

# The discursive political economy of Europe

Hybrid formation of nationalist populism  
through economics

Jens Maesse



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## Discussants

This paper has received peer comentaries from Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak (University of Łódź, Poland) and Thierry Rossier (London School of Economics, UK).

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# The discursive political economy of Europe

## Hybrid formation of nationalist populism through economics

Jens Maesse

Discourse Studies analyse meaning production as language use in different types of social contexts. This paper project will analyse *economically formed structures as institutional contexts* for discourse production in Europe (Part I) as well as the use of *economic expert discourses* for symbolic-imaginary identity formation (Part II) within these contexts. It is split in two parts and takes a discourse-sociological point of view. Part I analyses the contemporary socio-economic emergence of Europeanised fields of discursive identity production. It will be shown how the transformations of institutional contexts (especially since the European expansion since 1990) lead to the construction of a *new geography of power*, consisting of three different types of regions: first, a couple of *booming regions* located around the big cities and the Alps-Rhine region; second, a rather heterogeneous group of regions *locked down at a lower-medium level* of wealth participation; finally, a *shrinking and disconnected country side*. While Part I will analyse the institutional-economic forces that constitute this socio-discursive field, Part II will show how in these diverse regions discourses take on specific forms. Taking economic expert discourse from Poland as a case study (and comparing it with the AfD and Brexit economic expert discourses), it will be analysed how contradictions and paradoxes emerge between the symbolic-imaginary and the institutional level of European discourse production. The success story of nationalist populists such as PiS in Poland, AfD in East Germany, the Brexit in UK or Orban's project in Hungary cannot entirely be understood by solely looking at the "national histories", country's "political cultures" or "fake news" distributed by populists among "misinformed people". On the contrary, the paper shows that new nationalist-populist hegemonies in Europe can only emerge within Europeanised fields of identity production as hybrid discourse positions at the intersection between periphery and semi-periphery. Six elements forming a hybrid position will be elaborated in Part I and II.

*Keywords:* Economic Expert Discourse, European Studies, Studies in Discourse Sociology, Power and Inequality, Social Studies of Economics

### 1. Introduction

Discourse Studies analyse meaning production as language use. For a long time, discourse analytical projects have elaborated on the analysis of structures of speech and language. A huge array of methods and research agendas emerged (Angermuller, Maingueneau, and Wodak 2014; Reisigl and Wodak 2000; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Yet, in many cases the contexts of meaning production were taken for granted, analysed only at the afterthought or were seen as enunciative situations, historical developments or formal political systems. In addition to that, social structures and hierarchies can serve as contexts as well, as discourse sociological analyses have shown (Hamann et al. 2019). This paper project is split in two parts and takes a discourse-sociological and politico-economic point of view. It will analyse *economically formed structures as institutional contexts* for discourse production in Europe as well as the use of *economic expert discourses* for identity formation.

Institutional contexts can be analysed in different ways, for example as organisations and academic institutions (Angermuller 2015) or regimes of accumulation (Sum and Jessop 2013). Subsequently, my paper project takes the *economic division of labour* in current European economies as starting

point to show how socio-structural constellations, the distributions of occupations and professions as well as milieus are formed in Europe as an unequal social space (Part I). Against this background, the follow up paper (Part II) investigates how these institutional constellations impact discourse production taking Polish economic expert discourse of the year 2015/16 as case study. It will be shown that contemporary nationalist populism in Europe is constituted as hybrid position. Accordingly, two different analytical methods will be applied. While this paper will sketch out the socio-economic field of identity production through a *politico-economic analysis of new divisions of labour*, the second paper conducts a *polyphonic analysis* of identity formation in Polish economic expert discourse taking place within huge politico-economic hierarchies. Thus, the paper project applies two different methods for analysing the context and the discourse (in detail see: Hamann et al., 2019).

### *Europeanisation as “integration” or “lexicisation”?*

Against this methodological background, the paper will contribute to ongoing debates in the Social Studies of Economics and European Studies on Europeanization dynamics. While the nation states as functional entities disintegrate globally and regionally, and Europe does not form a coherent cultural and political entity, the notion of “new geography of power” will be developed in order to grasp the contemporary socio-historical form of Europe. Here, the economic dimension, which is at the heart of historical Europeanization processes (Maesse 2020b; Mudge and Vauchez 2012; Schmidt-Wellenburg 2017), will be analysed on two distinctive but interrelated levels: as institutional context that provides a field for discursive action (Part I) and as lexical tool for discursive practices (Part II).

The debate on Europeanisation in the social sciences was for a long time dominated by the idea that Europe cannot form a society, state or community without a single language. Accordingly, the emergence of European identities is seen as “impeded” by sociocultural “deficits”. Especially, integration-oriented approaches critically insisted that a missing common language would be an obstacle to further integration processes (Gerhards 2002). Against this background, studies in political analysis and game theory developed models of unequal decision-making under imperfect information (Moravcsik 1997). Europe was analysed as a multi-level game with rationally calculating nation-states as main actors, while nation-states are often seen as culturally homogeneous entities based on a common language. Here, heterogeneity is seen as an “integration problem” and not as a form and precondition for the existence of post-national social relations. Accordingly, Europe always remains incomplete, prone to crisis and a source of instability.

This paper project takes the term *lexicisation* as a discourse theoretical starting point for analysing the cultural dimension of Europeanization processes from the perspec-

tive of *inextricable cultural heterogeneity* (Balibar 2004; Delanty and Rumford 2005). Lexicisation is defined as a proliferation of words and signs without specific meaning, open to various meaning productions by social actors in diverse social contexts across Europe. Lexical systems in and of Europe are always empty signifiers; they have many sources, such as discourses on “peace”, “cosmopolitanism”, “global problems”, “European cultural history”, “European solidarity in Corona crisis” and so forth. In addition, Social Studies of Economics have for a long time discussed and analysed the social status of *economics* as a device of power, legitimacy and discourse (Fitzgerald and O’Rourke 2015; Pühringer and Hirte 2015). My analysis follows these studies by focusing particularly on *economics* as source of lexicisation. The Polish case of economic expert discourse, that will be analysed in Part II, is particularly interesting because it shows how economics is used as a discourse device to form nationalistic identity roles within an entirely post-national social space. Thus, Poland is not only one of the largest EU countries with a very specific economic role; it is also an instructive example how certain contradictions typical for Europe today are articulated, namely that discursive nationalism emerges from transnational structures (and not simply from national identities) (Nicoletta 2020) and it works as emotional compensation for various socio-economic marginalisation experiences (and not as a positive political utopia). Integrationist perspectives are often blind for globalisation paradoxes.

Thus, in contrast to the notion of integration, the term lexicisation helps us to see how languages from diverse and heterogeneous sources and contexts are used by social actors to speak, act and perceive themselves and others within a European symbolic universe (Trenz and Eder 2004). But the dissemination of lexical forms presupposes the existence of a corresponding *socio-institutional field constellation* for the adoption, interpretation and use of signs. Lexicisation implies processes of discursive decontextualisation and recontextualisation. For this reason, the notion of lexicisation refers to two tendencies: first, an unequal politico-economic field structure; and second, a heteroglossic cultural sphere. Therefore, a discourse analysis of economics as lexis will be complemented by an analysis of social fields (Maesse 2018b; Mudge and Vauchez 2012; Schmidt-Wellenburg 2018). Here, forms of discursive (“soft”) and institutional (“hard”) power interact.

### *Aim and structure of the paper (Part I)*

The grey boxes on the left in Figure 1 represent field-related aspects that influence European identity formation; the white boxes on the right represent discursive aspects. Since identities are only formed by language in discourse, both aspects are important. Therefore, only the interaction of both parts of the analysis will help us to understand the diverse elements that impact on and form European identities.

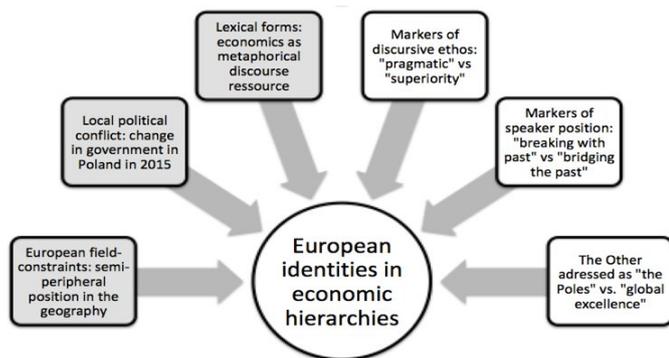


Figure 1: Discursive and field-related factors influencing European identity formation

The central thesis is that European identities take on an economic dimension because economics provides both, *the lexical material* for identity production as well as *the institutional contexts* of that identity production. Economics has a double function in the formation of contemporary Europe as a social space. As this paper will show, the transformations of the institutional context lead to the construction of three different ideal types of regions (providing a certain structure of jobs, income levels and milieus):

- first, a couple of *booming regions* located around the big cities and the Alps-Rhine region;
- second, a rather heterogeneous group of regions *locked down at a lower-medium level* of wealth participation;
- finally, a *shrinking and disconnected country side*.

In these diverse regions, discourses (especially in politics) take on specific forms; the hegemonic conflicts are embedded within particular historical, national but also European constellations; the opportunities political actors have to become visible via discourses are restricted to the symbolic and material means provided by the institutional contexts of the new geography of power. What I want to show, in particular, is that the new nationalist-populist hegemones in Europe can only emerge within a Europeanised field of identity production. Four aspects from the institutional level of the geography of power are particularly influencing the formation of nationalist identities:

- the experiences of loss, movement and motion at the intersection between the periphery and the semi-periphery,
- the low level of wealth participation,
- the experience of demographic decline,
- the spread of negative emotions.

Thus, the success story of parties such as PiS in Poland, the AfD in East Germany, the Brexiters in Northern Eng-

land or Orban's project in Hungary cannot be understood only by looking at the national histories or particular cultures of these countries.

The paper Part I is structured as follows. Chapter 2 explains the discourse theoretical approach and discusses the reason why contemporary Europe as seen as a "geography" (in contrast to "society"). Chapter 3 provides insights into the current morphology of Europe as a "new geography of power". Europe<sup>1</sup> develops as a centre-periphery-geography that is formed by five different but interrelated tendencies: the formation of a new power centre in the Alps-Rhine region (1), new European divisions of labour along value chains (2) and global innovation centres (3), regulated by economic administration (4) and accompanied by national illusions (5). Against this background, economics emerged as a lexical system, a "European language" functioning as discursive tool, as Chapter 4 argues. The Conclusion summarizes the main results and opens the realm for paper Part II.

## Part I

### The formation of a new geography of power by institutional means of economics

#### 2. Discourse analysis and the political economy of Europe

##### 2.1. Is Europe a society?

The political idea of "Europe" and the scientific notion of "society" share a common characteristic: they are both inspired by the concept of "integration". In political discourse as well as in scientific analysis, Europe is usually perceived as an integration problem that revolves around a common market, multi-level governance and semi-autonomous nation states (Börner and Eigmüller 2015). Accordingly, a common European society including shared norms and values cannot emerge as long as European integration is not completed (Gerhards 2002). Such a sceptical view of Europe is based on the sociological concept of society. According to Durkheim, society results from functional integration (Durkheim 1992) as interplay of the economy, the family, the political system and other aspects forming a differentiated social universe. This model was further de-

1 This paper makes a difference between the "EU" and "Europe". The EU is seen as the governmental-administrative centre whereas Europe refers to the larger European social space.

veloped by structural functionalism and Weberian political economy, such as the Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) approach (Hall and Soskice 2001). According to VoC, a society is based on a coherent institutional framework that serves all the needs and is able to manage all the challenges of this society in order to maintain a simple or complex reproduction of the system. In this view, a crisis basically develops and escalates through institutional heterogeneity (Hall 2014).

This understanding of Europe as a society led other proponents of the VoC approach to call for a re-nationalisation of European political economies in order to restore institutional homogeneity and political autonomy (Streeck 2014). But such a conceptualisation has provoked critical questions because it is based on two fundamental fallacies: First, no nation-state has ever formed a society. The notion of society served merely as a regulative idea, an imaginary institution, and not as an empirical reality. Second, the nexus of operative/ functional success and institutional homogeneity is entirely misleading and should be discarded. As the many crises of the European project since the Treaty of Rome 1957 demonstrated, Europe is a structural reality *sui generis*, a “social fact”, and its institutional framework has survived many disruptions. From a historical-empirical standpoint, crisis and heterogeneity seem to be the European normality rather than a state of exception. The doomsday prophets who went on stage during every crisis were proven wrong.

Europe is not a society and it will never become a society in the Durkheimian nationalist meaning of the concept. It rather developed as a heterogeneous field of transversal dynamics and trans-epistemic relations (Delanty and Rumford 2005). In order to understand the specific dynamics of and within Europe, we must consider the particular constellations that make possible the emergence of certain phenomena. In this respect, structural-institutional as well as discursive-imaginary aspects and their interplay are of central importance (Hamann et al. 2019; Sum and Jessop 2013). Structural as well as discursive forms of power constitute a heteroglossic social ensemble like Europe.

On the structural-institutional level, the political economy is one important aspect in this sense. The political economy of Europe developed, in recent decades, as a complex interplay of diverse types of divisions of labour, geographical translocations and governance technologies. Whereas the classical political economy of the nation-state was analysed as a universe with the Fordist firm at the centre, today, production chains, which stretch across nations, regions and various sectors, are much more important to understand the dynamics of post-national political economies. The Fordist firm, as the centre of industrial production, was based on a specific time-space regime of continuity. This regime has changed dramatically in recent decades since industrial production now takes place in industry-service networks where value chains stretch across different regions and countries. Dynamic value chains are located in regulated but open economies. They are em-

bedded in diverse institutional settings and hierarchies (Jessop 2012), and they produce a new geography of power.

## 2.2. *The discourse-power approach*

In order to grasp the full complexity of the interaction between cultural-linguistic dynamics and material-institutional forms of social relations, I will apply a discourse-power approach. The analytical focus on discursive power relations and powerful discourses is usually expressed by the *dispositif* concept (Foucault 1980). “With the concept of the *dispositif*, we make the case for sociological perspectives on discursive practices as embedded in institutional power arrangements [...]. The *dispositif* approach encompasses power and social structures (Bourdieu 1984), the nexus of power and knowledge (Foucault 1980), as well as institutionally organised processes of interpretation (Angermüller 2010)” (Hamann et al., 2019, 44). The main advantage of such a concept is the irreducible character; here social relations will neither be reduced to pure cultural forms of interpretation and negotiation of social relations, nor to economic-material determinism. This concept rather allows us to consider both, socio-institutional contexts of meaning production as well as the polyphonic dynamics of identity formation. Whereas this paper will analyse the material-institutional conditions of European identity production, the Part II will consider how economic expert discourses allow for the formation of polyphonic identities.

In order to make this methodological approach more tangible for empirically oriented discourse analytical projects, three forms of discursive power can be distinguished: performative power, symbolic power and imaginary power (Maesse 2020a). *Performative power* is defined as the possibility of every discourse to create fixed social relations that cannot easily be dissolved and reorganised by interpretation dynamics. This form of power is based on sedimented relations that in most empirical cases exist as trans-epistemic fields (Lebaron and Schmidt-Wellenburg 2019; Maesse 2015). Trans-epistemic fields are material terrains, institutionalised rules and fixed hierarchies, they are semi-open to each other and form the socio-historical background for every discourse production. They provide the material conditions for speaking and listening to other’s discourse. On the other hand, *imaginary power* is defined as the possibility of every discourse to create images of social actors as “me” and the “other”. Based on Lacan’s discourse theory (Lacan 1991), this dimension of the discourse provides social actors with images, categories and labels that allow speaker to become visible in the name of diverse others, authorities or ideologies. However, empirical social actors always create identities by getting placed in institutional as well as imaginary relations. Nobody can exist on simply one of both levels. Finally, *symbolic power* is defined as the possibility of every discourse

to attribute prestige, respect, authority, fear or excitement to an image of a person, a group or an institution. In contrast to the materially fixed hierarchies of the performative level (that very roughly relate to Bourdieu's economic, cultural and social capitals (Bourdieu 1986)), symbolic hierarchies and other relations depend on discursive attributions in situations. They do not serve as sedimented material background of discourse productions but rely on what Max Weber would have called "Herrschaft" (leadership/authority) as consent of the actors that are ruled with the position of the ruler (Weber 1972).

The following chapter starts from this conception of discursive power in order to analyse the contours of a European field. Generally speaking, different types of institutions, materialities and hierarchies can form such a field as the performative dimension of discursive power. What sorts of institutions are emerging and will forming a field is finally an empirical question. In case of Europe, specific *economic relations* emerged especially since the 1990s as the main forces of the formation of an institutional background for discursive identity production (Huffschmid 1994; 1970). For this reason, the field analysis takes the form of a political economy of Europe. Accordingly, the notion of the trans-epistemic field will be here analysed as economic structures, which developed as *production chains, supply chains or value chains* (and not finance, debt or industry). These chains are woven along huge hierarchies between European *regions* (and not nation states) and they have formed a *new division of labour* between booming regions, a shrinking countryside and reorganised regions locked down at a lower-medium level of wealth participation. These hierarchies will be analysed through *GDP per capita* and *Gross Value Added*. Both categories allow us to understand how economic wealth is unequally distributed among diverse regions in Europe along unequal participation in value chains. Especially the Gross Value Added helps us to understand how the *new professions* in the realm of *industrial services* were regionally monopolised in the Alps-Rhine region and the big cities, and how their Gross Value Added led to an ongoing diver-

gence between the culturally different regions in Europe (Pauli 2020). High wages, high qualification standards, the control over innovations and marketing, Research and Development, the access to firm's headquarters and the control of supply chains are the main forces for wealth monopolisation. As the next chapter argues, five different but interrelated features of this European field seem to be constitutive of the current form of Europe, adopting the form of a *new geography of power*.

### 3. A new geography of power in Europe

#### 3.1. The formation of the Alps-Rhine centre since the 1990<sup>th</sup>

The first trend is the formation of a new societal power centre that developed in recent decades within the European field. The first boost toward that new structure came from the expansion of the European Union after 1990 and the economic-institutional integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the capitalist centres of the West; the second boost emerged out of the financial crisis 2009; and the third boost will come from the Brexit (since 2016) as well as from the restart of the corona-crisis lockdown through the regionally unequal implementation of enormous fiscal measures.

Many critical economists argue that Germany, as a country and a national economy, occupied this position as a new regional superpower. It is argued that economic power is combined with political power that puts Germany in a position of a "silent hegemon". The power is based on low wages, an export-oriented industry and consumer power of other countries; Germany, on the other side, does not import as much as it exports. But this picture is only partially true. If we take a superficial look at the development of GDP per capita at the level of different European countries (compared with some leading global economies) this picture seems to be true.

As Figure 2 illustrates, Germany has developed in the last 20 years as a regional economic superpower in terms of income per inhabitant. Especially after the financial crisis 2009, the growth in relative economic surplus increased. The other huge economies in Europe (France, Spain, Italy, the UK) lost economic influence. Germany grew out of the financial crisis in 2009 as a global winner, whereas most Western European economies lost relative to Germany. This is confirmed when we take a deeper look at the constitution of specific economic sectors.

As Figure 3 shows the contribution of the manufacturing sector to all values produced in a society in terms of goods and services is constantly high in Germany as well as in East and Central European economies (e.g. Poland and the Czech Republic), but it is declining in West European economies (as well as in the USA). Thus, it seems to be

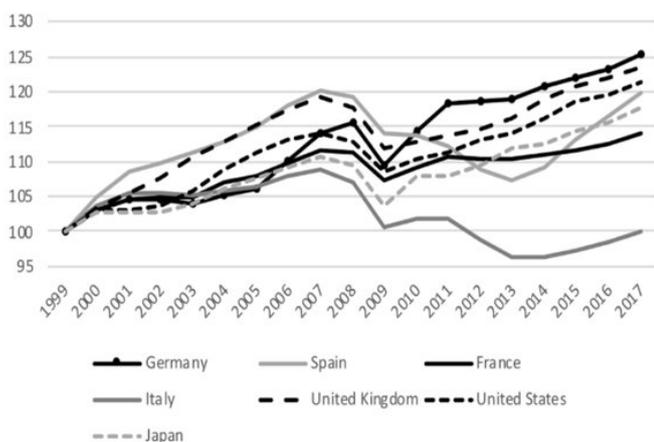


Figure 2: GDP per capita in euros (constant prizes), 1999–2017, Source: AMECO, as cited in Herr, Priewe, & Watt (2019, 2)

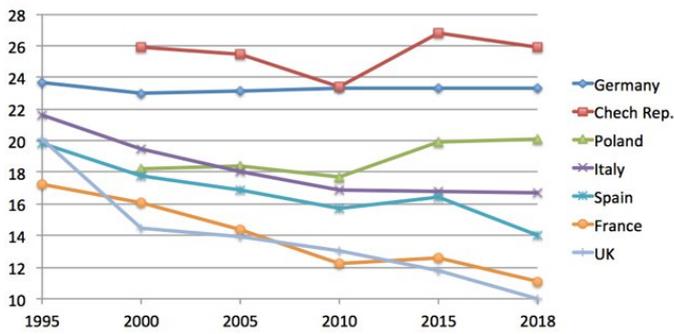


Figure 3: Gross value added by industrial sector, in %, 1995–2018 (Source: Eurostat)

that the general relative surplus in GDP per capita (compared to other huge European economies) was produced by relatively higher shares in manufacturing. But this is not true if we take a deeper look at the composition of value chains. While the relative growth in GDP per capita explains the general redistribution of wealth for the entire statistical entity (here: the “nation state”), the *specific positions* of activities in manufacturing, construction, public and industrial services in the value chain account for the particular reasons of wealth distribution. The GDP cannot account for that, but (for two reasons) the Gross Value Added (GVA) is much more interesting. First, GVA explains inasmuch a certain activity contributes to the production of value. For example, in car production simple and highly automatized activities (installation of doors) are extremely productive; but the value added by these activities is low; computing, engineering and marketing are based on very low productivity; their value added is nevertheless high. The GVA is measured in market prices and it is an indicator for the level of wages and profit extraction by a certain economic entity (a person, a department, a firm or a region). High wages are always based on research intensive, high qualified and service related occupations and professions. Thus, a high share of GVA is an indicator for social class positions, wealthy milieus and well skilled occupations on the upper level of reputation, education and income. If these occupations are unequally distributed among different regions, economically based social hierarchies emerge and become sedimented through the settlement of specific businesses, branches and milieus. Thus, what we find in case of GVA based hierarchies are not economic and political power centres but social hierarchies. These hierarchies have a rather indirect impact on political decisions.

Industrial production alone is not an indicator of economic power. It rather becomes the basis for the development of innovation and power when industrial production is connected to special parts of the service sector. In particular, the UK has in London one of the most innovative and influential service sectors in Europe (measured in terms of Gross Value Added). Accordingly, West London is the most innovative and productive NUTS2 region in Europe. But

services are only an indicator of economic power when they are related to industrial production. And these industrial areas are not located in London; they are rather outside the UK. On the other hand, Central and Eastern Europe has a huge share of industrial production (especially manufacturing) in terms of GDP. But the industries in these regions are only at a medium-size level of income and related high-wage and top-level service sectors are not located in these regions. They are at the lower-medium levels in the value chain and, therefore, economically dominated and industrially controlled by the high-tech centres.

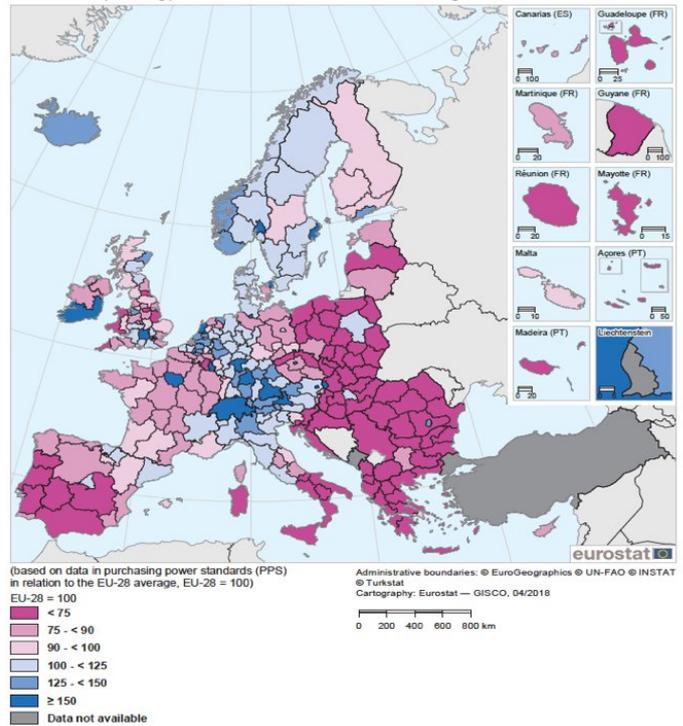


Figure 4: GDP per inhabitant, by NUTS 2 region, 2016, Source: Eurostat (European Union, 2018, 87)

A more precise impression of the geography of power offers the illustration of GDP per capita in NUTS 2 regions (Fig. 4). A NUTS 2 region is a descriptive category of European Statistics that helps us to understand the distribution of diverse items at a level below the nation-state. Figure 4 shows how these regions are constructed, and GDP per capita is an indicator of the share of wealth production of a region compared to related regions (blue = above the EU average; red is below the EU average. Switzerland is an integrated part of European value chains with a comparable high share of industry production to GDP, like South-West-Germany). It is not equivalent to productivity; it rather indicates the degree of economic power and industrial influence. They form regions in which people with highly skilled occupations, high levels of income and the ascending social milieus become more and more concentrated (Vester and Weber-Menges 2014).

What we see here is the result of three different but inter-related economic processes that have been at work for at least four decades, forming wealthy regions as socio-cultural power centres in the area around the Alps, the southern Rhine region and the big cities: first, a *reallocation* of economic, and especially high-tech industrial production, from the western parts to the middle of Europe (and through this reallocation moving high skilled occupations with high income possibilities to these regions); second, a *reintegration* of Central and Eastern Europe (including East Germany) as a low-wage supplier to the Alps-Rhine region (and thereby removing the economic resources from these regions that are needed to develop upper class milieus); third, a *concentration* of high-tech industrial production and related industrial services in the Alps-Rhine region (measured in terms of R&D and number of headquarters, expressed by GDP per capita = high value added). Through these processes, social class divisions become more and more shaped by geographic spaces (and cultural class divisions among regions increase).

For a long time, the economic power centres of Europe were illustrated as a “prosperity banana”, reaching from London, Belgium and Netherlands, through the Ruhr area to Turin. What is developing in 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe looks more like a “pear” (covering south-west Germany, Switzerland, Austria, north-east Italy) with a north-western “twist” (reaching to the harbours of Hamburg, Rotterdam and Amsterdam) and some “leaves” (representing the big urban innovation areas like Berlin, Paris, London, Madrid and so forth). In this statistical picture, “Germany” as a coherent national entity disappears, and “Europe” as a common open economy, re-connected by trans-national value chains, emerges as a more realistic category for understanding what is going on within current globalisation. If the traditional nation state order regulated the old Rhenish capitalism, then the new geography of power results from responding to the on-going decline of exactly that Rhenish model.

### 3.2. Regional production chains and new post-national divisions of labour in Europe

The second trend, closely interrelated to the first trend, is the formation of diverse forms of division of labour through value chains. This division of labour emerged around three different forms of economically formed regions:

- First, the new wealth and power centre with upper class milieus and corresponding jobs mainly located at the high levels on industrial services (see the dark blue and blue NUTS2 regions in Fig. 4);
- Second, semi-peripheral regions locked down at a lower-medium level of wealth participation inhabiting lower middle classes and lower classes and jobs mainly in manufacturing, handicraft and local services (see the blue and pink regions in Fig. 4);
- Finally, a shrinking countryside left alone at the periphery.

Especially the centre and the semi-peripheral region are in constant economic, political and cultural exchange whereas the peripheral regions are affected by strong demographic decline. This new division of labour that I describe on the basis of branches and hierarchical value chains is based on a geographical differentiation of occupations. Whereas a large amount of highly skilled and well-paid occupations on the leading levels in management, research and development, engineering, programming and so forth are located around the Alps-Rhine centre and the big cities, lower level occupations – especially in manufacturing (traditional craftsmen) and supply services (i. e. transportation) are based in Central-Eastern-Southern semi-periphery of Europe today. This unequal distribution of wealth, income and societal power is usually analysed by the sociology of occupations and milieu studies.

Unfortunately, most of these studies are strongly related to the nation state as statistical and analytical object and background. This makes the real category of geographical inequality invisible and contributes to the reproduction of nation-state myths. Today, the unequal formation of milieus and the distribution of occupations have already a significant European-geographical dimension, because value chains are no longer located along the institutions of the nation-state. They stretch across former borders and create within and across nation-states booming regions, a disconnected countryside and regions locked down at a lower-medium level of wealth participation. The geography of power is the special form of the European class society. And all the political and economic reactions to the corona crisis support the impression that this structure will be sedimented and fixed for a long time. National borders will be transformed into geographical class borders within an open economy.

Accordingly, the economies of the Central and Eastern Europe are only on the winning side at the expense of economic and political autonomy (Popławski 2016). The

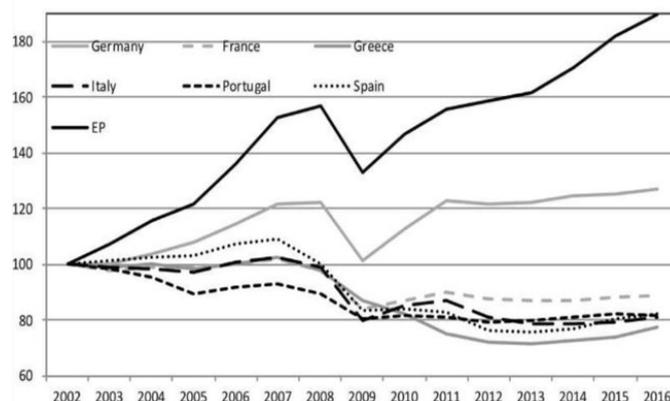


Figure 5: Industrial production in Germany, France, Southern Semi-Periphery and Eastern Semi-Periphery (EP), 2002–2016, index 2002 = 100, Source: (Simonazzi, Celi, & Guarascio, 2019, 167)

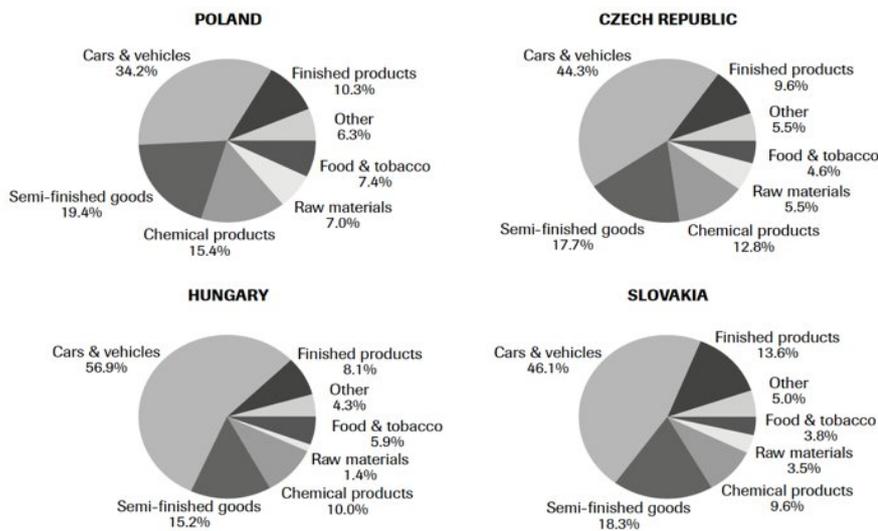


Figure 6: Structure of German imports from V4 countries in 2014 (%), Source: Federal Statistical Office, as cited in Popławski (2016, 25)

industries in these regions (covering East Germany as well as the VISEGRAD countries, Romania and so forth) are in most cases owned and/or directly controlled by Rhine-Alps headquarters and R&D departments.

Whereas the share of industrial production grew (Fig. 5, EP curve) compared to all the other economies, most parts of the huge industrial sectors in the Visegrad countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic = V4) are functional and integral parts of German export production. For example, out of 3.4 million cars produced per annum in V4, only 750,000 are sold in V4 markets. The rest are produced for German exports. As Figure 6 shows, the constitution of the industrial sector in V4 countries is very one-sided in favour of the German automotive industry, and the general international trade of V4 countries is dominated by Germany (25–30 %). If we take a look at some aspects of the constitution of German industry, we find that it is not industrial production as manufacturing but rather *industrial services* that dominate here (Fig. 7).

As we can see in Figure 7, industrial services (red line) grew dramatically in expense of manufacturing (blue line), meaning that traditional manufacturing jobs were replaced by industrial service jobs. In addition, around 50 % of those activities that Figure 6 shows as “manufacturing” are in fact service-oriented activities (engineering, R&D etc.; Eikelpasch et al., 2017). Thus, “industrial services” make the highest contribution to value production, and this is only possible because they are part of high-tech industry (“manufacturing”, which is still the second highest contributor together with public services to GDP). As many studies show, for each job that was lost in industry at low or medium levels of qualification, one new job was created at a much higher level of qualification (Vester and Weber-Menges 2014) (also indicated by Fig. 7). Low-qualification

and low-paid jobs are replaced by technological innovation or outsourced to low-wage areas; and jobs in top management, R&D and other leading positions are more and more concentrated in the Alps-Rhine region (IG Metall 2018).

What we can observe is a new division of labour along European hierarchical value chains that stretch across low-wage and high-tech areas (for the outsourcing effects of low and medium level qualification jobs, see Fig. 8). These areas are not equally distributed at a geographical level: some regions lost power and influence (west, south-west, especially UK), other regions became dominated (east) and a third category of regions developed as new markets with an equal division of labour. This unequal distribution of economic means is best reflected and illustrated by the high degree of unequal distribution of GDP per capita and gross value added per NUTS2 region (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). From a sociological point of view, it is easy to see that other socio-demographic and cultural characteristics follow these economic and occupational structures (as can easily be seen in election results, for example).

To conclude, post-national hierarchical relations and an innovation-oriented time-space regime characterize the new geography of power. The situation of societies, countries and regions at the semi-periphery of the new geography of power cannot be understood without recognising the monopolising role of the centre: the accumulation and concentration of high-wage positions, high skilled occupations, research intensive jobs, innovation activities and business headquarters is the primary reason for the very existence of the periphery as such – including all the consequences

of the periphery as such – including all the consequences

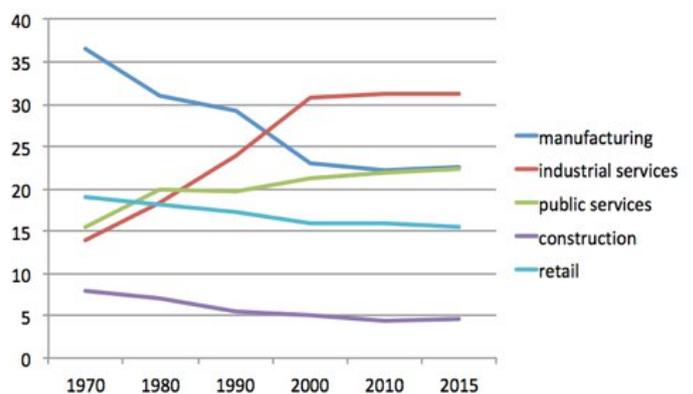


Figure 7: Gross value added, different sectors of the economy, 1970–2015, in %, Source: Bundesamt für Statistik, (Eikelpasch, Behrend, & Krüger-Röth, 2017, 19)

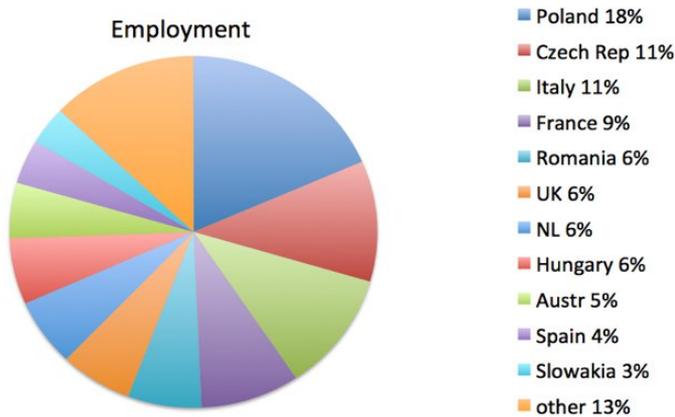


Figure 8: Employment effects of the German metals and electricity industry on European suppliers: 2,467 million, Source: (IG Metall, 2018, 11)

for social life, cultural forms and political discourses. The centre and the periphery belong together as part of a complex set of socio-economic circulations (Arrighi 1994; Wallerstein 2011). The centre is not independent, and the (semi-)periphery always tends to negotiate its relationships of dependency from the centre regions.

### 3.3. Europe among new global innovation centres

The new geography of power is formed by internal as well as by external forces. It does not exist as an autonomous region, independent from the wider global exchanges. Thus, the European social space is part of global power constellations, economic exchange, innovation and political conflict. Against this backdrop, firms (in cooperation with governments; Popławski and Bajczuk, 2019) apply different strategies when they move production and investment to other countries, regions or markets. Three motives can be distinguished: first, a relocation of production on the basis of lower wages (for example through the inclusion of manufacturing in Central and East Europe in the Alps-Rhine region); second, a new division of labour among equal partners on the basis of qualitative differentiation (this happened in the case of Airbus between Germany and France, by the regular access to global ports in the Netherlands/ Belgium = the “Rotterdam-Antwerp effect”, and in the case of financial and legal services between the City of London and the rest of Europe); third, participation in global innovation dynamics.

The third motive is at the heart of the third trend that brings together local and regional rearticulations of Europe

within a new geography of power and the new global position of the European field. This can best be illustrated with the example of the VW-China strategy because the automotive industry is one of the most innovative and globalised branches and it can very well illustrate how global transformations and the reorganisation of social structures along these lines work. In recent decades, the VW group has become one of the top global corporations in car production, with an annual output of approximately 10 million cars worldwide. This was possible through a global as well as a Europe-oriented regionalisation strategy. Today, many former car firms, such as Audi, Skoda, Seat, Porsche, Bentley, Lamborghini and five others, belong to the VW group. VW has absorbed these other companies in order to save money through a common R&D strategy, to occupy other markets for selling cars and to use low-wage areas to reduce costs. In addition, VW is at the centre of a huge network of high-tech (and low-tech) suppliers such as Schaeffler, Bosch and Continental.

Therefore, VW can be seen as a typical European global player with a huge impact on technological development in different industrial and service sectors, people’s lives and job opportunities, government’s regulation options, ecological and social standards and so forth. Taking direct and indirect effects, the car industry alone in Germany accounts for more than 2 million high-paid jobs. This is more than 7 % of all regular jobs in Germany, plus many jobs in other countries, such as the V4 countries in Europe, but also in France, Italy, the UK and so forth (Fig. 8). Organisations such as VW are not only a “firm”. They are socio-economic networks with huge cultural and political impact. If these types of so-called “lead firms” lose contracts to global innovation and suffer competitive disadvantage, the ensuing job losses could have tremendous effects on the inner constitution of entire societies (as we can see today in the UK, which has witnessed enormous deindustrialisation in recent decades and has transformed from a highly

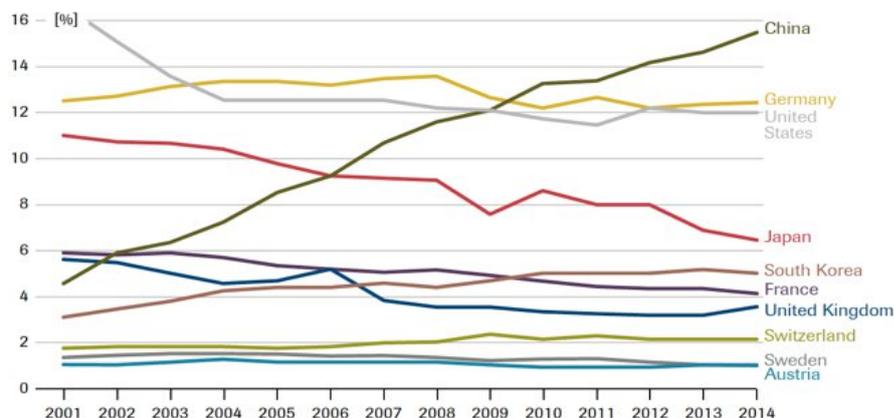


Figure 9: Selected countries’ share of global trade in research-intensive goods (in %), Source: Federal Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, <https://www.bmbf.de/de/deutschlandals-standort-fuer-forschung-und-innovation-2016-2845.html>, (Popławski & Bajczuk, 2019, 46)

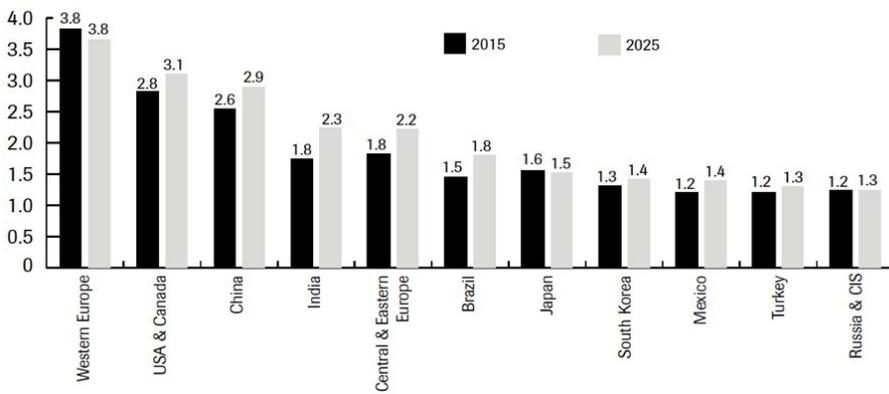


Figure 10: The most attractive regions for R&D (on a scale from 1 – unimportant to 4 – very important, Survey entitled ‘R&D Landscape by 2025: Eine Trendstudie der ROI Management Consulting AG. Ein Wegweiser durch die Trends im globalen Management von Forschung und Entwicklung, 2013, p. 11, (Popławski, 2016, 37))

diversified economic structure into a one-sided niche strategy relying on financial services).

However, in 2018, VW sold 4.3 million cars only in China. This is almost 50 % of the group’s entire outlet. In addition, not only automotive firms such as VW but also their big suppliers are moving more and more R&D activities to China. The reason behind this strategy resides in the fact that China is not only the biggest future market in the world, it is also the largest innovation area for the production of new battery-based engines, as the Chinese government decided that in the near future only engines with this technology will be approved.

In the future, this and many related technologies will be developed in China, and China is going to become the leading global region for car production. In addition, China is not only an innovation-driver in engines. In the last three decades, China became active in many different innovation fields covered by the “China 2025” strategy and the “Silk-Road” project. As Figure 9 shows, China is already leading in trade with research-intensive goods (whereby goods account for 75 % of global trade and services for 25 %) which are connected to high-level services through value chains and mostly located in geographical proximity to the production plans of high-tech goods. Thus, firms move into new markets and regions in order to participate in innovations, and innovations are the basis for building powerful economic and political positions. They have retroactive effects on the home-base regions, mediated by value chains and ever-closer political, academic, cultural and technological connections.

As Figures 10 and 11 show, China is not only an emerging global super power (Fig. 11), it is also a leading field of innovation and occupies

according to firm’s expectations, next to Western Europe and the USA, the third future position in R&D (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). The established global power centres of Europe and the USA have intensive trade relations with China and between each other. This is not just taking place between end-products, but on the basis of production chains of services and precursors as well. All these economies are already interconnected (for example, the biggest US car exporter is the German firm BMW and US firms control digitisation in Europe). On the other hand, peripheral regions in Europe and around the world are part of a new tri-pole structure as low-wage suppliers for leading centres: the USA as a declining pole, Asia/China as an emerging pole and Europe with its Alps-Rhine centre as a reformulated power in-between. This global in-between position of Europe has huge effects on ongoing and future internal formation dynamics even within Europe, and it will probably be the most important factor and motive for the future development of Europe. In light of this global position, the internal conflicts among diverse European local actors (firms, networks, states etc.) will move into the background. The very existence of China and the rapid transformation of the global role of the USA will have huge effects on further unification and integration processes in Europe. Europe cannot simply “collapse”, because it would need more energy and activity to collapse than not to collapse.

To conclude, Europe is not a society, it can rather be grasped as a new geography of power that is functioning as a trans-epistemic terrain for the formation of further socio-discursive relations. This new geography of power is located in a post-national social space, it consists of a new power centre in the Alps-Rhine region, which is connected to other European regions and to the global political economy by different types of production chains. Europe, as a

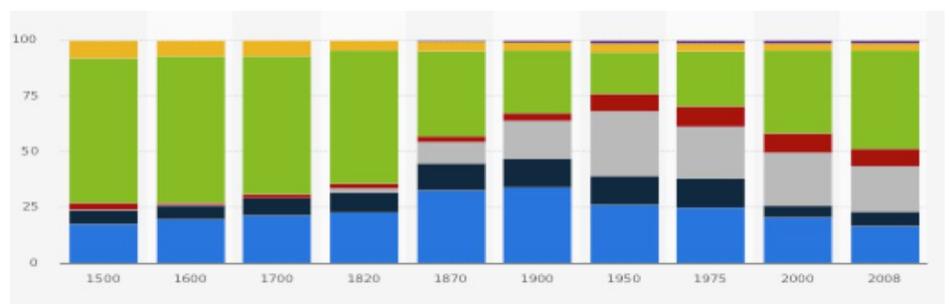


Figure 11: Estimated historical share of GDP per world region, 1500–2008, Source: Angus Madison, 2015 (yellow: Africa, green: Asia, red: Latin America, grey: North America, black: Eastern Europe, including the former Soviet Union, blue: Western Europe)

socio-discursive space, cannot be reduced to the EU (as the administrative centre). To understand the current dynamic of Europe requires an adequate conceptualisation of Europe, taking into consideration the new internal structuration as well as its new global position between the USA and China.

### 3.4. Economic administration and national illusion

A fourth trend contributing to the formation of the new geography of power in Europe can be characterized as “economic administration”. What does this mean? Many authors have analysed the formation of the European Union as a solely neoliberal project aiming at the construction of a free market (Bruff 2010). This is only partially true because Europe emerged as a contested field after the Treaty of Rome 1957. It was always influenced by conflicting actors representing social-democratic as well as neoliberal-conservative forces (Miró 2017). Against this backdrop, “economic administration” in Europe developed as an ambivalent technology.

*On the one hand*, economic administration was institutionalized by the so-called “Four Freedoms” that lay at the heart of European contracts: the customs union, the common market, the capital union and the free movement of persons. But these “Four Freedoms” are not simply neoliberal concepts set in stone and functioning as authoritarian dogmas (Bruff 2014). Most European policies are neoliberal (for a detailed discussion see Pühringer and Griesser, 2020), but not institutions and contracts as such. They rather became regularly an object of reform, interpretation and adaptation to the diverse problems of the history of Europe. The “Four Freedoms” have no singular content. On the contrary, their content was always subject to conflicting interpretations.

For example, the studies by Seitz and Costantini demonstrate this interpretative flexibility and discursivity of economic language in the course of the ongoing institutionalisation of Europe as a field (Costantini 2017; Seikel 2016). Costantini shows how the most important institutional framework of the EU, the Stability and Growth Pact, has constantly changed since 1992. Furthermore, not only the legal framework has been reformed. Also, the ways to implement this framework in different countries and in different historical and economic circumstances, by calculating national budgets through macro-economic valuations, have constantly changed. For example, to qualify a certain measure, such as expenses for infrastructure, as a tool for “increasing competitiveness” or to disqualify it as “budgetary expenses”, results from expert interpretations by the EU administration. The meanings are not written in contracts. They result from how these contracts are interpreted, implemented and applied. In line with this view, Seikel shows how austerity measures during the crisis were implemented completely differently in different crisis-ridden countries. Similar phenomena can be observed in the crisis policy of the ECB. The statutes of the European

Central Bank do not determine social action. As an institution they rather provide actors (members of the board, staff, other experts) with discursive material open to interpretation.

*On the other hand*, economic administration means that economic language is used as a state-formation discourse tool. The European Union as an institutional field has been formed in a long historical process by translating economic language into governmentality apparatuses (Schmidt-Wellenburg 2017). As Mudge and Vauchez have demonstrated (Mudge and Vauchez 2012), language from the field of economics (and law) is used to make Europe calculable and manageable, even if (or because of) the original academic meaning of economic concepts changes in contexts of governance, finance, business and trade. Therefore, words from the economics discipline always have a metaphorical character (Maesse 2017), otherwise they would not be transferable into non-academic contexts. Generally speaking, only the metaphorical character of words makes discursive circulations possible.

In addition to such a discursive form of economic administration in Europe, many public and political discourses across diverse European cultures and societies have developed and cultivated a national illusion. While almost all social activities, especially in the power-related areas of politics (civil rights, industry, finance, budgets, trade, all kinds of regulations and standards) are today already regulated by European acts and rules, the political imaginary in almost all European political systems is still dominated by nationalism, particularly supported by the media. In fact, national parliaments and administrative bodies must solely implement and transpose European Acts, and they are well advised to coordinate their policies with other countries in those areas that are not yet regulated by the EU in order to avoid destructive competition and to make economic exchange possible. Nevertheless, this post-national situation seems to motivate nationalism, especially in those regions that have moved to the European periphery or have been more or less excluded from the Alps-Rhine centre. Thus, proximity and distance to the economic power centre seem to impact on the degree of nationalism and populism. A *national illusion in Europe* seems to be the other side of the coin of discursive economic administration. This seems to be a fifth trend that is contributing to the formation of a new geography of power in Europe.

To conclude, many aspects of political control and policy in Europe are mainly reduced to and formulated as “economic” issues, which seems to impact on the rise of national illusions. But the meaning of these “economic issues” is not economic in the narrow sense of academic and scientific expertise. The meanings of these various economic words are complex. In discourses, they can be related to political conflicts, regional identities, cultural habits and many more non-economic meanings. The next chapter will explore this discursive potential of European discourses on the basis of economic expert language.

#### 4. “Economics” as lexis and discourse tool

Social Studies of Economics has for a long time discussed and analysed the social status of economics as a device of power, legitimacy and discourse (Fitzgerald and O’Rourke 2015; Pühringer and Hirte 2015). Whereas the economics discipline conceives of economics as a “hard science”, other studies have shown that economics is used in many non-academic contexts as a tool for changing the economy and influencing social relations (Callon, Millo, and Muniesa 2007). Whereas Marxian studies (and Marx himself) accused economics of being an ideology serving the interests of the ruling classes, Social Studies of Economics has analysed a broad variety of formatting practices in which economic expert knowledge is involved (Boldyrev and Svetlova 2016; Maesse 2013; Pahl and Sparsam 2015). Thus, economics is not just a science for observing economic reality; it is also a tool for intervention. It provides a language for governance, interpretation, problem-solving and transforming social relations. As such, economics is a discourse tool.

But why is economics a proper discursive tool or “language” for Europe if it has been formed within a new geography of power? According to the analysis above, a couple of reasons seem to account for that. First, Europe is not a society, it has rather developed under EEU/EU policies and a changing division of labour within a new geography of power. Industrial and neo-industrial issues and structures mainly dominate this geography of power. “Economics” as a symbolic and linguistic system has a close familiarity to this geography. Second, since Europe is not a classical society, it has not developed a common cultural universe with a national language at the centre. Thus, Europe seems to be a non-national system, and its culture is open to a “global language”. Economics is a natural candidate for such a global language because it is one of the most globalised academic cultures (Maesse 2018b; Rossier and Bühlmann 2018). Third, Europe is not a society for different reasons. But this non-integrated character in the European field has consequences, especially with respect to the aspects of its geography elaborated above: Europe has a regulation deficit in the economy through political ascetics and reductionism on a free-trade agenda (Busch et al. 2016); there is a democratic deficit caused by the bias in the political field (Georgakakis and Rowell 2013); and there is a community deficit through the absence of a common European language. The forming and “integrating” forces of Europe that have created the geography of power often remain invisible to European people. This invisibility corresponds to an opaque system of signs that appears to outsiders like technocratic hieroglyphs: economics.

Therefore, economics is, for a couple of reasons, a proper candidate for a “language” that can be used as governmentality tool for European discourses. Since such a discursive governance tool can be used to create various meanings across decentralised but hierarchized European fields, I prefer the term “lexicisation” of Europe instead of

“integration”. While the notion of integration seems to presuppose the formation of a “society” in the classical sociological meaning of the word, the term lexicisation refers to complex discourse production and meaning making, taking place on a heterogeneous as well as unequally formed social terrain. As the previous chapter has shown, this heterogeneous social terrain of Europe is mainly formed by an economic-industrial morphology. Durkheim’s as well as Marx’s sociologies have analysed modern societies based on hidden morphological structures (division of labour, mode of production) on which a socio-cultural apparatus of meaning-making, identity production and social-role formation is based, when forming a society (in the case of Durkheim). However, in today’s European constitution, the notion of lexicisation can help us to understand much better the heterogeneous character of culture and meaning production imbricated by strong hierarchical structures and huge inequalities between the classes and the regions.

#### 5. Conclusion: the constraints of institutional contexts for social identity production

The new geography of power does not determine culture, language and meaning. It is rather the name for an institutional system that distributes resources in terms of economic wealth, income, well-paid jobs, lifestyle opportunities and individual career options unequally across geographically determined social fields. Furthermore, these institutional constellations serve as background for political and economic discourse production, as Part II of this paper project will show. To speak and participate in discourses does not take place in an open social space. This space is rather regulated, hierarchised and separated in diverse sub-categories that allow people to become visible with their identities on the imaginary and symbolic level in different and unequal ways in a specific way.

Whereas in the classical nation state the political system had a very similar function, the European field is characterised by a loose federal administrative constellation. When political institutions are weak, economic mechanisms prevail and start to take over particular functions such as regional development, industrial policy, infrastructural development and so forth. The centre(s) of the European geography have no “legal name” and they seem to be invisible, obscure and opaque to many people in Europe. In this role, the new geography of power produces particular constraints, which have a significant impact on identity production at the centre regions as well as at the (semi-) peripheral sites of such a geo-sociological constellation.

As the institutional, politico-economic analysis has shown, five main aspects of the geography of power were identified as the forming forces which set up a centre-periphery structure in Europe:

1. After the collapse of the Soviet bloc after 1990 and the integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the EU, supported by the foundation of the EU (especially the introduction of the Euro currency, the foundation of the ECB, the setup of the Schengen agreement, the common market and the customs union) and pushed forward by the financial crisis in 2009, more and more economic resources (high-tech manufacturing and industrial services) were monopolised in the Alps-Rhine region and the big European cities.
2. Through the very same mechanism, a new distribution of labour among the different regions in Europe emerged, forming a centre-structure (Alps-Rhine plus the big cities plus the harbours), a shrinking and disconnected countryside as well as a more or less heterogeneous semi-periphery. Each region is defined and characterised by a particular level of Gross Value Added (high, middle-low, low).
3. This hierarchical structure is embedded within a new system of global innovation centres between the US and Asia/China. The particular dynamics of this new global system exerts pressure to the new geography of power in Europe and it contributes to further integration processes, as the corona crisis in 2020 exemplifies.
4. In addition to that, an administrative system emerged in Europe that uses economic languages as lexical tools for the discursive coordination, negotiation and communicative exchange of the European space.
5. Finally, due to a very decentralised-federal form of governance and a high degree of cultural diversity, combined with huge economic inequalities distributed across the European regions, populist forms of nationalism emerged as bizarre forms of functional illusion.

Against this background, a centre/semi-periphery/periphery structure emerged (Arrighi 1994; Braudel 1985; Wallerstein 2011) that is providing different social, cultural and infrastructural opportunities, specific mobility constraints and diverse lifestyle options to the people who live in these regions. For example, there is a significant correlation between the GDP per capita and regional mobility per region (low to no mobility in the wealthy regions and high to very high mobility on the poor regions). In a nutshell, the geography of power does not determine any cultural form or social relation, but it provides the discursive “soil” for symbolic-imaginary identity production. Thus, from a “context-centred” discourse analytical perspective (Hamann et al. 2019), identities cannot be reduced to the words we see and listen to when people speak. Identities are not only formed on the level of sheer symbolic and imaginary visibility. Language does not represent the entire social re-

ality, there is always a rest that cannot be represented and remains invisible to the pure linguistic analysis.

What we have to consider for understanding what is happening in the formation of social relations through identity formation is the institutional context as well. This paper has shown how a particular institutional context is formed by economic means, structures and production networks that contribute to the emergence and geographically unequal distribution of specific types of occupations, life style options and career opportunities. These structural aspects, in turn, provide the basis for the unequal distribution of milieus and social class belongings within the European field.

Very roughly speaking, three different ideal types of regions (providing a certain structure of jobs, income levels and milieus) can be distinguished:

- a couple of booming regions located around the big cities and the Alps-Rhine region,
- a rather heterogeneous group of regions locked down at a lower-medium level of wealth participation,
- a shrinking and disconnected country side.

In these different regions, discourses (especially in politics) take on specific forms; the hegemonic conflicts are embedded within particular historical, national but also European constellations; the opportunities political actors have to become visible via discourses are restricted to the symbolic and material means provided by the institutional contexts of the new geography of power. Accordingly, for the discourse analyses in Part II, economics is understood as a lexical system that is functioning as a European language for complex meaning production in heterogeneous but hierarchical social spaces. Taking the case of two economic expert discourses in and on Poland as an illustrative case study (and comparing it with the economic expert discourse of the AfD in East Germany and the Brexit-economists in UK), I want to show how European social identities of “social-national rebellion”<sup>2</sup> and “neoliberal cosmopolitanism” are formed, seeking to define the position of “Polish society” within the symbolic-imaginary universe of Europe, taking place from a semi-peripheral position within the geography of power.

Here, the discourse analyses of two economic expert documents from Polish political discourse (one from the government and another from the opposition) will show how different contradictions and paradoxes emerge between the symbolic-imaginary and the institutional dimension of European discourse. Four aspects from the institutional level of the geography of power are particularly influencing the formation of nationalist identities:

- the experiences of loss, movement and motion at the intersection between the periphery and the semi-periphery,

2 The term “social-national” does not imply a national-socialist orientation of the German Nazi regime. If we want to compare the PiS party with a German party, there seem to be some similarities to the conservative Bavarian CSU under Franz-Josef Strauss.

- the low level of wealth participation,
- the experience of demographic decline,
- the spread of negative emotions.

These factors influence the formation of nationalist populism discourses and complement the lexical/linguistic level of identity production. What I want to show, in particular, is that the new nationalist-populist hegemonies in Europe can only emerge within a Europeanised field of identity production that stretches across a centre/semi-periphery/periphery hierarchy. The success story of parties such as PiS in Poland, AfD in East Germany, the Brexit in UK or Orban's project in Hungary cannot be understood only by looking at the national histories, particular cultures of these countries or "fake news" among misinformed people.

## Part II

### The formation of post-national identities by symbolic and imaginary means of economics

#### 6. Nationalist populism as "hybrid position": a short introduction to Part II

Social positions emerge when different institutional, structural, symbolic and imaginary elements come together. A social position cannot be reduced to coherent singularities such as structurally fixed positions within social hierarchies, institutional roles or discursive subject positions. Only when different elements from linguistic, socio-structural, economic and other levels come together, forming a complex socio-discursive conglomerate, social positions become relevant elements within socio-political conflicts.

This study analyses nationalist hegemonies and identity roles resulting from complex levels as hybrid positions. While Part I of this paper project analysed the emergence of a new geography of power, forming a Europeanised field of meaning production and constructing a socio-geographical space based on centre, semi-periphery and periphery logics, Part II will analyse and discuss the consequences of this geography for political identity production in contemporary Europe. In particular, the current nationalist populist movements will be analysed as resulting from a Europeanised field in regional contexts. Their emergence and their functioning cannot be understood without the economically formed contexts resulting from a hierarchical division of labour as it emerged since the 1990s.

In a first step, the main characteristics of the Europeanised discourse context will be summarised and the consequences for their impact on discursive identities will be discussed. Here, I will briefly outline the *economic*, *demographic* and *emotional* characteristics of people's life at the periphery/semi-periphery intersection. After an analysis of Polish economic expert discourse (taking the example of the national-conservative PiS party and comparing it with economic expert discourses from the East German AfD and the British Brexit movement), I will show how these contextual aspects influence discourses and contribute to the formation of nationalist-populist identities. Finally, I will show how nationalism (in economic expert discourse) emerges as "hybrid position" through the interaction of polyphonic and institutional aspects. These hybrid positions produce four different paradoxes constitutive for nationalist identity roles.

#### 7. Discourse and power in contemporary Europe: a review

The study of contemporary European phenomena from a discourse analytical point of view requires some reflections, remarks and comments on the relationship between discourse analysis as method and the specific socio-historical form of Europeanised social fields. Discourse analysis does not only study the structures of language (such as argumentation, deixis, polyphony, topoi and so forth) but the structures of language use in contexts. Yet, how can we decide what a context is? In paper Part I have argued for taking economic relations (division of labour as value chains between manufacturing and industrial services) as institutional contexts into account. Such an understanding of discourse analysis and context requires the application of different methods. Thus, when the discourses that we analyses here are qualified as "European discourses" an explanation is needed for that European dimension. In my study, the European dimension is most clearly manifested by a certain structural dimension that is called "a new geography of power". This structural dimension is not universal. It has a relatively short history and was explained in detail in Part I. Main results will be summarised here. In addition to that, "economics" is seen as specific discursive resource for the formation of European discourses. Part I has explained the role of economics for the formation of institutional relations; Part II will outline the role of economics for symbolic-imaginary relations. This polyphonic aspect will be analysed with enunciative methods. Hence, if we assume such a structural dimension influencing economised discourses (which is only one structural dimension among others such as professional fields, various institutions and organisations, different class hierarchies and milieus), we need to explain first what it means when people speak under certain structural constraints.

### 7.1. What does it mean when “people speak” from a poststructuralist perspective?

When people, groups or institutional actors start to speak and become visible to others by using texts, talk or pictures, they always get involved in complex discursive relations. While some scholars from praxeological, ethnomethodological or other (more or less “radicalised”) micro perspectives overestimate the pure authenticity of the situation of speech, orthodox structuralist approaches tend to reduce every voice in discourse to the structural position of the corresponding actors involved into structural constellations. The former mainly focus on directly observable rules and practices that make spontaneous positionings and appearances possible (different indexicalities by gestures, body moves, speech sequences and so forth); the latter, in contrast, analyse usually the structural backgrounds (class belongings, social background of family, occupations and so forth). Both orthodoxies were criticised for different reasons. Many scholars from microsociologically-influenced research have highlighted the contingency of societies through social practices that cannot be reduced to fixed social structures; structurally oriented researchers have pointed to the structural conditions of every social action.

Subsequently, poststructuralist theorists elaborated the impossibility of every social existence that is based on both radical-orthodox views. The perhaps most elaborated and strictly argued position draws on an essay by Ernesto Laclau. In “The Impossibility of Society” (Laclau 1990), Laclau argues that society cannot exist as a universe which is completely determined by a fixed structural totality. The reason is simple: if we accept the rules constituting this reality, the totality must build a relation to its constitutive other. But this other is the absence of every meaning as such. Therefore, a structuralist-orthodox totality can only exist as contradiction because their axioms can easily be deconstructed. On the other hand, the radical alternative is impossible too, because the absence of every structure would lead social reality into meaningless chaos. Here, no social relation and no meaning can be fixed anymore. For Laclau, and for many other scholars influenced by post-structuralism, the notion of the Social emerged as an alternative to both orthodoxies.

The Social was defined as gradually fixed structure open for contingency, social processes and transformations (Angermüller 2014; Howarth, Norval, and Stavrakakis 2000). Following Lacan’s and Foucault’s ideas on discourse and subject position, empirical research influenced by poststructuralist deconstructivism highlight three main aspects that make the formation of the Social possible: first, the split and discursive character of subjectivity; second, the situational as well as institutional contextuality of every discourse forming a semi-structured terrain; third, the diversity and parallel existence of forms of power.

To put my understanding of poststructuralism in a nutshell, 1) there is no discourse possible outside a structured ter-

rain; 2) there is no discourse operating without subjectivity; 3) there is no social terrain without discourse; and 4) there is no social terrain, discourse and subjectivity without various forms of power (Hamann et al. 2019; Maesse 2018a; Maesse and Hamann 2016). From this poststructuralist perspective, the empirical analysis of discourses cannot be reduced to one single level of analysis. It is not sufficient to study only text and language without analysing the contexts of discourse production. Furthermore, it is not sufficient to reduce power to the pure production of things, as some Foucauldian would have put it, without considering the restrictions induced by power structures such as hierarchies, organisations and other institutional constellations, as Marxians and Bourdieusians would argue. When people speak, poststructuralist perspectives have to consider the full socio-discursive complexity of discourse production between the cultural-linguistic and the material-institutional levels. While Part I of this paper project has analysed in detail important aspects of the material-institutional level, Part II will have a deeper look into the cultural-linguistic dynamics. In identity production, both levels come together, as the Conclusion will show.

### 7.2. The discourse-power approach (reloaded)

As outlined already in Part I and quickly summarised here, to grasp the full complexity of the interaction between cultural-linguistic dynamics and material-institutional forms of social relations, a discourse-power approach is applied. The main advantage of such a concept is that social relations will neither be reduced to pure cultural forms of interpretation and negotiation of social relations, nor to economic-material determinism. This concept rather allows us to consider both, socio-institutional contexts of meaning production as well as the polyphonic dynamics of identity formation. In order to make this methodological approach more tangible for empirically oriented discourse analytical projects, three forms of discursive power can be distinguished: performative power, symbolic power and imaginary power (Maesse 2020a) (see Part I, Chapter 2).

### 7.3. The double role of “economics” as lexical tool

Mediated by these various forms of power, “economics” plays a double (and consequently a triple) role. First of all, economics is a special form of knowledge that is produced in very specific professional fields and circulates at the intersection of academia, politics, media and the economy (Lebaron and Schmidt-Wellenburg 2019; Maesse 2015; Maesse et al. 2021). This trans-epistemic character of economics has consequences for its impact on society. As European studies have shown (and as it was outlined in Part I), economics can be seen as a metaphorical form of words and signs that are used to constitute Europe as a special social space in the last decades (Mudge and Vauchez 2012; Schmidt-Wellenburg 2017). It is a discourse tool for the construction of social realities. Performativity studies have already pointed out that economics is “an engine, not

a camera” (MacKenzie 2006), it is producing social realities taking on an economic form. My paper project is analysing this performative and constituting role of economics in two ways: it is a resource for the constriction of institutional realities, but it is also a resource for constructing symbolic-imaginary realities. The contemporary form of Europe cannot be understood without considering this special, bizarre and contra-intuitive role of economics. Economics is not simply a logical conceptual system. It is rather a lexical toolbox for the formation of post-national social relations. European identities take on an economic dimension because economics provides both, the *lexical material* for identity production as well as the *institutional contexts* of that identity production. Economics has a double function in the formation of contemporary Europe as a social space.

#### 7.4. The geography of power: characteristics of the periphery/semi-periphery and the consequences for political identity production

As Part I has analysed in detail, the transformations of the institutional context lead to the construction of three different ideal types of regions (providing a certain structure of jobs, income levels and milieus):

- first, a couple of *booming regions* located around the big cities and the Alps-Rhine region;
- second, a rather heterogeneous group of regions *locked down at a lower-medium level* of wealth participation;
- finally, a *shrinking and disconnected country side*.

Each region is not only characterised by a specific position within the hierarchy of wealth production in Europe, it can be assumed that to each region a specific combination of

social milieus is attached. While milieu studies usually take the “nation” as basic category of milieu analysis (see an example in Fig. 12), data (see in detail Part I) show very clearly that these milieus are not equally distributed among all regions of the nation/Europe. My paper argues that such national representations cannot grasp Europeanised realities, they rather tend to support (unintended) nationalist imaginaries.

Thus, when, within a specific *geographical region* (for example Munich), particular milieus (i.e. from the upper-right part of the *milieu map* in Fig. 12) become demographically dominant, a completely different socio-political and cultural atmosphere prevails compared to regions with a different socio-structural composition. This observation is simple, but it has consequences because the entire unequal distribution of milieu combinations does not simply follow the nation state logic; and it cannot be explained by the opposition between urbanity vs countryside as well. It rather takes on a European dimension, as Part I has shown. In the age of Europeanisation, as it emerged and accelerated after 1990, next to categories such as “class”, “nation”, “urbanity”, the European region emerged as a factor that is structuring the social space of contemporary Europe.

What is needed to understand national populism constructed by economic expert discourse and the formation of nationalist identities are a couple of *consequences* that follow from the fact that a region belongs to the *periphery, the semi-periphery and the intersection between both*. Classical world system theory analyses in most cases each type of region as (more or less) closed system. For our analyses of the rise of nationalist populism, the intersection between periphery and semi-periphery is particularly interesting because here, people make particular experiences

of motion, movement and loss. For example, young people from the periphery move to the semi-periphery and people from the semi-periphery migrate to the centre regions; furthermore, most semi-peripheral regions are connected to the centre regions through industrial value chains (as in the case of western Poland). Thus, on that dimension, people experience the motion of things, services and goods; in addition to that, the centre regions invest money into the semi-periphery in terms of factories, infrastructure and cultural goods. But the profits are always re-imported to the centre regions. Therefore, by focussing on the intersection between periphery and semi-periphery, the interconnectedness becomes visible and makes the emergence of experiences of loss, motion and movement possible.

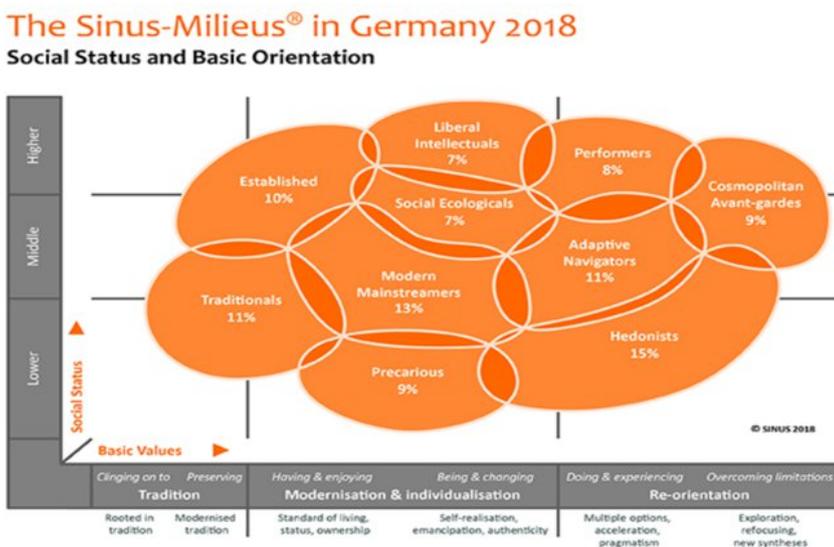


Figure 12: The milieu map of the Sinus institute, an example from Germany (<https://www.sinus-institut.de/en/sinus-solutions/sinus-milieus/>)

As statistical data show, regions of periphery and semi-periphery (and especially the intersection between both types) are characterised by three aspects: relatively low income, demographic decline, and the predominance of negative feelings.

1. For example, the income of people in Central and Eastern Europe has increased during the 1990s compared to western countries (such as Austria) from 1989 (Poland-Austria: 33 %) and 2018 (Poland-Austria: 58 %) (Dormann 2020); but if we take the *region* (instead of the *nation*) as standard of comparison, the differences are enormous and they increased. For example, the poorest NUTS-2 region in Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North-East Germany) had a per capita income of 26.700 € in 2017 and the richest region (Hamburg) had 64.700 €. Such differences result from drifts of the last 30 years, taking place in all European regions: in 2000, the 30 wealthiest regions in Europe were characterised by 143 % from EU average GDP per capita, and the 30 poorest regions had 57 %; in 2017, this difference increased to 154 % to 54 % (Pauli 2020). The peripheral regions are losing wealth compared to centre regions, and the semi-periphery is placed in between both.
2. Furthermore, people from peripheral and semi-peripheral regions migrate to the centre regions. For example, the population in Bavaria increased from 11.518.000 (1991) to 13.039.000 (2018). The poor region Mecklenburg-Vorpommern decreased from 1.907.000 to 1.609.000 in this period. The same processes of demographic decline can be observed in all peripheral regions in Europe, driven by the same mobility patterns: the people in regions of the periphery are much more mobile compared to the population at the centres (who almost never leave their region except for vacation). In addition to that, this general mobility is characterised by a very special social profile: while old, weakly qualified men stay in the countryside regions, young, well-qualified women move to the centres. This demographic dimension impacts the socio-political as well as cultural climate in decoupled regions.
3. Finally, almost all studies show that people in regions such as East Germany are more pessimistic compared to people living in the western part of Germany (independent of background and gender). A comparable atmosphere of despair and frustration can also be observed in the south of Italy and other peripheral regions. Studies from happiness-research show very clearly that wealthy classes and milieus are much more satisfied and happier with their lives compared to poor and precarious milieus (Grimm 2006). Thus, the periphery is characterised by a particular negative emotional mood.

In these diverse regions, discourses (especially in politics) take on specific forms; the hegemonic conflicts are em-

bedded within particular historical, national but also European constellations; the opportunities political actors have to become visible via discourses are restricted to the symbolic and material means provided by the institutional contexts of the new geography of power. What this paper project wants to show, in particular, is that the new nationalist-populist hegemonies in Europe can only emerge within a Europeanised field of identity production. The success story of parties such as PiS in Poland, the AfD in East Germany, the Brexiteers in Northern England or Orban's project in Hungary cannot be understood only by looking at the national histories or particular cultures of these countries.

The paper Part I has elaborated the dynamics which constitute a hierarchical order of regions. Here, some *economic*, *emotional* and *demographic* consequences of this hierarchical socio-geographical order were discussed. The next section will analyse the polyphonic modalities of economic expert discourses from peripheral and semi-peripheral regions, taking the case from the Polish national-conservative party PiS as main study. The results of the following discourse analysis will be compared with the AfD economic expert discourse from an East German county (Saxony) and the discourse of the economists for Brexit (UK). Finally, the conclusion will discuss how nationalist populism emerges as "hybrid position" through interplay of economic, emotional and demographic aspects (coming from the semi-peripheral/peripheral contexts) and polyphonic aspects.

## 8. Nationalist populism in Polish economic expert discourse during a change in government in 2015

### 8.1. *The historical context and the position of Poland within the new geography of power*

Poland experienced strong economic, cultural and societal transformations since the collapse of the socialist system in the late 1980s until 2015. Aniot (2015) analyses these complex transformations as driven by three different but interrelated forces: from below, especially by groups from the civil society; from above, typically pushed forward by the state and other official institutions; and from outside, where Poland is seen as integral part of the world system and influenced by global forces such as the EU, the IMF and other global powers. These three main drivers of social change (or "modernisation", as Aniot argues) are embedded by three different narratives that are present at all levels of language use (media, daily talk, science and expertise, party politics and so forth) and they get mixed up throughout several texts and speeches: a neoliberal narrative, a conservative narrative and a social democratic narrative. These narratives provide actors and institutions in Poland with different perceptual categories, norms and

values, interpretation frames and other forms of cognitive-linguistic materials. “However, we will stress that those currents cannot be assigned unambiguously to specific factions of public opinion, classes, political groups or ruling cabinets. The lines of ideological division within society and political life are less clear than differences between those three orientations or optics. In practice each of them has its own more or less radical varieties (779/80).” Accordingly, the ideological-political constellation of the year 2015 is deeply rooted in Polish culture and society.

In the 1990s, the neoliberal narrative was most dominant. “It expresses a technocratic and meritocratic vision of modernization, which is designed and implemented mainly from above. Among the three models identified here, the neoliberal narrative breaks away from the communist past to the greatest extent. It suggests radical and rapid, shock changes” (780) as well as a “free market euro-enthusiasm, which highlights the advantages of a liberalized, single European market” (781). In the years after 2000, the conservative narrative became more and more powerful with a critique on liberalism, modernisation and Europeanization. Finally, the social democratic narrative was always present but remained the politically weakest among the three main narratives. This might be one reason why the PiS was able to combine conservative values with a certain anti-neoliberal and anti-EU critique as well as social policies. According to Anioł, these three narratives have already influenced Polish public and political discourse while one becomes more or less dominant. Therefore, the narrative presented by the PiS and won elections in 2015 is not entirely new. Rather, the socio-economic situation of the Polish society and discursive logics of the PiS hegemony might explain the changes around 2015.

The two examples from Polish economic expert discourse that we analyse below were published between 2015 and 2016. During this period, the country experienced an intensive debate about the consequences of a neoliberal economic policy and the economic and demographic future of the country. There was a consensus among leading economic experts that the Polish economy is inclined towards a “middle-income trap” (Popławski 2016), despite the fact that the Polish GDP growth was still at a comparably high level at this time. The notion of a “middle-income trap” referred to a variety of diagnosed problems that are located on the institutional and morphological level of society and the economy. These diagnoses may appear as paradoxical, but they are typical for the semi-peripheral position of the Polish economy within the geography of power, and they potentially can support subjective feelings of being inclined in a “trap” and a “deadlock”:

- the industrial structure in Poland is at a high level of productivity, but it is only at the lower and middle levels of European value chains (and, therefore, contributes less to general wealth production);
- the population is well qualified but wages are still far below the European average;

- the inflow of capital as FDI (and the outflow as profits) is on a high level but the national capital base is low;
- the Polish economy hosts only a few R&D departments and almost all headquarters are located in Western Europe;
- finally, the population is shrinking and ageing (Oleksiuk 2017).

Thus, many actors among state officials and experts discuss more and more the question how further development might be possible in such a “middle income trap”. In addition to that, the high promises of market liberalisation and western orientation that were made, especially in the 1990s and 2000s, lost ground among the poorer parts of the population (especially at the periphery in the eastern parts of the country that cannot profit from manufacturing) and former hopes switched to frustration and despair (Albers 2016). This frustration grows not only because of the income gap between Western Europe and Poland but also because of the increasing income inequalities between the different social classes that split Polish society. Thus, Polish society experienced a special form of neoliberal transformation mostly known as “shock therapy”. This marks a difference to other forms of neoliberalism in Europe (for example the German variant of “ordoliberalism”).

In this situation, the nationalist-conservative party, PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, engl. *Law and Justice*) won the election in 2015 and formed a government. “The narrative presented today by the anti-liberal and Eurosceptical Law and Justice (PiS) government and president Andrzej Duda (former member of PiS) is not, however, purely conservative, but a hybrid one. The representation of transition, which is dominant in the official political discourse of Poland, combines the republican idea of strong sovereign state and civic devotion for the common good with the old post-romantic vision of a nation as a substantial, homogeneous entity, which unity is guaranteed by one single collective moral codex, namely, the catholic ethics” (Nowicka-Franczak, 2018, 327/28).

The first Prime Minister of the new Government was Beata Szydło. She was known as a representative of the social-conservative camp. Meanwhile Mateusz Morawiecki soon became a “super minister”, as minister for economic development and finance. In 2017 he became Prime Minister. Mateusz Morawiecki was from the beginning responsible for the new economic strategy of the PiS government. When we look at the deeper contents of the economic policies of the PiS government and the policy proposals of economic experts from the (neo)liberal opposition (that we will both analyse below), we find many commonalities:

- both promote an industrial policy that takes western countries such as Germany as role model;
- both are in a very weak position for implementing macro-economic measures since semi-peripheral

countries such as Poland have a very low taxation rate and almost no access to industrial profits;

- both share a common view on the main challenges for the Polish economy.

There is only one difference between PiS and the liberal opposition, and this is the welfare and social policy orientation of the PiS. With the PiS government, a new form of governmentality was established, including economic pragmatism, social welfare and nationalist populism. Furthermore, in 2016 Mateusz Morawiecki was not a newcomer to the Polish political and economic establishment. He was one of the most important bankers in the 1990s, he studied in the US and Germany, he was an economic advisor to former governments that managed the Polish accession to the EU. Thus, there is, on the content of economic ideas and policies, much more continuity between the PiS and former governments than is often declared.

Yet, the differences between the PiS-hegemony and the liberal hegemony can only be partially explained by economic policy (especially social policy). Rather, I will explain in the following analysis that the main differences can be seen on the “lexical” level of discourse production. I want to show in the next sub-chapters how economic lexis is used as a rhetorical device in a conflict over the symbolic-imaginary position of Polish society within a European geography of power that is characterised by huge inequalities between the regions and the peripheral/semi-peripheral position of the Polish economy. Thus, the main differences between the (old) liberal and the (new) PiS discourse appear in the way they *present the people by polyphonic logics*.

## 8.2. The empirical data

The two examples for the discourse analysis were selected from two reports. One report, the “Morawiecki Plan”, is the economic policy program presented by the new PiS government immediately after the change in government 2016. The other report, the “McKinsey Report”, is based on a discussion at Economic Weimar Triangle Conference in February 2014 among experts and politicians of the liberal government at this time (including Bronisław Komorowski, the President of the Republic of Poland between 2010 and 2015). The first report can be seen as the statement by the nationalist-conservative government and the second report represents the view by the liberal camp (that was in government for a long time after 1990 and takes responsibility for the economic policy of the last 25 years). From both reports I take the first part (“Introduction”). This part typically presents the main arguments, economic analyses and policies. And it typically introduces the general discursive perspective of a text. It is therefore easy to compare the discursive logics of both hegemonic camps when we consider comparable genres of an economic policy text.

Before we start the discourse analyses of both excerpts, it seems to be needed to reflect quickly about the main argu-

ments and policy contents of both papers. While the conflict between the conservatives and the liberals is often presented in political debates as antagonistic conflict based on huge differences in the economic programmes, a deeper look into the economic argumentation of both reports reveals that both agree in almost 90 % of all points. They share a very similar diagnosis of the “economic situation” in Poland and both agree on similar measures especially in industrial policy that should be implemented. Furthermore, the economy of Poland is based on a more or less semi-peripheral position within the geography of power in Europe: the industry depends on Foreign Direct Investments, it is more or less owned by firms from other countries, the state has a very low taxation rate (approximately 30 % of GDP while EU average is 40 % of GDP) and the capital base in Poland is rather low. Therefore, an autonomous macroeconomic policy is extremely difficult under these conditions. The only conceptual policy difference between the conservatives and the liberals is social policy. Therefore, the discursive opposition between the liberals and the conservatives is only gradually anchored in differences in terms of economic policy concepts.

## 8.3. Polyphonic logics: how speaker positions are formed

The following excerpts will be analysed as examples illustrating the diverse discursive logics of both economic expert documents. Two different parts of the reports were selected, first “economic diagnosis” and second “economic policy”. Each sub-chapter of the following discourse analysis addresses different aspects of both economic expert discourses in a comparative way. This is the reason why each sub-chapter will analyse the same excerpts but focuses on different discursive characteristics of them. Therefore, I will highlight relevant discursive markers in each sub-chapter individually.

The general idea of enunciative discourse analysis is that texts, such as the aforementioned documents, contain discursive markers that allow readers of those texts to contextualise words within different social situations, historical experiences, professional knowledge and other aspects of context (Angermüller 2014). As it is explained in detail above and in paper Part I, the notion of “context” is not restricted to the contingency of situations, it will rather be applied to wider socio-institutional contexts, political-economic fields and subjective experiences in social structures of inequality and hierarchy (Hamann et al. 2019; Krasni 2017). Here, discursive markers are devices that help individuals to interpret texts and find a social position that is formed by markers in social contexts. These markers include deixis of time (“now”), space (“here”) and person (“I”), boosters (“I like x”) and hedges (“I go on distance to x”), as well as other forms of constructing socio-imaginary positions (Fløttum 2005; Zienkowski 2017). In particular, I will analyse three different aspects creating a very specific polyphonic constellation:

- In a first step, I will show how both discourses create a “here” and “now” position. This is important in order to see how the speakers of both discourses locate their point of view in the enunciated historical time (which is, of course, a discursive construction and must not be confused to “real” time). In political discourse, historical temporality is a strategic resource for evaluating the past, criticising the government/opposition and presenting a policy programme for the future. In such deictic positionings, images of “good” and “bad”, “successful” and “failed” actors in politics are created. For this reason, historical temporality is an aspect of *imaginary power*, as it was explained above and in Part I.
- In a second step, I will analyse how both discourses speak in the name of particular authorities. Here, I use Lacan’s idea of the “big Other” which is a discursive figure that can provide actors with different forms of legitimacy. Legitimacy, authority and other forms of status are relevant strategies in political discourse to anchor justifications within the socio-symbolic universe. Political ideas are always presented in the name of somebody else, especially in democratic discourses. This is an important aspect of *symbolic power*, as it was explained above and in Part I.
- In a final step, I will ask what form of subjectivity each discourse evokes. This is important for understanding the type ethos as a modality that makes the subjectivity of politics and expertise accessible to diverse audiences. Ethos or subjectivity supports the relationship of the speaker to the symbolic authorities and it helps to make the “here” and “now” position plausible to audiences. In order to make the “statesman-like” or “establishment-related” character of the PiS nationalism more plausible, a subsequent subchapter will compare the PiS discourse logic with the AfD and Brexit discourse logics. This kind of ethos or subjectivity is an aspect of *imaginary as well as symbolic power*, as it was explained above and in Part I.

#### 8.4. Finding a place in discursive temporality

Let us start the analysis of economic expert discourse with the question of how the speaker forms a starting position for presenting his/her policy statement. This typically happens in economic expertise through the construction of a point of view in a narrated historical story. In order to show how it works in these texts, we take the “Diagnosis” parts of both discourses. In the aforementioned excerpts, I have highlighted different boosters, hedges and deictic markers.

**Moraviecki Plan** (Ministry of Economic Development, 2016, 8–9)<sup>3</sup>:

Economic Diagnosis:

“Within the last 10 years, the Polish economy has developed at a relatively fast rate, in particular when compared to the entire EU. However, due to adverse external factors and the exhaustion of simple growth reserves activated in Poland after the economic system transformation (cheap labour, external funds, including from the EU), combined with the lack of new drivers, the economic growth has slowed down in recent years. In consequence, there is a risk of permanent weakening of the economic growth rate due to negative demographic trends, low labour productivity growth rate and the lowest investment rate in the region (20.1 % in 2015). Exhaustion of the existing growth and competitiveness drivers means the risk of falling into 5 development traps: (1) middle income trap, (2) lack of balance trap, (3) average product trap, (4) demographic trap, (5) weak institutions trap.”

What we find in the Moraviecki discourse are many hedges which signal a negative distance of the speaker to the “current economic situation in Poland”, such as “lack”, “slowed down”, “risk”, “exhaustion” or “trap”. As we can see in the example above, the text is littered with negative evaluations and this creates a standpoint for the speaker at the point in time “now” ( $t_0$ ) that opens up necessity for the future ( $t_1$ ) where everything “must change” and “become better” in relation to the past ( $t_{-1}$ ). This positioning strategy evokes a “break with the past”. The discourse creates a position for the speaker to “look back to the past” in order to “overcome what happened”; and this creates a position to look into a “bright future”.

When we look at the McKinsey discourse, we find a slightly different positioning practice.

**McKinsey Strategy** (McKinsey & Company, 2015, 2–3)<sup>4</sup>:

Economic Diagnosis:

“Poland’s growth has been based primarily on dynamic exports, strong internal demand, productivity improvements, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the inflow of EU funds. This growth was supported by the buoyant demographics of the 1980s baby boom, as well as a stable banking system. Now, however, the environment has changed. Some of the fundamentals, including the volume of FDI, annual productivity and export growth, are slowing, while others, such as the flow of EU funds, will likely narrow after 2020.”

Here, the present ( $t_0$ ) is created, as a discursive standpoint, by relatively slow motion from the “past to the future”, evoked by less drastic hedges such as “has changed” or

3 Cf. <https://www.gov.pl%2Fattachment%2F24a9d313-dfcf-4ec2-8be1-2dc64cf475b1&usg=AOvVaw0aQ-Ys7iFLjnLojy9glvZS>.

4 Cf. [https://www.mckinsey.com/~/\\_/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/economic%20studies%20temp/our%20insights/how%20poland%20can%20become%20a%20european%20growth%20engine/poland%202025\\_full\\_report.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~/_/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/economic%20studies%20temp/our%20insights/how%20poland%20can%20become%20a%20european%20growth%20engine/poland%202025_full_report.ashx)

“slowing”. This positioning strategy gives the reader of this discourse the opportunity to maintain the connection between “the past”, “the present” and “the future”.

Thus, in the Moraviecki Plan, which represents the PiS-discourse, the subject takes a position in  $t_0$  by drawing a more or less “drastic line” between the past and present, keeping the past “on distance”.  $T_0$  is constructed by a discursive “caesura”. In contrast, in the McKinsey discourse the subject takes a position in  $t_0$  by “building a bridge” between the past and present, keeping the past “in line” with the present and future. While both discourses agree on many *conceptual aspects* in the economic diagnosis, on the level of discursive strategies many differences appear, and the historical timeline is constructed as “break with the past” vs “bridging the past”.

### 8.5. Invocation of the (big) Other: speaking in the name of conflicting authorities

Markers such as deixis of time and boosters/hedges construct symbolic-imaginary speaker positions in discourses. These positions help real social actors (who read and discuss economic expertise), such as Polish politicians, international journalists, economic experts from the European Commission, the Central Bank or other European governments as well as other professionals involved in the European and Polish political economy, to identify their own opinions and positions in discourse. The very same markers also help to perceive the other in the discourse in a specific way. Thus, discourse positions are not abstract; they are real because they influence the perception of economic policies, problem definitions and, finally, the opinions of voters. Against this background, it matters whether or not the “economic past” and the “present situation” is conceived as a “problem” that needs a “reaction” (and therefore a new government with a “new economic plan”) or not. It makes a certain “diagnosis” as well as a proclaimed “need for change” more or less plausible in the eyes of people sharing particular experiences in terms of demographic decline, wealth participation and emotions.

Whereas the speakers in both discourses use different markers and apply different positioning strategies in their communicative practice, discursive subject positions are much more complex. They are furthermore constituted by certain imaginary figures that Lacan used to call “the big Other”. The notion of the big Other refers to two different but interrelated aspects of discourse: on the one hand, it means the symbolic order in which the subject of discourse occupies a position (for example, a “teacher-subject” in the symbolic order of the school system); on the other hand, the concept of the big Other deals with questions of legitimacy, belonging as well as norms and values. Accordingly, the symbolic order cannot exist for itself, based only on a system of differences and interrelations between its components and stabilising itself through equilibrium. Rather, the symbolic order always contains a place where an authority guarantees the legitimacy of the symbolic uni-

verse. This authority is a purely negative and opaque figure, and it can only exist when discourses appeal to this figure (and filling the symbolic universe with concrete meaning in concrete discourses).

In the following excerpts, I have highlighted a few candidates that might work as figures that legitimate a political discourse:

**Moraviecki Plan** (Ministry of Economic Development, 2016, 8–9):

Economic Policy:

“The Strategy specifies the strategic vision, principles, targets and priorities of the country’s development in economic, social and spatial terms for 2020 and 2030. The responsible development concept defined therein means that the economic growth should rely on stable foundations, such as entrepreneurship, hard work, resources and skills of Poles. Stable, innovation-based foundations of a competitive and sustainable economy constitute a capital to be used by future generations. The main objective of the Responsible Development Strategy (RDS) is to create conditions for the growth of income of the Polish population with an increase in the social, economic and territorial cohesion. Three specific objectives have also been defined. They are as follows:

Specific objective I – Sustainable economic growth based on existing and new advantages,

Specific objective II – Socially and territorially sustainable development,

Specific objective III – Efficient state and economic institutions supporting growth and social and economic inclusion”

When we look at the Moraviecki discourse, we very often find an appeal to “skills of Poles”, “future generations”, “Polish population” as a form of “the people” in different variations, as highlighted in the “Policy” part above. In this discourse, economic measures and problem definitions are done in the name of “the Poles”. “The Poles” functions as an authority that gives the speaker the right to raise particular demands. Everything that is done by the policy and said by the author is in favour of “the Poles” and their “territorial sustainability” and “social inclusion”.

This is in obvious contrast to the McKinsey discourse. Here, again, particular candidates for such a legitimation figure are highlighted:

**McKinsey Strategy** (McKinsey & Company, 2015, 2–3)

Economic Policy:

“The analyses conducted for this report suggest that today, 25 years from the beginning of the transformation, Poland has the opportunity to make a strategic choice to determine its growth path for the next decade. Two scenarios stand out. Poland can opt to stay the course, remaining a regionally focused middle-income economy. Alternatively, it can seek to accelerate the pace, catch up to the advanced economies, and become a globally competitive growth

engine of Europe competing successfully on a global market.”

The McKinsey discourse invokes completely different figures that operate in the discourse, like value- and legitimacy-producing elements. Here, we find an appeal to the “global market” and “advanced economies” which are in opposition to a “regionally focused middle-income economy”. This discourse appeals to the Other, the neoliberal globalisation, consisting of “winners” and “losers”, “competition” and “success”. Here, the “regions” in Poland appear implicitly as “subordinated” and “backward” whereas the global authorities are the place of legitimacy. They serve as role models for the subordinated discourse entities. The Polish society is subdivided into “winners” and “losers”, while only the globally oriented milieu is offered the chance to catch up with the globalisation leaders. In contrast, the PiS-discourse seeks to put exactly these subordinated entities back to the centre of discursive legitimacy at the expense of everybody who does not fit into the category of “Poles/People”. Here we find an “anti-globalisation” element of the PiS-discourse.

And again, these conflicting authorities as “the Poles” vs “the advanced economies [...] on a global market” open up a space for interpretation against the background of collective experiences at the interface of the periphery/semi-periphery. Those economic expert discourses can successfully hegemonize a discourse position which can convince people with certain experiences.

To conclude, what we find here are two discourses that speak in the name of different symbolic universes producing different figures that refer to legitimacy and values and are able to provide discourse participants with meanings and norms that an economy should deal with. When we take into consideration the different modalities of how speakers deal with the past, the present and the future, we find that the PiS discourse is breaking with the past and the McKinsey discourse is seeking to continue the past into the future. Two different hegemonic projects develop from these discourse strategies: on the one hand a “social-national rebellion” and on the other a “neoliberal cosmopolitanism”.

#### 8.6. *The discursive ethos of European subjectivities: “social-national rebellion” vs. “neoliberal cosmopolitanism”*

And we can easily extend this analysis with respect to what Maingueneau has called “discursive ethos” or “subjectivity” (Maingueneau 1999). Whereas the McKinsey discourse is mainly characterised by a rhetoric of “excellence”, “competition” and “success”, the PiS discourse creates attitudes of “localism”, “pragmatism”, “social responsibility”,

“the people” and so forth. Thus, in the PiS-discourse, subjectivity and ethos are formed by a more “moderate”, “undramatic” and “pragmatic-popular” attitude, and in the McKinsey-discourse subjectivity and ethos are formed by rhetoric of “superiority”, “competition” and “excellence”. This ethos-dimension complements the discursive logic of both hegemonies, as Figure 13 illustrates.

<i>Hegemony</i>	<b>Neoliberal cosmopolitanism</b>	<b>Social-national rebellion</b>
<i>Deictic temporality</i>	Bridging the past	Breaking with the past
<i>The Other</i>	Global meritocracy	The national people as social and local beings
<i>Ethos/subjectivity</i>	Superiority and success	Pragmatic-popular and moderate

Figure 13: Neoliberal cosmopolitans and social-national rebellion

In addition to that, the ethos-dimension seems to be important because it provides the reader with a certain sense of milieu belonging. A rhetoric of excellence and global competition is much more compatible to the life style of people within urban-liberal milieus, well paid jobs, leading professional positions, optimistic world views, few experiences of loss and positive migration experiences. In shrinking regions at the interface of periphery/semi-periphery, such a rhetoric appears very often as “remote”, “aloof” and “arrogant”. This contextuality might be one reason why the liberal forces lost ground in many European regions which were more and more disconnected from the centres.

On the other hand, the PiS discourse obviously managed to adopt to the daily experiences of people in shrinking regions that were connected to the centres of economic production as manufacturing supplier. This is the case for western parts of Poland and Hungary, some parts of east Germany and the big cities of northern England. Whereas the hinterland of these regions (eastern parts of Hungary, east Germany, Poland; countryside in northern England and Wales) tends to be more and more to the periphery, the western parts of Hungary, Poland and east Germany are clearly part of the semi-periphery. People living in these regions make ambivalent experiences of loss/disconnection *and* gradual participation (through the middle-income position *and* relatively high wages compared to the population at the periphery), demographic shrinking *and* gradual restoration (through an increase of birth-rates in the semi-periphery and inflow of people from the periphery) as well as despair *and* local hope (through the structural connection to the centres, a consolidation of a petty bourgeois life style and the possibility for their children to move into the centres after High School).

Against this background, the moderate style of the PiS discourse, combined with the populist nativism and the antagonistic distance to the past makes up a discursive mixture that can mobilise the people from the countryside and demobilise the urban liberal milieus simultaneously.

On the other hand, the liberal hegemony seems to be unable to respond to certain tendencies of contexts at the interface between periphery/semi-periphery. The PiS discourse is nationalist or nativist populism since the speaker speaks in the name of the people as “Poles”, but at the same time the discourse appears serious, socially responsible *and* antagonistic. This is supported by people such as Morawiecki which come from the Polish establishment but appear as newcomer simultaneously. In order to see this “establishment” aspect in the PiS discourse (in contrast to and complementing the “antagonistic” and “populist” aspect), a short look into other nationalist discourses may shed light on that.

### 8.7. “Establishment-oriented nationalist populism”, “antagonistic nationalist populism”, “psychotic nationalist populism”: a comparative discourse analysis

The regions in UK and Germany where nationalist populist parties became successful in elections and referendums in the same period (around 2015) are characterised by very similar (yet not identical) socio-economic contexts. East Germany as well as the north of England are both areas with significant demographic decline, a decrease of wealth participation (well paid jobs disappeared to the centre region), a proliferation of negative emotions, and they are both located at the interface of periphery/semi-periphery with connections to centre region (London in case of UK and south-west Germany in case of east Germany).

Yet, the main differences between the PiS discourse and the Brexit/AfD discourses can be found on the policy as well as on the polyphonic level, as the following brief analysis will show. Let’s start with the AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*, engl. *Alternative for Germany*). The AfD is a right-wing party that emerged as an anti-EU and anti-migration party during the financial crisis and became relatively strong during the so called “refugee crisis” in 2015. Today, the AfD entered in almost all German parliaments. Whereas the AfD received approximately 10 % to 12 % in west German regions, they doubled their seats in the poorer east German regions up to approximately 25 %. Here is a clear positive correlation between wealth participation and voting behaviour.

The following excerpt was part of the election campaign of the AfD Saxony at the county elections in 2019. At this time, the AfD was about to become the strongest party. Finally, the Christian Democratic Party became again the party with most seats (32,1 %) and formed a government together with the Social Democrats (7,7 %) and the Green party (8,6 %). What makes this discourse excerpt interesting for our analysis is that the AfD in Saxony cannot just be reduced to a chaotic radical opposition. They became the second strongest party (27,5 %) and they demanded a position within the government. But all parties rejected this claim in advance.

A quick look at the AfD economic expert discourse shows already some significant differences compared to the PiS discourse. Whereas the PiS economic expert discourse was characterised by a social democratic tendency (increasing taxes and introducing welfare programmes) and a pro-EU orientation, the AfD economic discourse has a very typical liberal-conservative tendency (reducing taxes, “supporting SME”, restrictive monetary policy) with a clear nationalist and anti-EU orientation. The following excerpt is a part of the economic programme:

“Die für die EU-Finanzierung ausgegebenen Mittel müssen von den insgesamt eingenommenen Steuern finanziert werden. Von der EU verwaltete Fördertöpfe verschlingen Unsummen an Verwaltungskosten und widersprechen dem Subsidiaritätsprinzip. **Sächsische Kommunen leiden** wie viele andere in Deutschland an einer dramatisch schlechten Finanzausstattung und hohen Schulden. Wir wollen, dass Gelder für **regionale Förderung regional, mindestens aber national** verwaltet werden. Verwaltungskosten sind dafür **nicht** auf die EU-Ebene auszulagern.” (AfD 2019)

*Own translation: “The money spent on EU funding must be financed from the total amount of taxes collected. Funding pots administered by the EU devour huge sums of administrative costs and contradict the principle of subsidiarity. Like many others in Germany, **Saxon municipalities suffer** from dramatically poor financial resources and high debts. We want funds for **regional funding to be administered regionally, or at least nationally**. Administrative costs are **not** to be outsourced to the EU level.”*

The entire programme is full of nationalist and nativist marker that positions the “people of Saxony” against the EU. I have marked these words in **bold** and they are spread all over the economic chapter. In addition to that, the programme contains polemical marker and anti-EU demands that would finally lead to a suspension of the entire European Union. I have marked these formulations underlined. Both, the polemical as well as the nationalist/nativist marker create an antagonistic relationship between the (national/regional/native) people and the EU.

A very similar but not identical strategy can be found in the Brexiteer economic expert discourse. Both, the AfD and the Brexiteer discourses share a conservative-liberal orientation. But the anti-EU attitude in the Brexiteer discourse seems to be much more drastic, as the excerpt below illustrates.

“Economists for Brexit is a group of independent professional economists who – like many people – are convinced of the **strong political case for leaving the EU** on the grounds of regaining democratic control of economic and other policies by the British people. However, as economists, our professional focus here is only on the economics of the Brexit decision – a subject we believe has been served poorly in the debate so far. In fact, democratic control of economic decisions is as important an economic as it is a political argument. Democratic governments can be ejected and

learn when the people reject their policies, whereas the EU 'government' cannot be ejected, and is unresponsive to its failures and to criticism from the public – most of all UK public opinion. It has made many mistakes in economic policy, whether in launching the ill-fated euro, in dealing with the eurozone crisis, responding to migration, regulating businesses, or in choosing its overall socio-economic priorities; and it shows little, if any, sign of self-correction" (Economists for Brexit 2015, page 2).

This excerpt is the second part of the Introduction to a volume with nine small contributions by different economists who joined the initiative "Economists for Brexit" in 2015. The anti-EU polemics, critiques and many other forms of distancing are spread all over the entire document. For illustrative reasons, I have marked these distancing-markers **bold** in the illustration above. What I find interesting here is the fact that this little piece of the "Introduction" contains in almost every sentence a distancing to the EU. In addition to that, a lot of polemical oppositions are created that I have underlined. Here, a nationalist version of "the people" is put in opposition to an "undemocratic EU-government".

Compared to the AfD discourse, the Brexit discourse creates a very similar polemical antagonism between a nationalist concept of "the people" (Saxony/German, British people) and the EU. Both discourses share the antagonistic character; but the Brexit discourse obviously has a much more "psychotic" dimension that seems to be a kind of "discourse-paranoia". This impression is supported by the endless enumeration of the EU. Here, the EU is presented as the other of a discourse in the form of "big evil". Whereas the AfD discourse is much more characterised by provocations and low-level polemics against the EU, the Brexit discourse seeks all types of more or less drastic distancing to EU. This "dramatic" aspect is best expressed by characterisations such as "undemocratic", "mistakes", "ill-fated", "failures" and many other forms of hedges which keep the EU on biggest distance possible.

To conclude, whereas the PIS economic discourse was much more diverse because of a more complex positioning (moderate, populist, antagonistic), the AfD and the Brexiteer discourses are characterised by an antagonistic-polemical and an antagonistic-psychotic strategy. For this reason, I suggest to differentiate between various nationalist populist discourses. The PIS-discourse is much more "establishment-oriented" or "statesmen-like"; the AfD discourse can be characterised as "antagonistic nationalist populism" and the Brexiteer discourse seems to be an "psychotic nationalist populism".

## 9. Conclusion: nationalism as hybrid position and the paradoxes of identity production

In scientific debates and public perceptions nationalist populism is often reduced to a single *explanandum*. This

single *explanandum* can be very different: it can be the single reason explaining why a phenomenon exist, it can be a solution for problem that is expressed by the phenomenon or it can be a rationalisation of something that seems to be irrational to some people. In some cases, national populism is seen as related to the national order existing outside Europeanised fields. In that case, this national order explains the very existence of national populism because people are deeply involved in their national institutions and a critical majority is losing confidence in (weak and new) international institutions (Krajev and Holmes 2019). Other explanations highlight the economic situation or the cultural history of a region that might be responsible for the rise of national populism. In this explanation, nationalism was already there waiting for a political leader who is able to mobilise it (Aniol 2015). Another group of explanations focus on the nation-state as politico-economic alternative to Europeanised divisions of labour and a more democratic and socially responsible form of political regulation of capitalism. Here, the (alternative) political rationality is seen as *explanandum* because the international institutions are unable to solve real existing problems. These rationality oriented explanations sometimes plea for a "back-to-the-nation state" policy (Streeck 2014).

In contrast to explanations focusing on one single factor, I argue for an approach that takes the "hybridity" of every discourse position into account. A "hybrid-positions approach" shows that one single phenomenon (national populism) does not exist as one single position, it is rather the product of what Blommaert has in a different context defined "superdiversity" (Blommaert):

"This is superdiversity. It is driven by three keywords: mobility, complexity and unpredictability. The latter is of course a knowledge issue, which pushes us to a perpetual revision and update of what we know about societies. This, I believe, is the paradigmatic impact of superdiversity: it questions the foundations of our knowledge and assumptions about societies, how they operate and function at all levels, from the lowest level of human face-to-face communication all the way up to the highest levels of structure in the world system. Interestingly, language appears to take a privileged place in defining this paradigmatic impact; the reasons for that will be specified below, and the privileged position of language as a tool for detecting features of superdiversity is the reason why I write this book" (Blommaert 2012: 10).

Even if I do not share the particular definition of superdiversity presented by Blommaert here (because it is related to a different historical context), I nevertheless take the idea that identities (or knowledge about oneself and others) are built on or "operate and function at all levels, from the lowest level of human face-to-face communication all the way up to the highest levels of structure in the world system". Accordingly, national identities or national-populist hegemonies emerge out of the interplay of different aspects and levels, some of them are linguistically present but others are part of the contexts that are not reflected by

the texts. Thus, what I want to show here and in Part I is that underneath the positions created by polyphony of economic expert texts, three types of dimensions complete the “superdiversity” of contemporary national populism(s) in Europe and form hybridity. These dimensions can only emerge at the intersection between periphery and semi-periphery as well as the connection of the semi-periphery to the European capitalist centres:

- *The “wealth”-dimension:* Nationalist populism(s) are not (directly) related to the institutional order of the nation state. They emerge out of specific geographical region(s) and milieus (east Polish and east German country site, post-industrial areas of despair and social deprivation in UK) within a system of global distribution of labour at the intersection between periphery and semi-periphery. While the semi-periphery is still somehow connected to the centres (especially through industrial suppliers at the lower and medium levels within the value chain), today, the periphery is decoupled from wealth production and lost in despair. In a first step, the economic structures disappeared, subsequently the high qualified people left the region, and finally the remaining structures of wealth production collapsed. In these processes, a vicious cycle moved all resources first to the semi-periphery and then to the centre regions, while the semi-periphery becomes re-connected to the centres afterwards.
- *The “emotional”-dimension:* Nationalist populism(s) cannot be explained by a national cultural history and “institutions” in a Weberian sense; they rather mobilise particular cultural forms and artefacts (religions, nativisms, nationalisms, sports, pride etc.) out of a diversity of cultural histories. They are attached to an emotional economy that emerges out of declassification experiences typical for a peripheral/ semi-peripheral belonging within the geography of power. In every society, many cultural patterns, narratives and institutions exist. But they exist as inconsistent pieces and fragments and they do not form a coherent system. It is the power of nationalist populism to form an imaginary coherence out of cultural shambles that can only exist on the emotional level. In such a hegemonic amalgam, rationality and reasonable arguments do not count anymore.
- *The “demography”-dimension:* Nationalist populism does not serve or function as a rational alternative to globalisation and Europeanisation; it rather functions as emotional compensation for broken promises, lost hopes and experiences of disrespect. When people lose their future(s), which is in most cases reflected by demographic downsizing, and when they cannot

leave the region as well, then they very often tend to fall back to certain patterns of the past. In that case, the “nation” and ideas of “homeland” become natural candidates for such an emotional stabilisation strategy. We can observe such historical romanticism in different regions. Whereas some of them create touristic landscapes out of it, others slide into nationalist ideologies. Here, the “loss of the future” is compensated by a “loss of reality”.

The formation of the geography of power as well as the specific relationship to a particular place within this order explains for all of these three dimensions, but they remain invisible in the texts of populists.

A nationalist hegemony emerges when the polyphonic and the contextual elements come together, as Figure 14 illustrates. Here, the notion of hybridity seeks to grasp the multi-dimensional character of nationalist populism. And the particular composition of this hybridity explains for the establishment orientation of the PiS hegemony.

<b><i>Impact by the geography of power on nationalist populism position</i></b>	<b><i>Impact by economic expert discourse on nationalist populism position</i></b>
Wealth	Bridging the past
Emotions	Social-national rebellion
Demography	Moderation

Figure 14: Six elements forming the hybrid position of PiS nationalist populism

The rhetoric of national populism(s) makes some of these dimensions invisible by mobilising illusions, dreams and new promises that incline people. Nationalist communication strategies give a situation a name that is, in a rational way, politically irresponsible. For this reason, nationalist populism tends to “fake news” since these discourses do not talk about possibilities, they rather deal with the radical experience of impossibilities. Taking a specific symbolic-imaginary position in economic expert discourse implies several parallel positionings. But these positionings are not made explicit and visible by the text, they rather emerge out of invisibility when we consider the logic of the geography of power and read the results of the discourse analysis through the lenses of our analyses of the geography of power. Against this backdrop, let’s summarise some paradoxes as final conclusions:

- *Institutional paradox:* contemporary nationalist hegemonies are not primarily related to the institutions of a nation state; their discourses emerge out a *Europeanised field of discourse and power*. This can also be seen as “performative contradiction” (where the uttered content of a statement contradicts the conditions of enunciation).
- *Rationality paradox:* nationalist movements do not offer an alternative order to globalisation and Europeanisation; they function rather as *emotional com-*

*perspective* for diverse de-classification and loss experiences. In this respect, the “performative contradiction” is located between the explicitly offered solution (providing a national order as solution for globalisation problems) and the hidden but de facto solution (providing emotional settlement).

- *Intentionality paradox*: this can in some cases (as in Poland, Hungary and maybe in east Germany) *support European integration processes* (instead of separatism and disintegration) by giving an angry crowd a symbolic place within an existing socio-economic discourse order. Here, the “performative contradiction” operates between the promise (destroying Europe) and real actions (supporting Europeanisation).

- *Logics paradox*: all of these paradoxes of nationalist identity formation are only possible because the discursive power of nationalism is located *at the polyphonic level* (and not at the logical-conceptual level) of speech and language. While many political and academic observers analyse nationalism on the level of political ideas and reform programmes, thereby seeking to rationalise this phenomenon and placing it on the right of the political spectrum, my analysis argues for focussing on the form of the discourse, and not (only) on the content. This makes a difference, because the form is the place where we find significant characteristics of a type of nationalism that is deeply rooted within the political establishment of a typical European country.

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