is to provide a few landmarks for this debate, in particular by suggesting that “EU border studies” move away from the current short emphasis on “borders as the next enlargement” and towards a *longue durée* account of the future shape of our Union.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

The exercise in mapping out which I propose must start with laying out explicitly the underlying assumptions which we may hold about alternative meaning of “borders” for a non-state entity like the EU as well as the alternative meanings of the polity itself.

Meanings of Borders

Under the broad label of “EU borders”, we seem to refer to at least two sets of contested issues:

- *The shape of EU borders.* Here we deal with borders as political *frontiers*, and ask which countries should become members of the EU. According to the treaties, the Union is to be open to “any European state that respects its values”. This requires being both eligible and elected, that is, to qualify as “European” and then to demonstrate compatibility—“values” being operationalized through negotiated convergence towards more specific criteria (Copenhagen criteria). So the law itself is of little help here: you can be European if you are European. The game is simply to ask: Who is “European” and who is not? If Turkey, why not Ukraine? But then why not Morocco, Israel . . . or Canada? But membership in the EU does not exhaust the question of frontiers. What of the “almost us”, of Europe’s periphery, the relationship between membership, partnership, kinship? How far should our *European neighbourhood* extend? Should Europe have a “final” frontier?
- *The nature of EU borders.* Here we speak of borders as *boundaries* between different kind of realms, spatial but also functional, religious, ethnic, regulatory, etc. These borders may be soft or hard borders, subject to the contradictory pull of overlapping communities and the fundamental tension between prevailing security and liberal concerns in Europe. We recognise that the lack of congruence between national, regulatory, and political boundaries within the EU also applies to the relations with the rest of the world. We also recognise the gap between legal and mental boundaries as well as the interrelationship between internal and external boundaries, that is, boundaries between Europeans and non-Europeans living outside or inside the EU itself. In either case, borders can be barriers or bridges or better geographical “spines” (as Schama refers to Hadrian’s wall) structuring, rather than separating, a local world. In short, bordering cannot be apprehended as only a political or strategic fact, but also as a form of social change subject to intersubjective interferences and imaginings.

Thus, the *constitution* of Europe as a political community results from both the shape and nature of EU borders, and European politics in turn determine the evolving shape and nature of these borders. Choices and beliefs in one realm may influence the other, although the relationship is not a straightforward one. Hence for instance, enlargement of the EU was made easier once the candidate countries (say, Lithuania) had showed their capacity to “harden” their external borders, including in relation to kin communities living outside these borders (say, Russians in Russia) while at

the same time to “soften” their internal interethnic boundaries (say, Russian minorities). This was a hard sell since enlargement countries resisted the creation of new walls with their neighbours, calling instead for a disaggregation of the nature and functions of EU borders: Neighbours may not be members but we may abolish various kinds of borders between us nevertheless including those which impede or facilitate the movement of people; and we ought to seek some kind of consistency between the way internal and external boundaries between peoples are managed. But as we know, EU officialdom rarely considers flexible approaches to what happens on Europe’s external boundaries.

Visions of the Polity: Federal State, Empire, Union

Which leads us back to the Yin and the Yang. In our imagined geographies, borders depend on how we view the political space within. Who can or cannot be part of us depends on what “us” is about. I have laid out elsewhere a simplified contrast between three visions of the EU as a political community, each providing a normative benchmark for legal, institutional, and policy prescriptions (Nicolaidis 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2012, 2013; See also Lacroix and Nicolaidis 2010). These are of course ideal types as each corresponds, descriptively, to *part* of the EU’s reality and each anchors normatively *alternative* ideals of what it should be.

My starting point is widely shared in EU scholarship (see inter alia Magnette, 2005, Tsoukalis, 2004). The EU as is hovers between two traditional paradigms preferred by different camps, each of which had to make compromises with the other: sovereignists on one hand and federalists on the other. Crucially, these sides tend to share a state-centric paradigm familiar to all, characterized by the congruence between political territory and authority, and the equation between democracy and a single people. This paradigm is not of course the monopoly of sovereignists or their soft institutional translation—intergovernmentalism. As many have argued elsewhere, sovereignists-cum-intergovernmentalists and traditional federalists are but two sides of the same state-centric coin. Identity symbols—a common flag, passport, or hymn—and textbooks are supposed to tell a “European” history and thus recreate the mystique of the nation state at the European level. They rely on the sovereignists’ idea of a single *demos* as the necessary ground for creating a genuine political community. But they also believe in the “withering of the state” and that state authority and capacity for control is being eroded from all sides—above, below, and sideways (non-state actors)—and moreover that this is a good thing.

In my view, however, the EU is best described as a third way against these two alternatives. We need not deny the continued importance of the state, not only as the remaining central locus of identity-formation and policy implementation, but also as the most appropriate unit for the

conduct of democratic politics. In this view, it is precisely in recognition of the continued and desirable importance of the state that we must invent something else at the European level. In reaction to both the sovereignist and federalist state-centric approaches which rely on the existence of a single *demos* at the national or European levels, many authors have argued that the EU's political construct must contend with its radical plurality, not only in the realm of culture but also in socio-economic and political terms. The EU is what I have called European democracy, that is, a Union of peoples, understood both as states and as citizens, who govern together but not as one. As a democracy-in-the-making, the EU is neither a Union of democratic states, as "sovereignists" would have it, nor a Union-as-a-democratic state to be, as "federalists" would have it. A Union-as-democracy should remain an open-ended process of transformation which seeks to accommodate the tensions inherent in the pursuit of radical mutual opening between separate peoples (Nicolaidis 2012, 2013; Cheneval and Schimmelfennig 2013).

A European *democracy* is predicated on the mutual recognition of the many European identities—not on their merger. Such identities can be individual or collective, national, sub-national, or transnational. Europe is a community of project, rather than a community of identity, a community mobilizing some degree of shared allegiance to basic values in order to act inside and outside its borders. Europe's heterogeneity can be politically *mediated*, but cannot be *eliminated*. A truly "federal" vision of Europe, preserving its cultural differences *and* solidarities, must be a federal union not a federal state.

Importantly for our purposes here, there are variants around these various themes. In particular, the EU has been viewed as "empire" to denote a form of association between its member states which not only exhibits asymmetric forms of power and (soft) domination, but also where the nature of EU governance and the nature of its frontiers are intrinsically related (Zielonka 2006; Batt and Wolczuk 2002). For these analysts, Europe may be a benign kind of empire "by invitation" seeking to exercise non-coercive forms of influence, but it is an empire nonetheless. Arguably, understanding Europe as an empire may partly obscure as well as enlighten our debate. Obscure, because empires do retain features of the figure of the state in that they are ultimately organised around the division between centre and periphery. In its post-colonial guise, the European empire replaces domination by influence and the "metropole" by the "technopole". But the centre remains. We are in the paradigm of "Wider Europe" and the political community of concentric circles is not viewed as one of symmetry of influence.

How do borders then figure in each of these paradigms? Producing borders is first and foremost about producing foreigners, picking our Others, an exercise which both informs and reflects the different imagined geographies European might have about their continent. Most conspicuously,

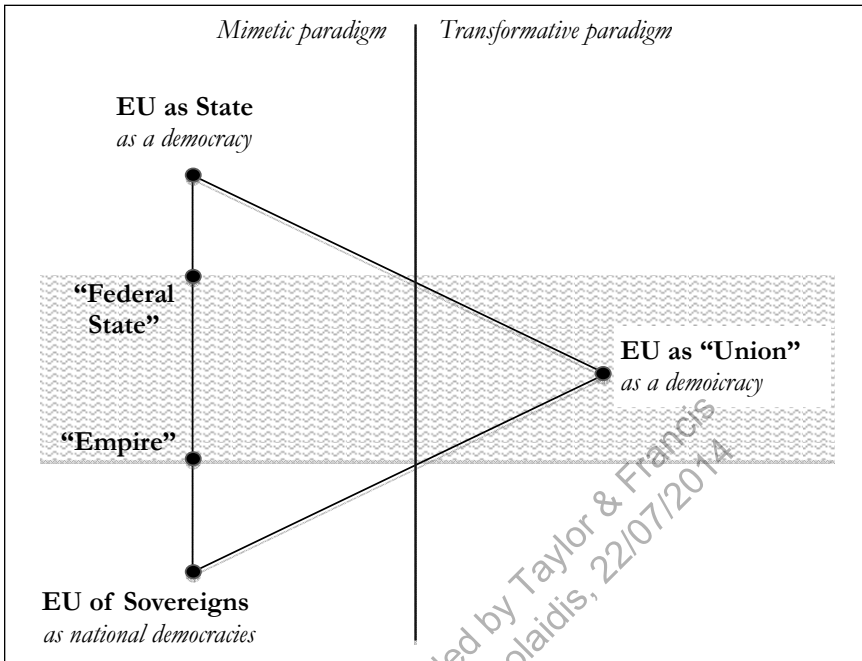


Figure 16.2 The political community and its democratic credentials.
 Source: Kalypso Nicolaïdis.

the state paradigm has been from inception an exercise in constructing a collective identity among strangers through the construction of “others”—enemies, rivals, or simply neighbours kept at arm’s length. During the 2000s, mainstream public and elite opinions in Europe oscillated between *Clash of civilization* (the West vs. Islam), including through the *othering* of Islam-within, and *Clash within civilization*, where many Europeans came to find that rejecting “American imperialism” (or more broadly discussing, opposing, addressing, pleading with, and emulating the US) was the one thing they had in common (see Habermas and Derrida 2003; Borrandi, 2003). But a decade later, during our times of global power shifts, who we consider as Others might be interchangeable, and Asia might come to replace America.

Non-statist understandings of the EU on the other hand start from the proposition that defining the EU against an Other is not the most faithful approach to the story of the post-war European project. If the EU is not to emulate a traditional (federal) state writ large, there can be no strong and sharp divide between how we treat other Europeans and non-European others. There are gradations in solidarity, sense of belonging, and togetherness. Borders within Europe beyond mere physical checkpoints do not

disappear overnight (and may never do so) just as borders with the non-EU world are permeable, “fuzzy”, and progressive. Empires blur the difference between us and others while allowing for differences within. If Europe must have an other, let it be, and only that, its own past—whether that of nineteenth century colonialism, or twentieth century mutual slaughtering. It is in this first sense that the distinction between statist and non-statist visions of Europe matters for its borders. Only with the latter, can we consistently argue that the EU cannot and should not be constructed against an Other—be it the United States or Islam—as the historical trope of state construction would have it.

Etienne Balibar perhaps best captured this idea of a non-state like Europe space not predicated on “othering” with the idea of Europe as “borderland” or a model of “*Cross-Over*” between worlds (Balibar 2004). In his words,

This is a schematic projection of an idea that can be found in many contemporary critiques of the notion of “pure” cultural identity : especially the “post-colonial” writers, but also historians and anthropologists of the “Euro-Mediterranean” civilization, sociologists working on the “Atlantic passage” (either in its dominant “white” version, or in its subaltern “black” version). It is also, more empirically, latent in the works of writers, geographers and political theorists who examine the prospects of “border zones” of the new European space, such as the “Baltic Rim”, the “Danubian region”, the “Euro-Mediterranean”, the “Trans-Manche” (litt. Cross-Channel region), who, albeit frequently describing the same “facts” as in the old theories of Mitteleuropa, reverse their meaning, by insisting on the idea that in the very “heart” of Europe all languages, religions, cultures, are coexisting and mixing, with origins and connections all over the world. If this is a “middle”, then, it is not a center, but rather “a series of assembled peripheries”, as Edward Said put it in (. . .).

Thus the paradigm of Europe as borderland differs from that of Europe as empire in that there is no centre but only peripheries and that these peripheries overlap among themselves and can straddle EU boundaries. Balibar speaks of “overlapping peripheries” each of them *open* (through “invasions”, “conquests”, “refuges”, “colonizations”, and “post-colonial migrations”, etc.) to influences from all other parts of Europe, and from the rest of the world. In this sense Europe is also a “microcosmos” where patterns of relations and conflicts imported from elsewhere take place *within* the European space. The EU is as much permeated or “invaded” by the world through its borders as it is “protected” or “isolated” by them from the rest of the world. Europeans like to argue that their continent is a microcosm precisely because, while European nation states in the colonial era exported their internal conflicts, Europe has now become the place where many of

the world's problems crystallise and get played out: refugee inflows and socio-ethnic tensions; transnational economic inequalities between north and south; calls for redistribution and the pursuit of justice beyond the state; the controversial balancing of social standards and trade liberalization; the two-edged sword of free movement of people and capital; or the tension between liberal and conservative values in coordinating police and justice systems. On the bright side, this means Europeans have not only the institutional capital, but also the substantive know-how to promote a shift in the global agenda towards better management of our commons. On the dark side, this means that Europe exemplifies the tensions and contradictions of twenty-first century modernity from globalisation to ethnic conflicts to the travails democracy beyond the state. This may be the broader meaning of the Euro-crisis from 2010 onwards: Europe is laboratory, with its trials *and* errors, which sees itself as the image it hopes to project not as what it really is (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002). And of course, the more the two collide, the less its global influence is sustainable.

And so, beyond the ways in which the projection of self and other affect the imagined geographies of European boundaries, we come back to the issue of power and influence. First to note that the old tension between deepening and widening—or as the French still have it, between Europe-*espace* and Europe-*puissance*—continues to loom large in alternative visions of European borders. With each EU enlargement, there are those who argue that heightened levels of heterogeneity (in strategic culture, atlanticism, beliefs about sovereignty and intervention, economic, social, and political models, etc.) will translate in a lost sense of common destiny and purpose in the world, thus an ever lesser capacity to act together and speak with a single voice, and thus ultimately a loss in global power. To simplify the chain of causality: power and homogeneity go hand in hand, a premise closely associated with state paradigms of the Union.

Against this vision, each link in the causal chain can be questioned. Whether diversity and destiny are really antinomic in a world where the tyranny of small differences tends to be the greatest source of conflict; whether a single voice is necessarily the most effective mode of influence in a multi-centred world; and whether indeed, scale and size are not in the end a greater source of influence—making Europe an alliance of states or new kind of empire “by invitation” more relevant to a world in transition. Accordingly a more diverse Union allows for the pooling of preferential ties and cultural affinities, complementary skills, international networks, sensitivities, and languages which, in turn, make the EU more “relevant” to partners around the world. In geo-strategic terms, a larger Union not only weighs more but comes to exercise increased influence through “neighbourhood effects”.

Ultimately we need to recognise that it may not be up to Europeans themselves to adjudicate these debates. It may be that the EU's active power matters less than its normativity in a more passive sense, its capacity to stay

relevant as a toolbox for governance if not as a model in the eyes of the rest of the world. Hence, we need to ask about the credibility, legitimacy, and desirability associated with different visions of European borders from the outside-in and critically assess claims to EU universalism (Fisher Onar and Nicolaidis 2013). The rest of the world is the co-shaper of Europe's imagined geography. After all, the Union is an imagined community for them, too.

THE LONGUE DURÉE: EUROPE'S ENDS IN OUR IMAGINED GEOGRAPHIES

We all carry around our own imagined geographies. Sometimes individual imaginations coalesce into collective ones which shape the social worlds in which they are embedded. The line between the individual and the collective is not a straightforward one. To ascertain that different collective visions of the "European space" can be associated with the different understandings of the nature of the EU polity as discussed above (state, empire, union), its identity in the making (demos vs. demoi), and the external projection of its power and model, certainly requires simplifying assumptions. Alternative ideas of Europe's Ends as in purposes can be related to alternative visions of Europe's Ends as boundaries. My concern here is only to suggest ways of framing the current debates about EU enlargement within the *Longue Durée* and thus to literally take perspective, a different one from the dominant inside-out perspective (e.g., Should the EU expand?). I offer a view "from above" on how the EU might look like in fifty or a hundred years. Indeed, I will argue, our disputes about the here and now of EU borders must be embedded more explicitly within these broader visions, not because one must necessarily choose his or her favourite one, but because today's decision are necessarily made in the shadow of future possible worlds, that of our children and grandchildren.

So as we ask about Europe's Ends in fifty or a hundred years, we usually start with the familiar question "who is us" and "not us"; the "us" in this case being who is "European" against the backdrop of the many other ways we are faced with the reconstitution of boundaries within the European space. And yet quickly, "who is us" becomes "who is us by implication" or by osmosis, an inference from the initial answer, as if the paradox of the heap applied to being us for the EU. There is no specific tipping point, no point on the map where we can say: EUness stops. Hence the most basic anxiety so often voiced with regards to the prospective Turkish membership in the EU: If Turkey becomes a member why not Ukraine, if Ukraine why not Russia, if Russia, why not Israel . . . and if Israel, why not Morocco? And then as an un-fathomable perspective: Should the EU have no end? As if, in a sense, the lack of final frontiers, or rather their ever shifting character meant that the EU also lacked clear goals, a *raison d'être*: Ends as ends, endlessness as aimlessness.

Table 16.1 Four Visions of EuroBorders

<i>Inclusiveness</i>	<i>Exclusive</i>	<i>Inclusive</i>
Territoriality		
Bound	1. Euro-Myth	1. Euro-Limes
Unbound	3. Euro-Spheres	4. Euro-World

Source: Kalypto Nicolaidis

I believe that in order to address squarely this ubiquitous fear of endlessness we need to ask two fundamental questions, which in turn generate four imagined geographies for the EU as laid out in table 16.1 and figure 16.3.

The first question is the most fundamental as it is about “boundedness” itself, or the delineation of boundaries. Should the EU be conceived, imagined, or constructed as a bounded political community? That is a polity which at a given point in time ought to “finalise” its borders, draw a line in the sand, or should it be thought and imagined “beyond territory” as a Union premised on some shared project, idea, destiny, or set of rules that could in principle expand for ever? In other words, how constraining should the “European” be in the future development of this original Union?

The second question is about inclusiveness. Whether thought of as bound or unbound, should the European Union be exclusive or inclusive? Should the default option be to take such and such neighbours into the club or leave them put? Should the EU’s bias be to exclude or encompass areas or countries significantly “different” (whatever this may mean) from its core?

Europe Bound

I suggest that two most traditional imagined geographies for Europe both rely on seeing it as bounded space, but with a crucial difference—one is exclusive as if Europe was akin to a nation; the other is inclusive as if Europe was something else.

Vision 1: Euro-Myth (History and Religion): A European Nation

Many books, in history, sociology, political geography, or history of ideas have been written to tell the story and draw the portrait of the EU as Euro-Myth (Della Salla, 2010). Meike Schmidt-Gleim tells the story in her chapter of this volume of how the construction of Europe over the centuries has been coined by the figure of the barbarian, the silent other beyond our borders. Little needs to be added here. Many imagine “Europe” as shaped by a mythical past and the religious or cultural affinities which flow from it. Like the nations that compose it, and in keeping

EUROPE'S ENDS : ALTERNATIVE VISIONS

*Inclusiveness
Territoriality*

Exclusive

Inclusive

Bound

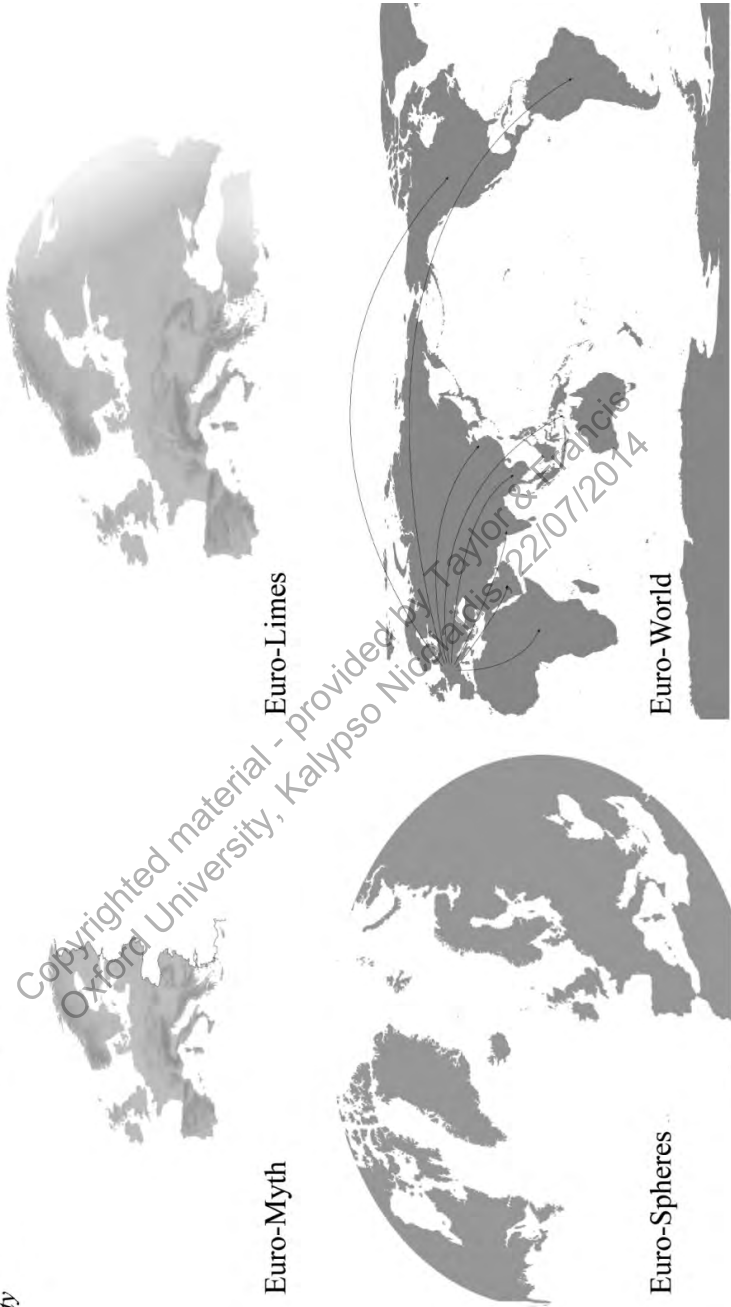
Euro-Myth

Euro-Limes

Unbound

Euro-Spheres

Euro-World



©Nicolaidis K., Moulin

Figure 16.3 Europe's imagined geographies.
Source: Kalypso Nicolaidis..

with the first, state-centric paradigm, this Europe is being imagined as an age-old reality (see for instance the draft Constitution's first preamble in 2002). It is most antithetic to the idea of Europe as empire with its expansive connotation. And while one can conceive of a Union of peoples limited to the boundaries of the Euro-myth, it does not sit at ease within these confines if the very spirit of a democracy is to avoid the pitfalls of "oneness" and othering.

At its most extended, this is the space defined by de Gaulle's famously curse formula of "Europe de l'Atlantique à l'Oural". To be sure, for many, this imagined Europe includes forays in Russian territory up to the Black and Caspian Seas and corresponds to the mythical Christian, or Judeo-Christian, Europe of our childhood textbooks. It can thus encompass South East Europe with slight but tolerable exceptions of Muslim Albania and Bosnia, absolved for their religious affiliation by their subjugation under the Ottoman Empire.

This Euro-Myth is all the more powerful because it is shared by "outsiders" engaged in un-reflexive exercises in self-exclusion. Classically, Europe's "final limit" to the east can be found in Istanbul, where traffic signs on the western side of the Bosphorus bridges welcome drivers to Europe (Avrupa'ya hoşgeldiniz) while the other side offers its "welcome to Asia"—essentialist imagination at its concrete best.

This first vision fits more or less our current borders and entails eventual enlargement to the Western Balkans and resistance to Turkish membership. The impulse here is exclusionary: The EU is about defining who is not us, defining ourselves against some Other as discussed above, whether the US or Islam, those living "beyond" some geographical boundary reified as reflecting an "essential" characteristic of the EU. Such a view, one must stress, is not necessarily xenophobic, but can be driven by other factors, such as the concern for solidarity, which is seen to require homogeneity, or for Europe's ability to speak with one voice which is seen as antithetic with diversity. In this vision, Europe's teleology is "finite" and the EU enlargement process close to closure, a closure seen as key to effectiveness inside and strength outside.

Vision 2: Euro-Limes (Politics and Society): Finite but Inclusive

The more we understand Europe as a "community of others" bringing together different peoples who at this specific moment in history have decided (well, their leaders have) to pursue their political destiny together, the more uneasy we may be with this mythical version of Europe's Ends and the exclusionary nature of its boundaries. Both paradigms of Europe as Empire and Europe as Union or borderland suggest a more inclusive reading of the European space which reconciles the hybrid character of the whole of Europe *within* with the progressively higher degrees of hybridism to be found as we move towards its margins.

In this perspective, it might be useful to invoke the notion of *limes*, a term which lends itself to many interpretations. While its Indo-European etymology—“to bow or to bend”—denotes a limit which bends across in some way, the term in its broadest sense can denote any way of signalling distinction or difference, from the most subtle to the bluntest. While Latin writers generally used “*limes*” to denote the marked or fortified frontiers of the empire, it also came to define a simple cross-path or cross-wall which the Romans meant to temporarily throw across the path of invaders to hinder them; in other words, *limes* were as much mental as material barriers which could be easily shifted according to necessity. In some places, the Romans considered themselves free to attack while in others the emperor simply ordered the army to stay within the *limites* except for punitive expeditions. To the extent that *limes* can be thought of as thresholds, each country also has entrance points or portals that individuals pass through to enter. The idea of *limes* can thus allow for boundaries to encompass spaces rather than lines in the sand. And there may be degrees in whether one is in and out, degrees, as it were, of inness, of Europeaness.

I would argue that today at least, Europe’s *limes* include countries or parts of countries that are already members of the Union (Britain, Greece, Lithuania), or candidates to be (South Eastern Europe), and, perhaps more controversially, Turkey, Ukraine, and beyond, the other western former Russian former republics.

The key question becomes whether Europe should stop before (*en deçà*) or beyond (*au delà*) its *limes*, these margins of the empire which were traditionally more outward than inward-looking and composed of peoples with only partial sense of belonging to the empire itself. In other words, if the EU excludes Turkey, it will stop short of encompassing its “*limes*” and if it includes it, it would extend beyond. The same applies to Ukraine or Georgia. Moreover, Europe’s *limes* are not only the spaces and peoples at its geographical margin, but all those across Europe who do not fit a mythical straightjacket of *Européen de souche*. They are, as the poet would say, *pas tout à fait les mêmes pas tout à fait les autres*: migrants, refugees, diasporas, transnational communities, etc. *Euro-Limes* is a paradigm which relates integration within and without to the inter-cultural, inter-ethnic, or inter-class bargains struck within today’s EU, and to the inter-state bargains struck with its potential new members. When we talk of Europe’s neighbourhood we need to imagine the complex web of connections between minorities within and majorities without and factor these in when we imagine EU enlargement to its *limes*.

The *Euro-limes* vision is clearly not consistent with the idea of Europe as a state or a nation writ-large. Beyond, the empire model implies that the *limes* are “thick” boundaries, that may encompass large geographical areas or even entire countries that may be incorporated into the EU as a part of functional imperatives but may remain peripheral culturally,

politically, and economically. On the other hand, clearly, a Europe which is itself a borderland, mediating between continents and collective stories, cannot but incorporate its *limes*, and in fact consider that such incorporation strengthens Europe's idea of itself as the ultimate translator between worlds (on translation see Balibar 2004).

The "great debate" around Turkish membership can surely be viewed as one between these two visions of Europe, Euro-Myth versus Euro-Limes. In my view, to make the argument that Turkey belongs to the EU still requires addressing the essentialist question of whether "Turkey is European" if only because this is the way the publics see it that will vote in an eventual referendum on Turkish entry (Nicolaidis 2003). Nevertheless, proponents of membership do not need to pretend that Turkey is simply European, to deny that it is "more different" than other new members. Yes Turkey is European, but in a twenty-first century kind of way (Nicolaidis 2004b). To recognise that the enlargement to Turkey is a different ballgame than any one before it, and that this is both Turkey's burden and its ultimate strength, does not mean, *au contraire*, that Turkey is not European. I would argue that Turkey is European, not because Brussels said so or because Istanbul straddles a continental divide over the Bosphorus, but because it is itself a hybrid, complex, multifaceted cultural and political entity. It is European if and only if we hold a vision of Europe compatible with this complexity, that is a Europe that is itself hybrid and multifaceted, either as empire or as democratic union in the making. The crucial caveat in the story is of course that members of a democracy must themselves be democratic—this is the test that Turkey will continue to face.

In this regard, the empire paradigm predicated on a distinction between a core and a periphery may offer an alternative version of Euro-lime, with variations on variable geometry membership, membership-minus schemes around concentric circles, or even ultimately "strategic partnerships" instead of membership. Indeed, some would argue that the 2010 financial crisis renders such differentiated integration inevitable.

When it comes to Europe's global actorness, and against the Euro-myth vision of *Europe puissance*, one can certainly argue that expanding the EU's Ends to its *limes* would more likely enhance than reduce Europe's influence in the world. A Union which is seen outside as capable of including Turkey for instance will not only send a powerful message to the rest of the world about the compatibility of Islam and democracy, but even more importantly signal that the EU is such a powerfully integrative political project that it can accept as its "biggest" member state one whose dominant religion is Islam. By becoming one of the most powerful voices of Europe in the Muslim world, including North Africa and the Middle East, Turkey could contribute to a highly political project for the EU, enhancing its credibility when it comes to peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. This is the tricky promise offered by the prospect of *Euro-Limes*.

Europe Unbound

But what if Europe was not to be a bounded space after all? For the likes of Polyani after World War II, functional integration limited to a region did not make sense and would only serve to recreate the barriers which world-scale sectorial cooperation was meant to tear down. When Jean Monnet ended his memoirs with the thought that the European community was not an end in itself but a means towards a better world, he may have been trying to assuage the functionalists' misgivings by presenting the European project as a building block for the kind of world they had in mind. And yet, for those who see and experience the EU as "fortress" or at least as a mechanism to defend its borders against penetration, this promise has little traction.

Nevertheless, we ought to free our mental maps from current realities. The question raised here is whether the very idea of Europe should not, could not, free itself from territoriality altogether? Would a vision of Europe beyond territoriality or at least beyond the conceptual anchor of a bounded space not be more consistent with the idea of the European Union—a Union, inspired by the European Enlightenment ideals of tolerance and progress, but ultimately without final frontiers at all? A Union whose avowed universalism translates in universal membership rather than purely universal friendship?

Vision 3: Euro-Spheres (Geopolitics): A "Union" beyond Europe

It is possible therefore to imagine a future Union that cannot simply be encircled on a map once and for all, a Union unbound but still imagined through those it excludes. "Broad concepts as 'the West' or 'the Orient' cover no well-delineated territories," wrote William Wallace twenty years ago. "Their appeal is in the associations they conjure up, mixing geographical space with economic and social interaction and with political and cultural identity to draw an imaginary—but nevertheless effectively recognized—divide. So similarly with Europe (Wallace, 1991)." Such a Europe, where geography only serves as the anchor for a more fluid notion of kinship corresponds to the third vision of European Ends which I call *Euro-Spheres*.

What may it mean to imagine the Union as an un-delineated sphere which nevertheless retains an exclusivist dimension?

We are here in the realm of empires. In Balibar's vision of Europe as borderland, Europe stands as part of three open overlapping spaces—"euro-atlantic", "euro-mediterranean", and "euro-asiatic" as symbolic rather than realistic labels which intersect over the projected territory of Europe. The question becomes whether the EU is only the overlapping part of these overlapping circles (akin to *Euro-Limes*), or whether a much more expansive understanding of the European project could not take-in some or all of these partial spheres—spheres of influence, spheres of action, spheres of affinity—thus advancing a geopolitical version of the European project as a pole

around which world politics of the twenty-first century could be organised or converge: the Union, rather than Europe as an empire, anchored but not limited by the EU (Diez, 2004). Not only is a statist concept of the EU antinomic with this scenario; the kind of political mutual recognition and mutual engagement involved with the original idea of Union and its translation as democracy hardly seem likely in a Euro-sphere. But who knows?

I will not expand on all the versions of this Euro-Sphere model, but on two specific variants. First, that of the Euro-Mediterranean space translated politically as the *EuroMed* or Barcelona process in the 1990s and later the Union for the Mediterranean. That political process, with all its flaws and limitations, was built on an age-old historical eurocentric tradition of thinking of the Mediterranean as a world in itself, a bridge before becoming a divide (Pace, 2005, see also discussion of Arendt by Parvikko in this volume). Here, issues of membership blend into issues of neighbourhood and perhaps the latter supersede the former in a world shaped by soft security imperatives. We used to argue that the promise of the Euro-Mediterranean idea lay precisely in this proposition: The construction of a non-territorialized region (Fabre 2004; Nicolaïdis and Nicolaïdis 2004). The so-called Arab Spring and the geopolitical reconfiguration of the region at this juncture may make this vision mute (Akkoyunlu et al. 2013). Or it may reinstate the promise in a more balanced form as the southern shore and its interland explore the virtues of political maturity. Either way, it remains a potent imaginary referent.

In this view, the EuroMed should not aspire to be yet another “region” whose limits need to be defined. Rather, it should be a process and an idea that, from the bottom-up, contribute in creating we-ness in an area of the world referred to as the EuroMediterranean region, but whose reality radiates well beyond the shores of this sea itself (Bechev and Nicolaïdis 2009; Oktem 2009). Such a perspective was first embedded in a broader call to move beyond territory in our understanding of international relations, not in the name of some unstoppable phenomenon of globalisation, but simply because there are many types of boundaries that matter which cannot simply be superimposed (Ruggie 1993). Similarly, the new literature on regionalism no longer conceptualizes regions in terms of geographical contiguity, but rather in terms of purposeful social, political, cultural, and economic interaction among states which often (but not always) inhabit the same geographical space. This is especially true for the Mediterranean, where there exist many informal contacts between people that share the Mediterranean as a common reference but not necessarily as a living space. Europe as borderland, if it is to escape the territorial logic, must be based on elements other than the state, such as informal networks of cooperation, value dialogue, and transnational networks of information and communication.

Using the Mediterranean as a common reference on which to build a collective project, by relying not only on the cultural or historical foundations of the Mediterranean space but also on its environmental and

socio-economic realities is far from equivalent to the construction of a “Mediterranean identity”, inevitably exclusive of non-Mediterraneans. Indeed, how could people from all EU member states, from Dublin to Krakow, be engaged in the building of a EuroMediterranean sphere on the basis of a territorially defined identity? Instead, the shared motivation for this project lies in the sense that the EuroMed area is one where identities have long been intertwined and increasing mutually shaped. All European countries have become or are becoming Mediterranean through immigration, whose effects are magnified by historical links.

This is important if we want to consider a vision of Europe’s geography which does not radiate from Brussels. Precisely because Northeastern EU members are not territorially Mediterranean, they may be best able to give real substance to the non-EU centred nature of the *EuroMed*. Thus, while “re-centring” means for Italy moving institutions from Brussels to Naples, for a Swede it means moving them from Brussels to Alexandria (e.g., Anah Lind Foundation). And beyond, Warsaw may better be attuned to the universal nature of the Mediterranean challenge, precisely because it sees it as one of political transition grounded in foundations that transcend a particular space. Thus, in contrast to a more geopolitical version of this vision of *EuroMed* space which was foreseen by Alexander Kojève (2005) and his *Latin Empire*, Europe as borderland also suggests a vision of governance which seeks to do away with echoes of colonial management of Europe’s periphery.

The idea of a Euro-sphere does not stop with the EuroMed. Another version, which may be seen as alternative or complementary, sees the planet earth from above, a picture centred on the North Pole, with the EU extending around the pole from Vancouver to Vladivostok. This is the vision of *EurArtic* or *EuroPole*. Key to this vision is the notion that Canada could eventually switch from the North American sphere to the EuroSphere—or indeed provide a bridge between the two (Saunders 2005; Garton Ash 2006). The case for a EuroSphere to encompass Canada—along with Iceland and Greenland—may seem far-fetched today but this is precisely because we are wedded to a territorial understanding of the EU. An artic EuroSphere would define a new geo-political area, the Arctic Ocean, which would not only diminish Canada’s sense of isolation but also drastically change the outlook of the EU. On cultural-political grounds, both France and the UK would have an obvious interest in such a development, so would the Scandinavian and other Baltic EU members who would see the centre of the EU move in their direction, as well as Portugal, with its sea-faring tradition. Germany and Austria might welcome a counterweight to possible Turkish membership. There would be substantive support from the smaller new central European member states, for whom attachment to NATO and North American guarantees of liberty and security are important. In sum, one may ask, who in the EU would be moved to oppose this vision?

But the main driving force for envisaging such a *EuroSphere* is again geo-political. When considering the way forward in the sterile potential

opposition between Europe and the United States, we must ask how the progressive shaping of such a sphere would affect Euro-Atlantic relations. Indeed one could venture that a Eurartic would be supported by both anti- and pro-US actors, depending on how Canada's "Americanness" is perceived. Perhaps even more fundamentally, geopolitical here must be apprehended as encompassing geo-environmental: this is a possible sphere centred on a part of the earth slowly turning from an Ice-land into a Northern Sea. Thus, the vision could be supported by greens and environmentalists as offering a unified political framework for managing climate change in the Arctic Ocean and perhaps leading to effective environmental management of the North Atlantic as well. And without discussing here the whole "Eurasia dimension", if Russia was going to be part of this sphere, it would draw one of the major world-polluters and energy providers into a political sphere responsible for almost 50 per cent of total world consumption. In the end, the vision of a EuroSphere may not be for today, but it is bound up with issues that are very much at the core of our contemporary predicament.

Vision 4: EuroWorld (Political Economy; Ideology): A Global Project

It would not be too hard to have guessed what follows naturally from venturing into the further possibilities of a Europe *unbound*. Thus, the last vision proposed here is that of a *EuroWorld*, of a European *Federation* which would eventually expand to the entire globe. This scenario is not only a Eurocentric reading of Star Trek. There are many ways in which the EU has been sold as an anchor for global politics, most of which ought to be dismissed as indeed Euro-centric (Fisher Onar and Nicolaïdis 2013). But a *EuroWorld* can also carry meanings that escape Europe itself. Such a statement should not be confused with the idea that we might one day achieve a true global democracy, a worldwide multilateral democracy that would not have "started" as it were from the EU (Cheneval 2011). Instead we must harp back to old patterns of imperial expansion, a sort of benign European Commonwealth.

Ever since the inception of the European integration process, and with increasing vigour in recent years, the question of whether and how the EU's experience is relevant to the wider world has been a theme in discourses mobilized both by European policy-makers and academics. Could not one see the EU as an embryo UN but one which is progressive and experimental rather than universal at birth? In the world of international trade law and global governance, authors discuss the merits and limits of the EU as a laboratory where methods of governance for mediating differences are here for the taking by the rest of the world (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002); the notion of Europe as a model has been expanded to all spheres of governance (Manners 2002; Laidi 2006). And it has in turn led to the notion that the contagious impact of a model works best by osmosis or ultimately some kind of global enlargement.

Most recently, even mainstream International Relations scholars have started to enquire about the transformative potential inherent in world politics suggesting that the European project could be seen as an incipient form of a Kantian federation, including authors such as Linklater, Telo, Caney, Beck, Grande, Held, Bohman, or Habermas who sees in the EU the kind of rational deliberative potential that alone could create the basis of a mature transnational political community. For all these authors, a EuroWorld is an EUtopia worth dreaming for. Europe as an “evanescent centre” to echo Balibar’s beautiful formula of “evanescent mediator” (Balibar, 2003).

But they often seem to fail to see or at least acknowledge the dark side of this vision. For sure it thankfully requires an EU capable of resisting the temptation to frame an “other” against which to build itself—that is a good thing. The only suitable “other” for the EU is its own past, wars exported to the rest of the world. Proponents of the EuroWorld vision may see these global sins as suggesting a vocation for atonement for the EU, doing the global thing right this time around. The rest of the world may be struck instead by the neo-colonial and self-righteous overtones. How could Europe be this universal promise without giving up the very features that make its model appealing (non-hierarchy, non-security, non-state)? And why should we expect any buy-in from the rest of the world, especially as we can expect the EU to remain dysfunctional for times to come? It may be that such an ambition can serve to compensate for the danger of the overly introverted nature of the EU. But such Euriformism makes many in and outside Europe ill at ease. There is a fine line between ambition and arrogance, and arrogance is especially embarrassing when the model itself suffers all too many defects. As Clyde Prestowitz writes about his own *Rogue Nation*, “a good mythology can cover a multitude of sins.” How can its narrative of projection be reconciled with the *post-colonial* character of the EU project? Why would the rest of the world want to “join” the European Union?

CONCLUSION: BACK TO THE FUTURE

This chapter set out to relate Europe’s two meaning of Ends: *finalité politique* on one hand, borders on the other. It does not offer a systematic relationship between the two but a more impressionistic set of connections. In appealing to the reader’s imaginary geographies of Europe, my hope is that alternative views of Europe’s “borders” may inform the often prejudiced “enlargement” debate rather than the other way around. Readers may draw alternative and indeed contradictory implications from the four visions of Europe’s boundaries offered here as mental maps which may inform the political debates which will continue to take place in Europe for the foreseeable future.

One implication, I would suggest, is to put in perspective the kind of criteria often suggested to assess “Europeaness” in the mainstream European

debate, that is geography, history, values, and political willingness to live together. Juxtaposing the various imagined geographies of Europe can help fend off essentialist readings of either criteria. If these visions can coexist in our mind, the questions of boundedness and inclusiveness behind each EU enlargement may not and should not have a single answer.

Thus, geography is where we start and where we refuse to end on any discussion of borders. It has been the mother of all proxy arguments in the debate over Turkish entry in particular. The discussion proposed here could be understood simply as a drawn out argument against the geographical determinism—the myth of “natural” frontiers—of much of today’s discourse on the EU’s Ends. Much has already been written on the hardened geographical as well as cultural attitudes that, under the guise of rationality, cloak deep-rooted prejudice about the difference between “them” and “us”. We know very well that there are no sharp boundaries to delineate Europe to the east, that Eurasia contains *thick* boundaries, and that in the grey area between the two continents, membership of Europe and by extension the European Union, is on both sides a matter of choice. But geographical determinism endures: Europe ends on the Bosphorus.

As Max Weber argued, borders “are not simply lines on maps where one jurisdiction ends and another begins . . . borders are political institutions: no rule-bound economic, social or political life can function without them.” (cited in Prakash, 2005) How then can Europe both acknowledge and transcend traditional tropes in drawing and redrawing its borders? How should we understand the relationship between top-down and bottom-up management of borders, or that between internal and external boundaries? If the European Union is more about the journey than its destination, imagining Europe’s Ends is a journey among many landscapes which we may not yet be able to fathom for they are to be shaped by tempest, earthquakes, and floods yet to come.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this piece was published in French: Geremek, Bronislaw, and Robert Picht, eds. 2007. *Visions d' Europe*. Paris: Odile Jacob. I wish to thank Edouard Gaudot and Kerem Oktem for their input.
2. As a result, while this essay is about the European Union *per se*, I use “Europe” when speaking of border issues precisely because “what is Europe” has become the frame for discussions of EU boundaries.

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