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## Europe Transformed, 1945–2000

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Have you read Primo Levi's initially grim, but ultimately vivifying, memoir, *The Reawakening*? The book recounts Levi's circuitous return from a Nazi concentration camp to his home in Turin. It begins in January 1945. Shortly after Russian troops arrived at the infirmary of the Buna-Monowitz camp in Poland's Auschwitz district, a liberated Russian–Jewish prisoner named Yankel started transporting sick inmates to a huge, improvised hospital camp in Auschwitz. Feverish Levi only half understood what was happening. Yankel's horse cart took its load of former prisoners through the Auschwitz gate with its fearsome motto *Arbeit macht frei*: work liberates. After sturdy Russian nurses grabbed, stripped, and bathed the ex-inmates:

We were given a shirt and pants, and led to the Russian barber, so that our heads might be shaved for the last time in our careers. The barber was a dark-skinned giant, with wild and delirious eyes: he practised his art with uncouth violence, and for reasons unknown to me carried a sten-gun slung on his shoulder. 'Italiano Mussolini,' he said to me grimly; and to the Frenchmen 'Fransé Laval'; from which one sees how little general ideas help the understanding of individual cases. (Levi, 1995: 24)<sup>1</sup>

All Europeans and all students of Europe have become heirs of Auschwitz. We can

easily make the entire period of European history since 1900 pivot on the Holocaust and World War II: before, during, and after the disaster. Across the world, the war killed something like 50 million people, the majority of them civilians.

The most lethal war in human history left a shattered Europe to rebuild, and finally to evolve into the fundamentally reshaped continent of our own time. This essay places European transformations since 1945 in historical perspective. While conceding the importance of individual cases, it challenges Levi's conclusion: without general ideas, we do not know what questions to ask of individual cases. It asks, among other things, to what extent and in what regards we can think of Europe's experience since World War II as, yes, a reawakening. It replies: Europe never slept. But the half-century's struggles and transformations certainly produced a Europe that would have been unrecognizable to the continent's residents and observers as World War II ended.

What was Europe before 1945? Atlases conventionally divide Eurasia into two continents: Europe and Asia, with Asia four times the size of Europe. At the extremes of the great Eurasian land mass, Europe and China

occupy roughly equal amounts of territory. Over most of human history, furthermore, the European population has usually run around one-half to two-thirds of China's: 40 million versus 60 million a thousand years ago, 725 million versus 1.5 billion today. For more than two millennia, the world economy has typically centered on China and adjacent areas of the Western Pacific and South Asia rather than on Europe. Although the Atlantic economies unquestionably rose to world dominance after 1750, the 250 years since then have constituted little more than a blink in the eye of historical time. Today the economic and political rise of Eurasia's eastern half is restoring the customary historical balance.

Although Roman and Byzantine empires had earlier ruled significant portions of western and southern Europe, the European region only took shape as a distinctive, connected entity within the Eurasian complex after 1000 CE. It did so through intense interaction with Muslim territories to its south and east. Those territories controlled the western end of the world's greatest commercial system, which ran from eastern to western Asia while extending into northern and eastern Africa.

Between the millennium and 1500 CE, Europe and the Muslim world interacted triply in:

- a series of political struggles that realigned the boundary between territories controlled chiefly by Muslims and mainly by Christians;
- expansion of trade between Europe and Asia that stimulated a remarkable acceleration of Europe's economy;
- intensified exchanges of ideas and technologies between the Muslim and Judeo-Christian worlds.

After the year 1000, trade between Asia and Europe intensified dramatically. It increased interactions of European merchants with the Muslim merchants who predominated in western Asia, southeastern Europe, and North Africa while generating commercial activity within Europe as well. Intensified trade also promoted the two other trends: political

realignment and cultural exchange. In the course of these three processes, Europe moved from being a dull backwater of the great Eurasian commercial system to becoming an attractive target for Asian invaders. Mongols, who leaped Muslim territories to reach well into Muscovy and Central Europe starting in the thirteenth century, were simply the most successful of many conquerors from Asia. The Turks, whose descendants created the Ottoman Empire, had themselves started coming into Anatolia from Central Asia some time after 1000 CE.

After 1500, however, the balance began to shift. An expanding Ottoman Empire incorporated many of the Muslim territories that mediated trade between Europe and Asia. It became a major European power in its own right as it did so. But other Europeans created their own direct connections with eastern riches by navigating around Africa into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. They also began drawing coastal Africa into their own trading systems as they reached across the Atlantic to conquer and populate the Americas. European trade and conquest laid a base for industrial expansion, first through small shops and widely scattered cottage industry, then (from the eighteenth century onwards) by means of fossil-fuel-consuming factories.

During the nineteenth century, European powers (now including Russia) began to bypass and pick apart the mighty Ottoman force to their southeast. By the twentieth century, European settler regions such as Australia, Argentina, South Africa, Canada, and the United States had extended European influence across the world. Meanwhile, militarily backed forms of colonial control had brought much of the Caribbean, Oceania, Africa, and maritime Asia into the European web. As Europe approached 1945, its fate depended heavily on world trade and imperial extraction. After then, trade came to matter even more as European empires disintegrated. No postwar European power except Russia, for example, managed on its own to produce sufficient energy for its

daily needs. All traded their own products for imported fuel.

Once historians conveniently divided history since 1914 into four lumps: World War I, an interwar period, World War II, and postwar. Now they increasingly see European history from 1914 to 1945 as a single, seething block extending from one world war to another. But they cut the postwar period into several slices. Volker Berghahn contrasts his own analysis of the period with two others, by Eric Hobsbawm and Mark Mazower. Hobsbawm treats the war-to-war era as an almost unmitigated catastrophe of religious conflict and intolerance followed by a temporary interval (1945 to 1973) of reconstruction and prosperity before the oil shock of the 1970s signaled a new time of uncertainty. Mazower (2000) portrays the twentieth century's first half as struggle and alternation between tolerance on one side, and racist extermination on the other. But for Mazower, the time after World War II offers greater hope that Europeans can come to terms with diversity, dissension, and a reduced place in the world.

By no means does Berghahn minimize the cruelty of European life before 1945. On the contrary, he centers his analysis of the century's first half on its violence. Yet for Berghahn, the postwar period has opened up the possibility of an alternative vision that had already started to crystallize earlier in the century:

The alternative to the epoch of violence for the first time assumed more concrete shape in the decades before 1914. It was sidelined thereafter by horrendous wars and civil wars, except for a brief period in the mid-1920s. Only after 1945 did the alternative finally break through in Europe, leading to a period of peace and prosperity that the region basically enjoyed up to the 1970s and, *pace* Hobsbawm, even beyond until the late 1990s. The alternative I am thinking of is the model of an industrial society that, within a democratic-constitutional political framework, peacefully consumes the mass-produced goods that it has manufactured. (Berghahn, 2006: 3)

Berghahn adds that such a model takes much of its inspiration from the United States, and that European history since 1945 remains incomprehensible without considering American influence. As Berghahn reminds his readers repeatedly, European history between 1945 and 2000 lends itself easily to teleology. Did the postwar reconstruction of Europe and the rise of non-European power make something like a European Union inevitable? Did the state socialist regimes of the USSR and Yugoslavia leave World War II already stuffed with the seeds of their own destruction? Within capitalist Europe, did the surviving authoritarian regimes of Greece, Spain, and Portugal necessarily move toward democracy? Did globalization ineluctably dissolve boundaries separating European countries from each other and from the world outside of Europe? In each of these regards, any responsible analysis of Europe's postwar transformations must make three moves: (1) identify major changes in European life after World War II that require description and explanation; (2) consider what else could have happened, and why it did not; and (3) use the first two to sketch explanations of major European transformations between 1945 and 2000. This essay offers preliminary versions of the three moves.

## WHAT'S TO EXPLAIN?

First, let us review the sorts of changes in European life that call for description and explanation. In a heroic feat of disciplined compression, Swedish sociologist Göran Therborn has documented European transformations between 1945 and 2000. He describes them as a parabola: ascent to the peak of modernity, followed by partial descent from that peak. Modernity, for Therborn, means 'a social period turned towards the future as a means of orienting the present, rather than to the past, or as opposed to gyrating in the present without a compass'

(Therborn, 1995: 355). In a survey drenched with facts and figures, Therborn makes the case that after World War II both Western and Eastern Europe headed broadly in the same directions. In his account, they both:

- experienced rapid economic growth up to the 1970s and slower but still positive growth thereafter;
- spread mass consumption despite great disparities in levels of living between East and West;
- secularized aggressively; and
- first increased then decreased the place of government-backed collective goods such as education and health services in everyday life.

Table 2.1 recasts a fragment of Therborn's evidence for his summary. I have used Therborn's data to compute annual average rates of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) for 20 European countries over three periods: 1938–1950, 1950–1965, and 1965–1990. The first twelve-year span includes the war and the first five years of postwar recovery. No European economy roared over those troubled years. Yet the countries scattered across a remarkable range, from net losses of GDP in Hungary, Spain, and (especially)

Greece to substantial postwar gains in Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. The Bulgarian figures look suspicious, given the country's battering as an Axis partner during World War II and as a much-troubled Soviet satellite thereafter. The other relatively fast movers – the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden – did begin rebuilding rapidly once the Germans (occupiers of the Netherlands and Norway, harassers of neutral Sweden) retreated and the war ended. Germany itself suffered widespread war damage, and had hardly started recovering by 1950.

The period from 1950 to 1965, in contrast, brought robust growth to most of the continent. Economic planners in East and West remember those golden years with nostalgia. By this time Germany, Bulgaria, and Greece led the pack, with the Soviet Union, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Austria not far behind. Statistical retrospect makes it easier to understand why many Europeans then saw state socialism as a viable economic competitor with the capitalism espoused by the US and its Western European beneficiaries. Although the Soviet Union's ham-fisted control of its Eastern European satellites became even more visible with its 1956 crushing of Hungarian liberalization, from the West it looked for a while as though the Warsaw Pact would bring off the combination of socialism, authoritarianism, and vigorous economic growth.

In 1956, intellectual cold warrior Shepard Stone gave a worried assessment to his sponsors at the Ford Foundation. As to Western Europe, even though 'the Soviet Union has abandoned hope to control' the region, efforts to influence it indirectly continued. For example, the Soviets would 'appeal to the youth of Europe by pointing to opportunities for talented young people in the Soviet Union to get to the top'. In short, having moderated its once aggressive rhetoric, Moscow 'will try to become the economic, ideological and cultural magnet for 200,000,000 Europeans'. Conversely, 'the Kremlin will continue to try to divide Europe

**Table 2.1 Annual average rates of GDP growth for European Countries, 1938–1990**

| Country        | 1938–1950 | 1950–1965 | 1965–1990 |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Austria        | 0.5       | 5.4       | 3.3       |
| Belgium        | 1.3       | 3.7       | 3.1       |
| Bulgaria       | 2.8       | 6.7       | —         |
| Czechoslovakia | 0.3       | 4.0       | —         |
| Denmark        | 2.4       | 4.2       | 2.4       |
| Finland        | 1.7       | 4.9       | 3.6       |
| West Germany   | 0.4       | 6.9       | 2.4       |
| Greece         | –2.2      | 6.6       | 3.9       |
| Hungary        | –0.4      | 4.4       | —         |
| Ireland        | 1.1       | 2.4       | 4.1       |
| Italy          | 1.2       | 5.6       | 3.6       |
| Netherlands    | 2.9       | 4.6       | 3.0       |
| Norway         | 2.9       | 3.9       | 3.6       |
| Portugal       | 2.5       | 4.8       | 4.2       |
| Spain          | –1.2      | 6.3       | 3.8       |
| Sweden         | 3.1       | 4.0       | 2.3       |
| Switzerland    | 2.1       | 4.8       | 2.2       |
| United Kingdom | 1.6       | 2.9       | 2.3       |
| USSR           | 2.1       | 6.3       | —         |
| Yugoslavia     | 1.2       | 5.7       | —         |

Source: computed from Therborn 1995, table 7.1, p. 134

within itself and to split Europe from the United States'. And he feared that the communists might well succeed: 'The economic and social structure of Europe is brittle. Europe's belief in its own future is fragile' (Berghahn, 2001: 183).

In 1957, after all, the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite, impressing the entire world with its technological virtuosity. At that point, Eastern Europe was riding high. After 1965, growth slowed in both halves of Europe. Since communist powers became more secretive about their economic statistics, it is hard to detect which half slowed more. Of the reporting countries in Table 2.1, only Ireland accelerated its growth in the interval from 1965 to 1990. Nevertheless, along with Ireland latecomers Portugal, Greece, Spain, and Finland joined oil-rich Norway with growth averages neighboring four percent per year during that quarter-century.

Over the entire period, much of Europe industrialized, incomes rose widely, and mass consumption flourished. Industrialization also drew Europe out of the prewar period's still predominantly agrarian economy. Look, for example, at Therborn's data on changes in agricultural employment, which I have graphed from two complicated tables. Figure 2.1 shows that just before World War II the majority of European countries had 40 percent or more of their working population in agriculture. Overwhelmingly, the most agrarian countries concentrated in eastern and southern Europe. The countries with their largest shares in agriculture – the USSR, Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Estonia – had all adopted (or been forced into) one variety or another of state socialism by the 1940s.

By 1990, only Albania remained above the 40 percent mark. In the vast majority of countries, the agricultural share had dropped to under 20 percent. State socialist regimes, then breaking up, still retained significantly larger proportions in agriculture than capitalist and social democratic regimes, but differences were diminishing across the continent.

The shift promoted dramatic urbanization of national populations and vast rural–urban migration. Across the board, agriculture had become more mechanized, productive, and prosperous.

The continent's agricultural workers and their children moved into manufacturing and services, including government services. Up to the 1970s, European countries saw a rapid increase in the manufacturing labor force and a rise in the productivity and profitability of manufacturing. From that point on, manufacturing employment leveled off or declined, as services took up larger and larger shares of the labor force. Overall (unlike their American counterparts), European workers and their governments responded to rising productivity by shortening work weeks, hastening retirement, and expanding unemployment benefits. At first, a postwar fertility increase expanded the European labor force. By the 1980s, however, fertility was leveling off or declining over much of the continent.

Once urban services had absorbed a country's surplus rural population, international migration took over. Although nineteenth-century Europe retained a crazy, moving quilt of overlapping nationalities, World War I and its aftermath slowed its internal migration and homogenized its national populations:

The tidier Europe that emerged, blinking, into the second half of the twentieth century had fewer loose ends. Thanks to war, occupation, boundary adjustments, expulsions and genocide, almost everybody now lived in their own country, among their own people. For forty years after World War Two Europeans in both halves of Europe lived in hermetic national enclaves where surviving religious or ethnic minorities – the Jews in France, for example – represented a tiny percentage of the population at large and were thoroughly integrated into its cultural and political mainstream. (Judt, 2005: 9)

Labor shortage and mass immigration changed all that. Immigrants arrived in two major streams: from former European colonies and from southeastern Europe including Turkey. As a result, countries that wartime ethnic cleansing, postwar repatriation, and



Figure 2.1 Agricultural employment in European countries, 1930s and 1990. (Source: Therbourn, 1995, 66-67.)

border realignments of the peace settlements had homogenized with regard to language, religion, and culture again became ethnically heterogeneous. Absorption of culturally distinctive immigrants, long a hot political issue in such receiving countries as the United States, Australia, and Israel, became a matter of fierce contention in both Eastern and Western Europe. Whether recent arrivals of Muslims from North Africa and southeastern Europe have produced minorities more resistant to economic, political, and cultural integration than their non-Muslim predecessors remains a disputed matter among politicians and scholars alike. In my own view, the very processes by which long-distance migration occurs make it likely that Europe's Muslim immigrants will settle down at various positions in the range from rapid assimilation to uneasy accommodation (Tilly, 2000, 2007). Beyond the dispute, however, the richer parts of Europe are unquestionably becoming more diverse with respect to language, religion, and national origin.

Breakups of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia accelerated the process, as internal controls over movement weakened and incentives to escape misery or lethal conflict increased. Major flows of migrants within the former USSR have run mainly toward the northeast, including the Baltic. Migrants from newly independent Warsaw Pact and Yugoslav states, however, have rejoined the centuries-old streams flowing from southeastern to northwestern Europe. Because long-distance migrants rarely abandon contacts with their places of origin, these mass migration streams are again knitting Europe together.

Therborn links these and related European transformations directly to the slash-and-burn effects of World War II:

The way World War II ended radically restructured means, rights and opportunities, reshaped the political, economic and cultural space of the continent, and gave rise to new identities while discrediting others. It also generated grandiose efforts at social steering, East and West. The boom, which owed much to the war, accelerated the social and cultural dynamics of the Western European capitalism and of the Eastern European socialisms, to

the post-industrial, multicultural transformation of the former, to the erosion and dissolution of the latter (Therborn, 1995: 353).

Therborn sets a descriptive and explanatory agenda. Whatever else we do, we must trace the effects of World War II in Europe's two halves. We must also locate subsequent European experience in a changing world economy. Therborn establishes that the evidence exists both for sustained comparisons of countries and for detection of changes in politics, economics, culture, and social relations.

Still we must simplify. In this brief, preliminary treatment, we can't hope to account for all of Europe's social, cultural, political, and economic history between 1945 and 2000. Including only events that affected multiple countries and attracted international attention, Box 2.1 conveys the explanatory complexity that European political history alone presents. As compared with Therborn's comprehensive internal account, it calls attention to international institutions, US intervention, violent political struggles, and relations of Europe to the changing world economy.

The chronology traces a great series of political adventures (for sweeping surveys, see Calvocoressi, 2001: 213–378; and Judt, 2005). A shattered continent rebuilds, prospers, divides, returns to violent conflict, then makes significant strides toward internal coherence. Imperial connections largely disappear, but capitalist economies that had seemed exhausted come once again to occupy significant positions in the world economic system. However incompletely, democracy returns and even advances. A European Union that seemed a pious hope in 1945 not only intensifies relations among Western European countries, but begins integrating former members of the Soviet and Yugoslav state socialist systems.

Events in the chronology imply some remarkable shifts without pinpointing them precisely. Resistance to fascist forces during the war lent exceptional prestige to anti-fascists, especially communists, during the struggles for political control that roiled

**Box 2.1 European political chronology, 1945–2000**

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1945    | Defeat and surrender of Germany (January–May) and Japan (February–August); multiple peace conferences, 1945–1947  |
| 1945–46 | Creation of United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (succeeded in 1990s by the World Trade Organization)  |
| 1946–49 | Greek civil war   |
| 1947    | Initiation of Marshall Plan and other US efforts to contain Soviet expansion in Western and Southern Europe   |
| 1948    | Multiple Western European initiatives to coordinate recovery, including Organization for European Economic Cooperation  |
| 1945–54 | European efforts to re-establish mandates and colonial control in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific often bloody, largely unsuccessful e.g. in India, Ceylon, Burma, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Indochina   |
| 1949    | Formation of Council for Mutual Economic Assistance to coordinate Soviet Bloc   |
| 1949    | Formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization as anti-Soviet military pact  |
| 1951    | Formation of European Coal and Steel Community to coordinate Western European economies   |
| 1954–69 | More colonial struggles and independence movements largely undoing European colonialism in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific; 53 newly independent states join the UN   |
| 1957    | Creation of European Economic Community (= Common Market) among Western European continental powers (Britain not admitted until 1972)   |
| 1968    | Major anti-regime mobilizations in Northern Ireland, France, West Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia   |
| 1974    | Portuguese revolution, independence of Portugal's African colonies  |
| 1974    | Fall of last Greek military regime, beginning of democratization  |
| 1975–78 | Spain's dictator Franco dies, Juan Carlos becomes king, democratization ensues  |
| 1979    | Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, spurring US attempts to check Soviet power in western Asia  |
| 1989–93 | Disintegration of Yugoslavia, the USSR, and the Soviet Bloc, East and West Germany reunified, multiple civil wars, with 24 newly independent European states joining the UN, and another 4 mini-states (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino) acquiring independent UN membership |
| 1990    | Schengen Agreement eliminates border controls among Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg   |
| 1992    | Maastricht Treaty officially creates European Union, effective in 1993  |
| 1998–99 | Serbian forces battle Kosovo Liberation Army, NATO bombs Serbs, international force occupies Kosovo   |

much of Europe between 1945 and 1950. As Gabriel Kolko puts it:

In most of Europe the prewar ruling classes and dominant parties, having pursued varying degrees of collaborationist policies, sacrificed and lost their nationalist cachet and thereby endangered their purely class interests. The void to be filled was all the more ominous because the noncommunist socialist parties in many nations emerged from the war tainted with the stain of collaboration, and they failed to produce autonomous leaders who could articulated relevant responses to the burning issues each society and its people confronted. (Kolko, 1994: 263)

At the same time, participation in the war effort gave indigenous leaders of European colonies experience, contacts, and visibility that buttressed their bids to head independence movements.

The chronology also identifies several other parabolic trends that reshaped Europe:

sharpening division between capitalist and socialist blocs aligned respectively with the US and the USSR, followed by disintegration of the socialist bloc after the 1980s; rising, then falling, influence of the socialist vision within the capitalist bloc; resurgence of independent national states in Western Europe, followed by their partial subordination to international institutions eventually including the European Union. A more mixed trajectory marks the history of European democracy during the same years: some decline in what remained of democratic traditions as state socialist and other authoritarian regimes rebuilt central state control, eventual democratization in such recalcitrant authoritarian regimes as Spain, Portugal, and Greece, splitting of former state socialist regimes into relatively democratic successors such as Estonia and Slovenia on one side,



and increasingly undemocratic successors such as Russia and Belarus on the other.

At the risk of oversimplifying, we might divide postwar political history into four phases. First (roughly 1945–1950) comes a sweeping effort to repair the war's damage, including American and international agency support for Western European reconstruction, Soviet consolidation of control in the East, and the beginning of Cold War competition. Second (roughly 1950–1975), both East and West enter boom times and Westerners take their first steps toward economic integration as the Westerners lose their colonies and post-colonial immigration begins. During the same period, France and other Western regimes contain demands for radical democratization as well as their domestic communist parties. Third (perhaps 1975–1990), economic growth decelerates, the West's remaining authoritarian states democratize, and state socialist regimes stagnate. Finally (from 1990 onward), the same state socialist regimes disintegrate, long-distance migration transforms most European areas, and ethnically charged political conflict again becomes prevalent over much of the continent, while both the European Union and Russia become influential actors on the world's political and economic stages.

What do these demographic, economic, and political changes mean for Europe's culture and forms of solidarity? By 'culture', let us mean simply shared understandings and their representations in symbols and practices. By 'forms of solidarity' let us understand simply social ties on which people rely heavily when pursuing consequential collective enterprises. The two connect, since forms of solidarity such as kinship, friendship, and religion regularly shape people's shared understandings and representations (Tilly, 2005, 2006).

Changes in culture and forms of solidarity followed different schedules and trajectories in East and West. In the East, much of life revolved around state-backed enterprises including factories and collective farms; benefits, obligations, and identities depended heavily on membership in such enterprises.

Citizens of the East long retained collective representations and commitments of their lives to state-backed enterprises even as they made up for the deficiencies of those enterprises by fashioning extensive (and often clandestine) networks of mutual aid (Alapuro and Lonkila, 2004; Castrén and Lonkila, 2004; Humphrey, 1999, 2001; Johnson *et al.*, 1998; Ledeneva, 1998; Lonkila 1999a, 1999b; Volkov, 2002; Woodruff, 1999). With the economic slowdown of the 1980s and the shredding of state-sponsored safety nets thereafter, a culture of distrust for all but local and kinship-mediated solidarities grew more prevalent. At the same time, aspirations to the Western European style consumer culture became more salient; wealth occulted governmental and party connections in the acquisition of power, prestige, and comfort.

In the West, the immediate postwar period fostered a survivors' culture: pride in the sacrifice and solidarity that had helped people get through difficult times. Soon, however, a culture of consumption displaced the credit that people had received for their wartime sacrifices. It also challenged the disciplined redistribution of Western European socialism. Victoria de Grazia says it forcefully:

By the 1980s Europe's old left did not have a consumer leg to stand on. Much had been said throughout the century about the false consciousness of false needs. But by the early 1990s it was clear that every movement to build 'insurmountable barriers against the invasion of false needs' had failed; the 'Maginot line of austerity' had been 'circumvented at the demand of consumers themselves'. Those who believed that new consumer advocacy movements could coalesce the 'dispersed interests' of consumers into a strong and effective political lobby were equally disillusioned. Acting in their interests as consumers, Europeans proved as agilely opportunistic as Americans, choosing exit, by going to another store or not buying at all; rather than voice, by mounting meaningful protests over the injuries of mass consumption. Well before the collapse of the Soviet bloc, there was a consensus, if a deeply disconsolate one, that with the exhaustion of 'alternative scenarios' the consumer society had to be recognized as 'our only future' (de Grazia, 2005: 465–6, quotations from Victor Scardigli and Michèle Ruffat; for the American model of the citizen consumer, see Cohen, 2003).

In the process, solidarities of religion, class, party, and nation that had emerged stronger from World War II began to lose their hold. Mass urbanization combined with long-distance migration to produce cities and suburbs sharply divided by national origin. Xenophobic politics like that of Italy's Northern League and France's National Front acquired widespread appeal in countries that had only recently turned away from organized anti-Semitism. Despite the economic and political unification promoted by mass consumption and the European Union, new parochial forms of culture and solidarity thrived in late twentieth century Western Europe. In East and West, the century's later decades brought a decline in the collective national visions of the early postwar years.

## COUNTERFACTUAL EUROPE

What else could have happened? Aside from the Europe that actually emerged, what futures for Europe could close historical observers have plausibly predicted in 1945? Amid the ruins of World War II, close observers might have forecast a restored Europe, an authoritarian Europe, a socialist Europe, or an American Europe.

A restored Europe would have reconstituted the political, economic, and cultural map as of, say, 1920, with its striking contrasts of wealth, political organization, external connections, and lifestyles brought back into existence through mutual aid and (however wary) mutual respect. Replicas of the Bolshevik-dominated USSR, the precarious Weimar Republic, victorious but divided Britain, battered and likewise divided France and Italy, plus the Turkish remnant of the Ottoman Empire, would dominate their sections of the continent as they did before. Yet another European war would remain possible as these powers jockeyed for position.

An authoritarian Europe would have divided among different forms of top-down collectivism, with military regimes retaining

or recovering power in Greece, Iberia, and Germany as varieties of state socialism – from moderately to very authoritarian – became prevalent elsewhere. Eventually, in this scenario, we might expect war between the two types of authoritarian regimes, with the long-term victory and spread of militarily backed economic collectivism.

A socialist Europe would have given greater strength to the workers who fought and supplied World War II, fulfilling the Soviet program of solidarity among workers' organizations across the continent. Just as communist China wielded disproportionate influence among its neighbors without simply absorbing them, we might have expected the postwar USSR to create a large European web of clients, fellow travelers, and wary collaborators.

An American Europe would have subordinated Europe to the strength and the programs of a United States that World War II had lifted from economic crisis and brought to pre-eminence among world powers. With the USSR possibly surviving as a contained and impoverished enclave, most of Europe would have integrated into the American system of production, consumption, and distribution, with regional specializations resembling those of Canada, Mexico, and American states. The scenario implies domination by US military policy, which presumably would have centered on containing the Soviet Union and enhancing American power in South America and the Pacific.

Because none of these counterfactual Europes took shape, it is easy to raise objections against each and every scenario. Critics might claim, for example, that World War II's devastation made restoration of the prewar system utterly impossible. Let me offer two replies to that imagined criticism. First, elements of all four counterfactual scenarios did, in fact, come into being. As compared with the wholesale redrawing of boundaries that occurred at the end of World War I, for example, the settlements of World War II mostly restored the core territories and identities of states that had already existed during the 1920s. To some degree and in some

places, furthermore, authoritarian survival, socialist expansion, and American influence did indeed occur.

Second, the point of the exercise is not to claim that these suppressed historical outcomes (in the phrase of Moore, 1978, chapter 11) had equal probabilities of realization with the history that actually transpired. Instead, it clarifies what an analysis of European trajectories since 1945 must explain. Explaining Europe's transformation since World War II entails specifying why a restored Europe, an authoritarian Europe, a socialist Europe, or an American Europe did not sweep the historical field.

Strictly speaking, the four scenarios do not qualify as counterfactuals (Hawthorn, 1991; Tetlock and Belkin, 1996). Some elements of each actually occurred. More important, partial realization and interaction of the four scenarios shaped Europe's historical transformations after 1945. Each one set limits for the others. Most obviously, American intervention contributed to the containment of state socialism, helped push Greece, Spain, and Portugal away from their previous authoritarian paths, and accelerated the disintegration of the Soviet Union. But influence also ran in the other direction: the vigorous viability of European socialism, for example, set serious obstacles in the way of the continent's thorough Americanization. Again, the vision of restored Europe that informed the peace settlements and the United Nations pitted national sovereignty against the consolidation of socialist states into a single seamless block.

The scenarios of restored Europe, authoritarian Europe, socialist Europe, and American Europe do not, however, exhaust the causes that transformed Europe after World War II. Remember Göran Therborn's description of the period as an approach to modernity – orientation of social life to the future – followed by substantial regression from that vision and organization of life. To the array suggested by the four scenarios, we must add at least these interrelated causal bundles:

- loss of overseas colonies;
- increased integration into the world economy;

- expansion of manufacturing employment, followed by shifts to services, leisure, and unemployment;
- rising then falling fertility, followed by population aging and mass immigration;
- urbanization, with concomitant contraction of the rural population.

In returning to description and explanation of what happened in Europe between 1945 and 2000, then, we must somehow integrate the causes implied by the four scenarios with these additional forces, which none of the scenarios entails directly.

### WHY THIS EUROPE?

The largest process behind these complex changes has an ironic edge. It consists of Europe's increasing integration into the world capitalist system. The irony appears when we realize that Europeans invented and spread capitalism as a system well before encountering it as an external force. Whether appalled or enthused by Europe's capitalist integration, observers often think of it as Americanization. Yes, the US became the central power of world capitalism during the twentieth century. Yet that way of putting European experience since 1945 gets two things wrong. First, since World War II the world capitalist system has greatly internationalized, with Asian centers of manufacturing and finance increasingly crucial to its operation and a great deal of capital itself international in scope. Critics of globalization often have precisely the increasingly global reach of capital in mind. Second, Europe itself has played a crucial part in the creation of a genuinely worldwide capitalism. It has done so by participating in globe-spanning movements of capital, labor, and commodities as well as by creating many of the world's coordinating centers for capitalist production, consumption, distribution, and transfers of assets. The rise of European economic cooperation and finally of the European

Community has made European states and their capitalists major players in the world economy.

Take the case of multinational corporations. Arthur Alderson and Jason Beckfield provided an original and relevant perspective on the structure of world capitalism in 2000. They mapped head offices and branch locations of the world's 500 largest multinational firms (think Toyota, Microsoft, and Royal Dutch Shell) as a connected network. They then computed measures of centrality for individual cities. Their measure of 'betweenness', for example, gets at the extent to which possible connections among all cities pass through any particular city.

Let us call high scorers on that measure 'connectors.' The top 15 connector cities on the Alderson–Beckfield scale are given in Table 2.2, with their scores. The majority of the world's top connector cities – 9 of 15 – lie in Europe. The roster of cities changes somewhat with the measure of centrality. For instance, Tokyo heads the list of cities measured by the extent to which they maintain direct ties with all others ('outdegree'). But the proportion of European cities on the list remains high by all measures (Alderson and Beckfield, 2004: 830).

To be sure, multinational firms do not exhaust contemporary capitalism. Europe also

figures significantly in world flows of energy. Here the former Soviet Union – not only Russia, but also Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and other energy-rich areas on the Asian side of the Asia-Europe border – looms much larger than on maps of multinationals and their subsidiaries. Consider the Putin government's arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment of Mikhail Khodokorsky, head of Yukos, the country's largest privatized energy company. It exemplified Putin's relentless campaign to recapture control over oil and gas supplies as a means of consolidating his personal political power and eliminating wildcat capitalist 'oligarchs' from his possible political opposition. Soon the state-controlled energy corporation became the world's largest producer of natural gas. With nearly a quarter of the world's known natural gas reserves, Putin's Russia is using its energy to buttress its international influence. As of 2006, Slovakia was importing 100% of its gas from Russia, Bulgaria 94%, Lithuania 84%, Hungary 80%, Austria 74%, Germany 40%, Italy 30%, and France 25% (Schmitt, 2006: 61). Clearly, the Russian state's monopolization of energy supplies was lending it tremendous clout both domestically and internationally. In a distinctive way, it was also making Russia a linchpin of world capitalism.

Russian experience underlines another crucial aspect of Europe's recent transformations. In 1945, many European and American leaders hoped that postwar reconstruction would block future varieties of totalitarianism by spreading democratic institutions and culture across the continent. To some extent they got their wish. Imperfect versions of democratic rule did become much more common in Europe between 1945 and 2000. Authoritarian regimes such as those of Spain, Portugal, and Greece moved into the democratic camp. More dramatically, the collapse of state socialism permitted partial democratization in Eastern Europe. Finally, the European Community's conditions for membership provide incentives for new members to take on the formal structure of democratic

**Table 2.2 The top 15 connector cities on the Alderson–Beckfield scale**

| <i>City</i>   | <i>Score</i> |
|---------------|--------------|
| Paris         | 25.65        |
| Tokyo         | 15.04        |
| Düsseldorf    | 13.61        |
| London        | 13.31        |
| New York      | 10.01        |
| San Francisco | 7.29         |
| Munich        | 4.89         |
| Oslo          | 4.60         |
| Vevey         | 4.46         |
| Zurich        | 4.32         |
| Beijing       | 4.23         |
| Atlanta       | 4.22         |
| Amsterdam     | 4.09         |
| Stockholm     | 3.99         |
| Osaka         | 3.98         |

institutions, if not necessarily to build deep democracy.

To be sure, the EC itself incorporated a contradiction that haunts democratization wherever it occurs: the tension between popular voice, on one side, and executive authority sufficient to implement collective decisions, on the other. The creation of a European Parliament installed popular representation at a previously unimagined geographic scale. But the creation of technocratic bureaucracies to implement trans-European policies engaged EC leaders simultaneously in overriding local interests and negotiating with persistent national interests. Democratization therefore proceeded hesitantly at both the national and international scales.

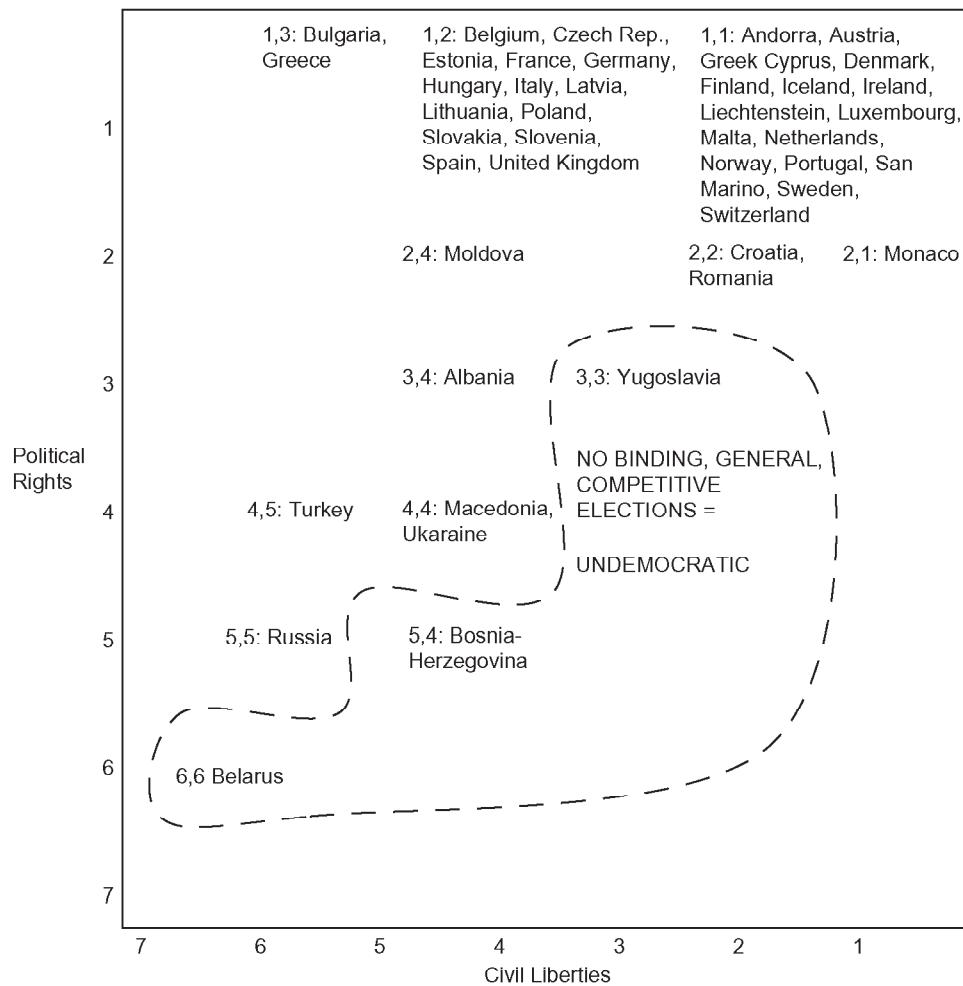
In any case, democratization remained incomplete, and involved some U-turns. Freedom House can help us see what happened. For every independent country from 1973 onward, the New York democracy-monitoring organization produced annual ratings of political rights and civil liberties. In that dual scheme, countries run from 1 (high) to 7 (low) on each of the two. Ratings for rights emphasize the breadth, equality, and influence over governmental policy of citizens' voice, while ratings for liberties emphasize protection of citizens against governmental harassment. Change in the quantity (rights  $\times$  liberties) therefore provides a rough measure of democratization (positive) and de-democratization (negative). Thus Freedom House rated Hungary 6 on rights and 6 on liberties in 1973, for a combined score of  $6 \times 6 = 36$ , while Hungary received 1 and 2 in 2001, for a  $1 \times 2 = 2$ , scoring an impressive  $36 - 2 = 34$  for democratization between 1973 and 2001. Meanwhile, between 1991 and 2001 Russia (not rated separately before 1991) went from  $3 \times 3 = 9$  to  $5 \times 5 = 25$ , for a resounding de-democratization score of  $-16$ .

In 2002 Freedom House classified every European country except Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Yugoslavia – the three

regimes outlined in Figure 2.2 – as democratic. All but the three pariahs featured civilian governments competitively elected by general adult suffrage. But Freedom House's evaluators introduced much more variation into ratings of political rights and civil liberties. Figure 2.2 arrays the ratings for 43 European political units, from tiny to huge. Sixteen of them received the highest possible rating: 1 on political rights and 1 on civil liberties. Andorra, Austria, Greek Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Sweden, and Switzerland all qualified for the highest possible grades on political rights and civil liberties. Fourteen otherwise democratic countries received ratings of 1, 2. All were experiencing major ethnic conflicts and/or visible political discrimination against minorities. In fact, they included all the larger democracies. They offered fairly broad, equal, and binding political rights, but faltered somewhat when it came to protection.

No European regime, according to Freedom House evaluations, quite traveled in the company of Afghanistan, Burma, Cuba, Iraq, North Korea, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Turkmenistan. All those non-European regimes scored at the bottom of the Freedom House scale: a bottom-scraping 7 for political rights, another abysmal 7 for civil liberties. But among European countries Belarus (6, 6) stood close to the bottom, while Moldova, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Ukraine, Turkey, and Russia all remained outside the privileged zone of regimes having extensive political rights and civil liberties.

Except for Turkey, as of 2001 all the low-ranking European countries had recently shed state socialist regimes. Among the regimes that had still styled themselves socialist or communist in 1989, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and – more dubiously – Croatia and Romania had as of 2001 moved away from their fellows by



**Figure 2.2 Freedom House ratings of European countries on political rights and civil liberties, 2001. (Source: compiled from Freedom House 2002).**

installing ostensibly democratic institutions. The political problems of Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Moldova, and Russia did not stem, however, from too much socialism. They had all stuck with, or slid into, regimes ranging from petty tyranny to authoritarianism. Tyrants small and large blocked their ways to breadth, equality, protection, and citizen influence over government policy. Many of those tyrants had, of course, survived from socialist regimes. Yet their commitment to socialism did not hold back their

countries from democratization; their tyrannies did.

Once the Soviet regime collapsed, Russian nationalists within Russia (including the opportunistic nationalist Boris Yeltsin) faced a fierce dilemma. On the one hand, they claimed the right of Russians to rule the Russian Federation, which actually included millions of people from non-Russian minorities. Their claim supported the principle that titular nationalities should prevail throughout the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, they vigorously criticized the treatment of Russians

outside the Russian federation as second-class minorities. Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, for example, all numbered millions of self-identified Russians.

Those numerous Russians had suddenly become members of minorities – sometimes very large minorities – in newly independent countries. They faced choices among assimilation to the titular nationality, lesser forms of citizenship, and emigration. The Russian Federation posed as their protector. Unsurprisingly, newly independent neighbors often accused the Russian Federation's authorities of imperialism. Fairly soon, the great Western powers lined up together in a program of containing Russia and drawing its former satellites selectively into Western political and economic circuits. They tried to secure the enormous resources of former Soviet territories; for example, the huge oil reserves of Kazakhstan under and around the Caspian Sea. Led by the United States, the great powers unilaterally ended the Cold War. Outside of the Baltic, economies collapsed across the former Soviet Union, with output dropping about 60 percent across the region as a whole between 1989 and 1998 (Campos and Coricelli, 2002: 794). At the same time, what remained of the Soviet Union's economic regulatory system fell to pieces.

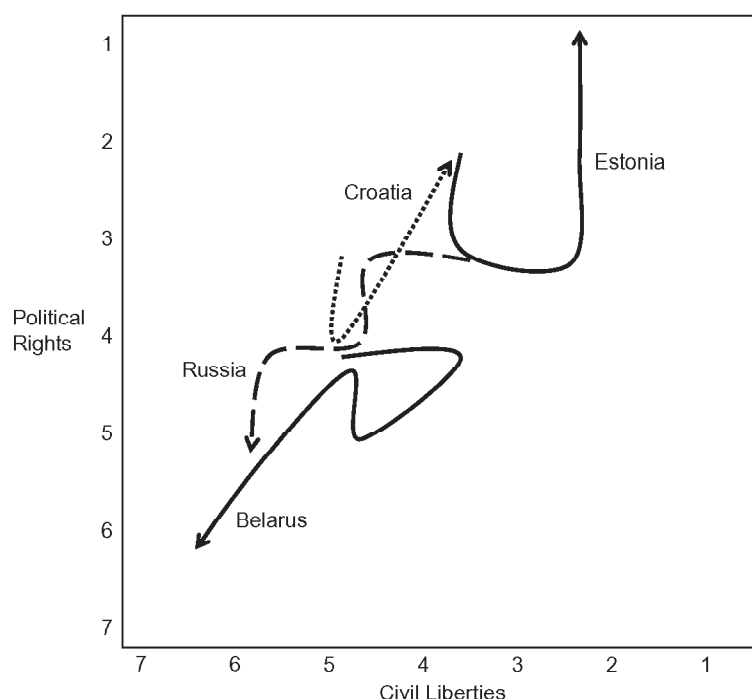
Not all post-socialist regimes, by any means, then proceeded to democratize (Fish, 2001, 2005). Again using Freedom House measures, Figure 2.3 displays trajectories of four post-socialist countries from 1991 to 2001. (Freedom House only started treating Belarus, Croatia, Estonia, and Russia separately from the preceding socialist federations in 1991.) According to these ratings, every one passed through an early decline of political rights and/or civil liberties. But after its civil war ended, say the scores, Croatia took significant steps toward democracy. Estonia restricted political rights at first, but made a U-turn as civil liberties increased and then political rights expanded; the regime's discriminatory treatment of its substantial Russian minority accounts for Estonia's 2001 rating of 1, 2 – in the company of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Russia and (especially) Belarus headed downward toward fewer political rights and diminished civil liberties. In Russia, the Yeltsin–Putin wars in the Northern Caucasus and their silencing of opposition voices pulled back their country from the partial democratization Gorbachev had initiated. Yeltsin and Putin concentrated their energy on restoring the Russian state's internal capacity and external standing. They sacrificed civil liberties – or, more generally, protected consultation – as they did so. Inequalities of class and ethnicity became more salient in Russian public politics. Russian citizens disconnected their tattered trust networks even more definitively from public politics, and protection, breadth, equality, and bindingness of political participation diminished visibly.

Belarus president Aleksandr Lukashenka won his office in a 1994 popular election as an anti-corruption watchdog. But as soon as he had consolidated his hold on office, Lukashenka instituted censorship, smashed independent trade unions, fixed elections, and subjugated the legislature, thus compromising the country's small previous democratic gains.

Less than a year into his presidency, in April 1995, riot police acting on Lukashenka's orders beat up Popular Front deputies on the steps of the Supreme Council, in what was a first manifestation of regime violence. Ever since, the special interior ministry troops (OPMON) have become a most visible reminder of how Lukashenka prefers to deal with critics, being used against peaceful demonstrators with escalating brutality and frequency. In two years, the number of security forces is estimated to have risen to about 180,000, or double the size of the armed forces. (Mihalisko, 1997: 237)

The use of specialized military forces to establish political control drew on an old Eastern European repertoire. Post-socialist regimes that de-democratized after 1991 teetered between dictatorship and civil war. Nevertheless, as the Freedom House ratings illustrate, the majority of Europe's post-socialist regimes did move some distance



**Figure 2.3 Trajectories of four post-socialist regimes, 1991–2001. (Source: compiled from Freedom House 2002).**

toward democracy after 1991. That did not, of course, make them equally prosperous. Figure 2.4 underlines the wide income disparities among European countries at the twenty-first century's start. (Purchasing power parity adjusts national income differences for variation in the local cost of living.) In 2000, the range ran from \$2,250 in desperate Moldova to \$30,350 in wealthy Switzerland. Although greater income inequality in rich capitalist countries than in poor post-socialist countries makes per capita comparisons a bit misleading, the figures portray an average Moldovan as living on seven percent of the purchasing power available to an average Swiss. By 2001, Slovenia had made it into the upper half of Europe's income distribution, but no other refugee from state socialism had yet arrived there. Except for Turkey, all the low-ranking countries had spent most of the postwar years under socialism. Since the majority of them have either joined the European Union or

have entered the Union's queue for eventual admission, the future portends the inclusion of many countries that missed the postwar prosperity of most present Union members.

Economists Alberto Alesina and Francesco Giavazzi, however, warn that even the currently prosperous European leaders face the prospect of economic decline *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world if they persist in their present policies. Alesina and Giavazzi do not recommend slavish European imitation of American models. For example, they deplore US health and welfare policies. But their comparison of industrial policies in Europe and the US lead them to the conclusion that anti-market actions are dragging Europe down:

Without serious, deep, and comprehensive reforms Europe will inexorably decline, both economically and politically. Absent profound change, in twenty or thirty years the share of Europe in the world economy will be significantly lower than it is today, and perhaps more important, its political influence will be much trimmed. Europeans seem to be living in the dream that their past splendor and



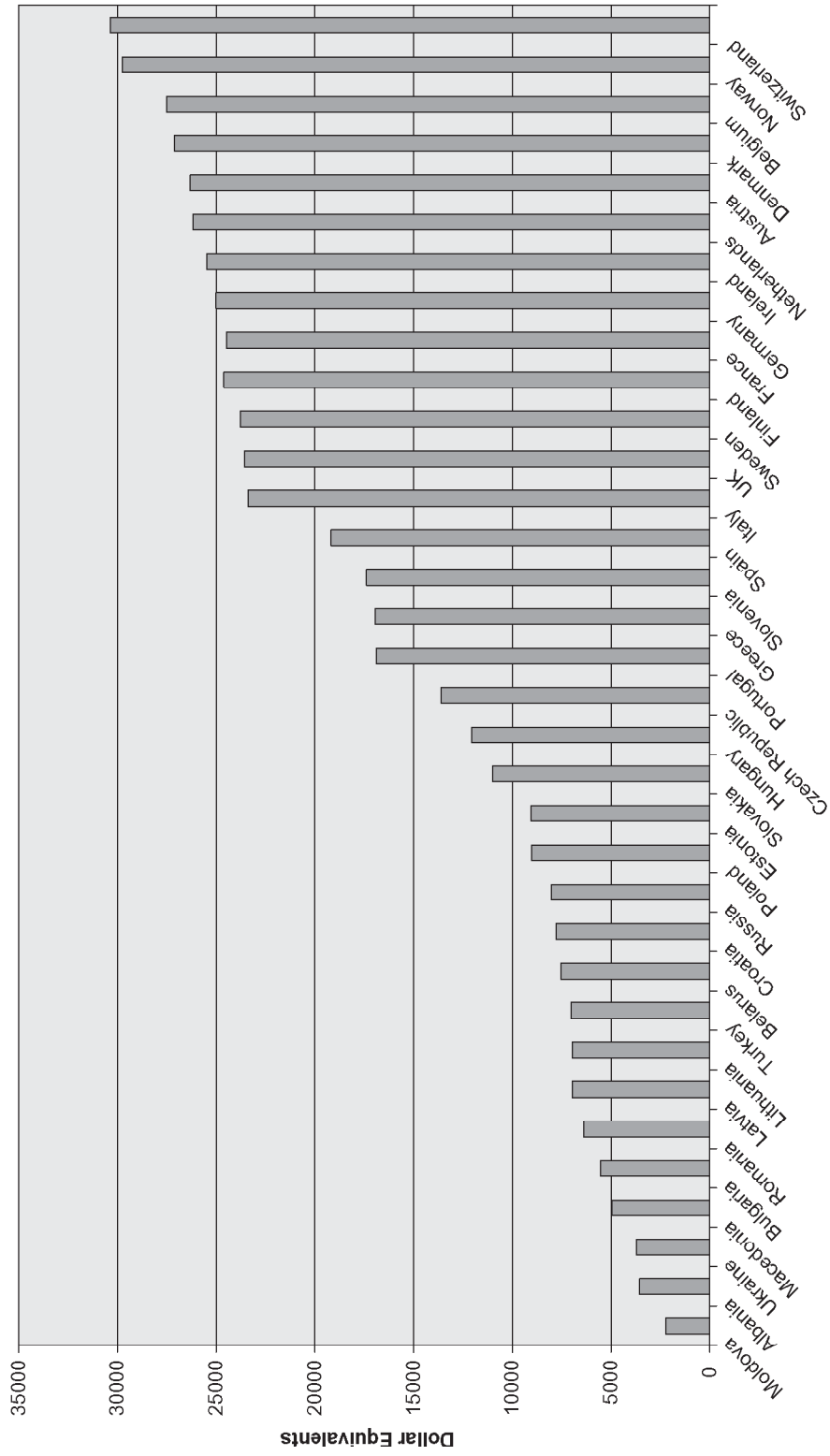


Figure 2.4 Gross national income per capita, purchasing power equivalents, European countries in 2000. (Source: World Bank 2001, table 1).

their current prosperity cannot be lost. This is a mistake. A major European decline is indeed a serious possibility (Alesina and Giavazzi, 2006: 3–4).

Back in 1945, both American and European economic planners had thought that unrestricted markets had caused (or at least permitted) the Depression, and therefore that governments would have to cushion market effects with some forms of public planning (Hobsbawm, 1994: 271–2). By the 1990s, however, the US had turned away from market-cushioning policies while European governments generally held to them more steadfastly. Whether Alesina and Giavazzi have their grim prognosis right or wrong, they correctly point out how much farther from the neo-liberal ideal espoused by recent American governments even the most capitalist European economies have remained. If the overall transformations of Europe since 1945 have integrated the continent more firmly into the world capitalist system, that integration has fallen far short of making European countries replicas of the US or Japan. It always will.

The continued rise of Asia will nevertheless drive the US and Europe together in two different regards. First, as the world economy shifts back to its historical Asian center, Europe and America will lose some of the economic and political dominance they have enjoyed for two centuries. Second, within that changing world economy European–American exchange and collaboration will intensify. Increased reliance of both Europeans and Americans on Asian energy sources could, to be sure, increase transatlantic competition and compromise future attempts at collaboration. Even in that case, we should expect the fates of Europeans and Americans to depend increasingly on each other. The world knits together, but it knits unevenly.

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### NOTES

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