

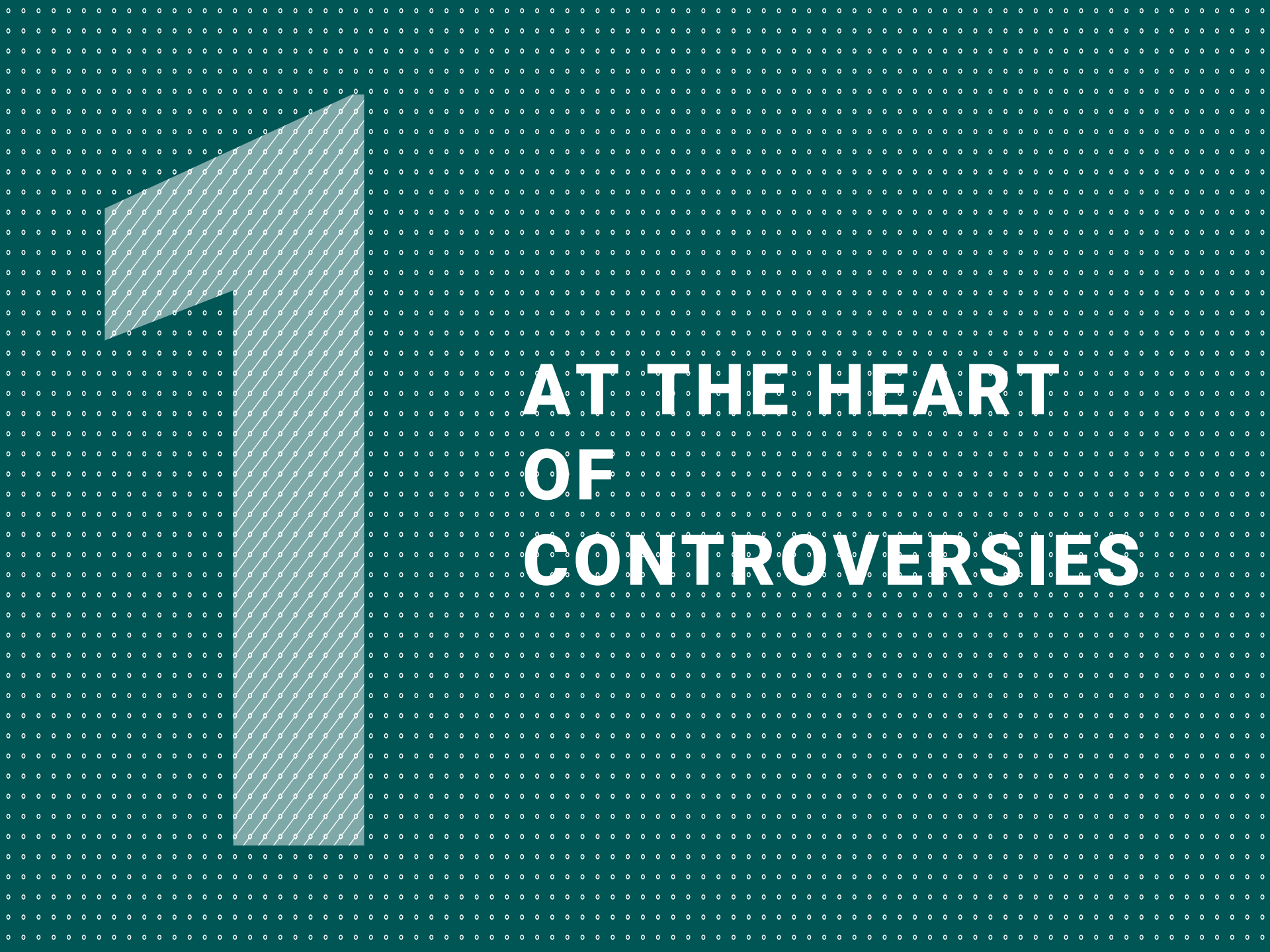
A large, diverse crowd of people of various ages, ethnicities, and clothing is arranged to form the geographical shape of the European continent. The people are densely packed within the landmass and more sparsely distributed in the surrounding white space. The image is taken from a high angle, showing the tops of the people's heads and their shadows on the white ground.

Meaning and Promise of European Society



AGENDA

- 1. At the heart of contemporary controversies ‘**
- 2. On the meaning of European society**
- 3. On the promise of European society**
- 4. Calibrating the consequences**



AT THE HEART OF CONTROVERSIES



On 19 November 2024
The Commission pleaded before the full Court
In case C- 769/22 on Hungary's anti-LGBTIQ* law
With the support of 16 Member States as well as
the European Parliament



***"This is a frontal and deep attack against the
... European society."***



Klára Talabér-Ritz
Legal Advisor, Commission

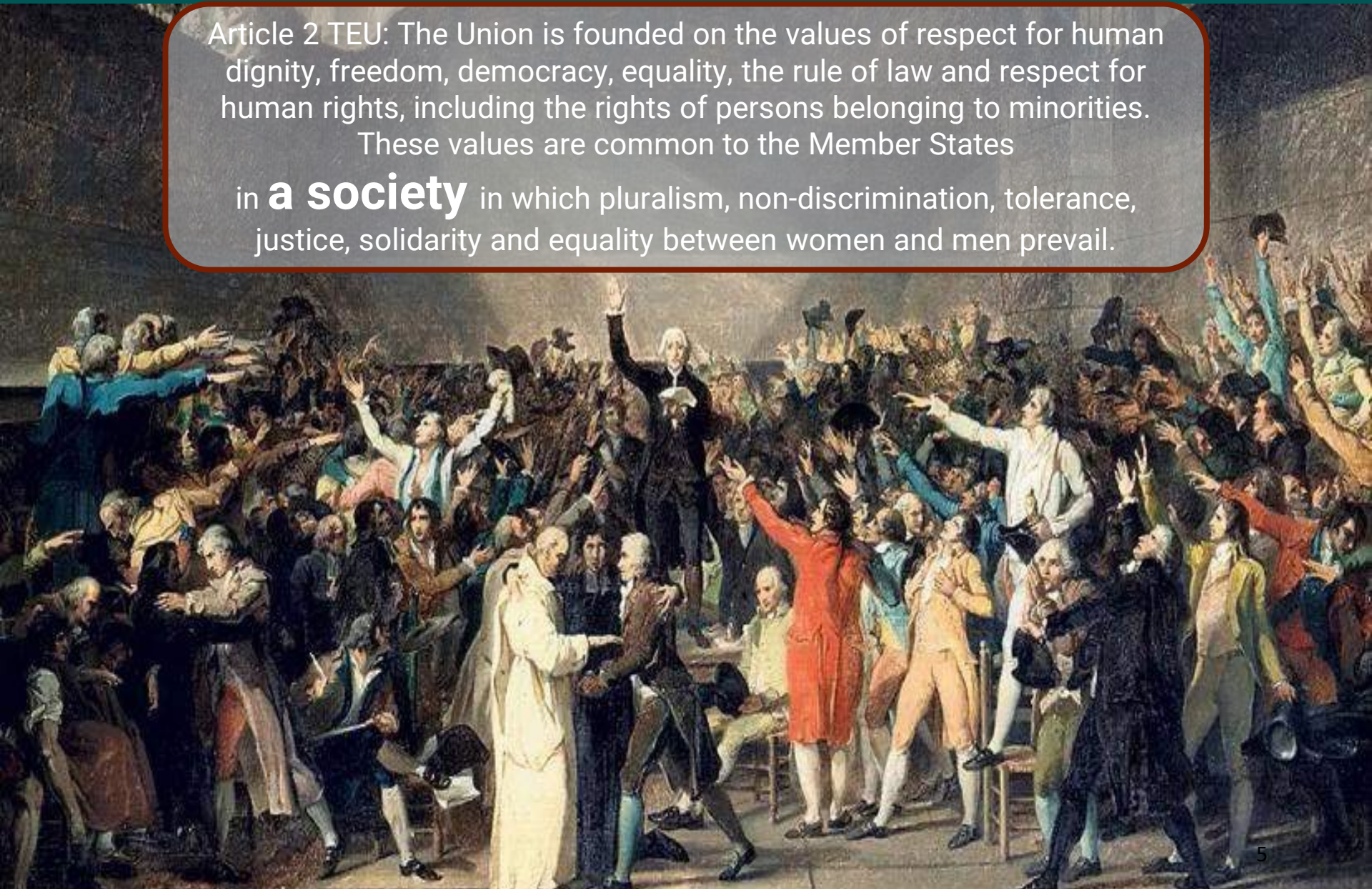




Article 2 TEU: The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

These values are common to the Member States

in **a society** in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.





MEANING OF SOCIETY



INTERPRETING ARTICLE 2 TEU

- **‘Society’ means ‘European society’**
- **European society is EU-centered**
- **‘Society’ occurs whenever individuals engage or are interdependent within a stabilizing framework**
- **European society goes along with national societies**
- **‘Society’ encompasses public institutions**
- **‘Society’ means the ‘social totality’**
- **Constitutional principles are key to European society**



OPINION OF ADVOCATE GENERAL ČAPETA, 5 June 2025, Case C-769/22

155. Article 2 TEU expresses *the choice* of the founders of the European Union as to the type of society that the Member States have pledged to create together within the framework of the European Union.

156. One can imagine different societies: autocracies not based on the separation of powers; societies in which the elected majority is not limited by the requirement to respect human rights; societies which are ruled by men, and not by law; societies that do not treat minorities equally and reserve human dignity only for the majority; or societies that do not recognise that women are equal to men. Such societies do indeed exist, and are emerging, throughout the world.



The role of Article 2 TEU continued

157. The vision of what *a good society* is in the EU constitution is different. That vision is expressed in Article 2 TEU. The values enumerated in that provision: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, read together, paint a picture of *a constitutional democracy that respects human rights*.

158. That choice represents the *very identity* of the European Union. Without those values, the European Union would cease to be the Union as envisaged by the Treaties.

Series Editor
Alberto Martinelli

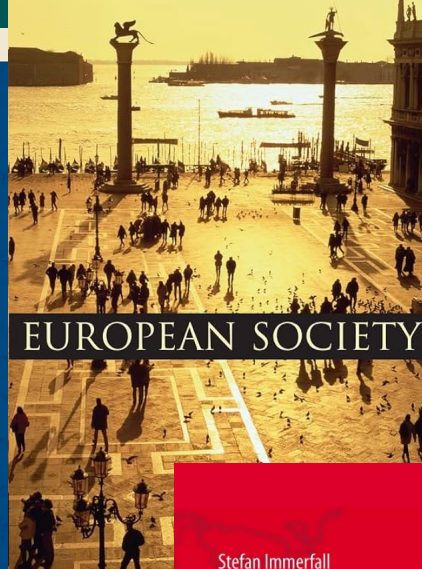


Narrating European Society



*Toward a
Sociology of
European
Integration*

WILLIAM OUTHWAITE



EUROPEAN SOCIETY

Stefan Immerfall
Göran Therborn
Editors

Wilfried Loth (Hrsg.)
Europäische
Gesellschaft
Grundlagen und
Perspektiven

[illegible]

VS VERLAG FÜR SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

STUDIENKURS SOZIOLOGIE

Europasozio­logie

Richard Münch
DIE KONSTRUKTION
DER EUROPÄISCHEN
GESELLSCHAFT

Richard Münch

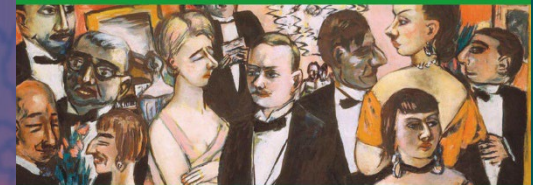
Zur Dialektik
von transnationaler
Integration und
nationaler
Desintegration

Handbook of European Societies

Social Transformations in the 21st Century

 Springer

Hartmut Kaelble



Eine europäische Gesellschaft?

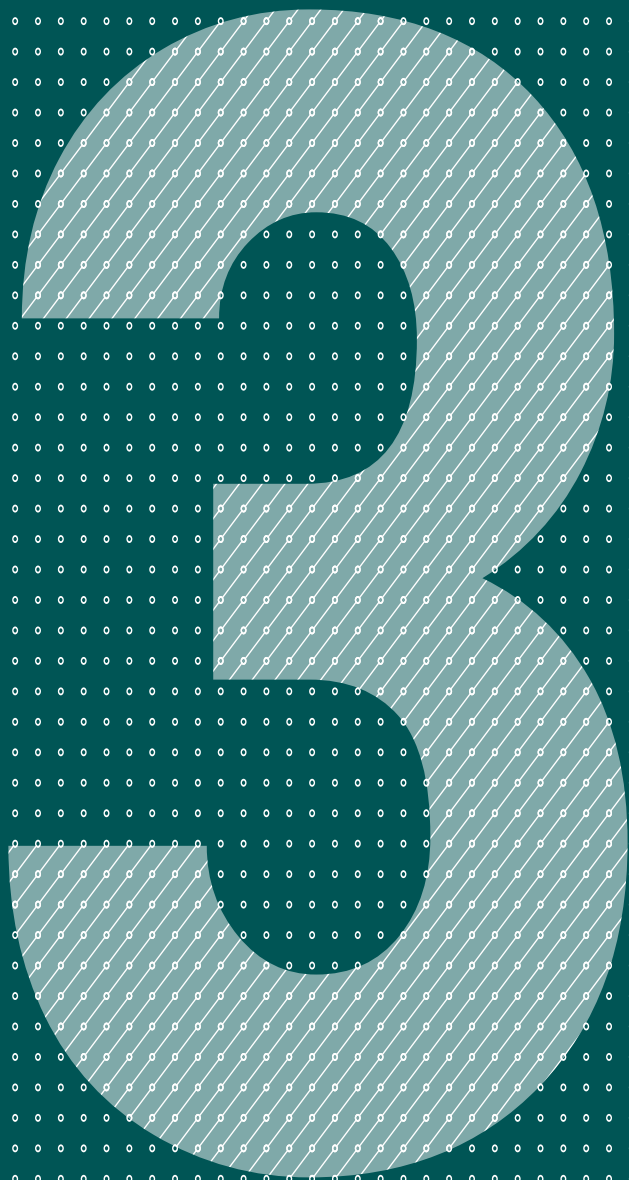
Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte Europas
vom 19. bis ins 21. Jahrhundert



INTERDISCIPLINARY BORROWINGS

- **A process oriented understanding (Simmel)**
- **Integration and Europeanization (Haas)**
- **From quantitative to qualitative change (Luhmann)**
- **Social integration (Boerner)**
- **The role of values (Joas, Simmel)**
- **The many fields of European society (Bourdieu)**
- **Identity (Kaina)**

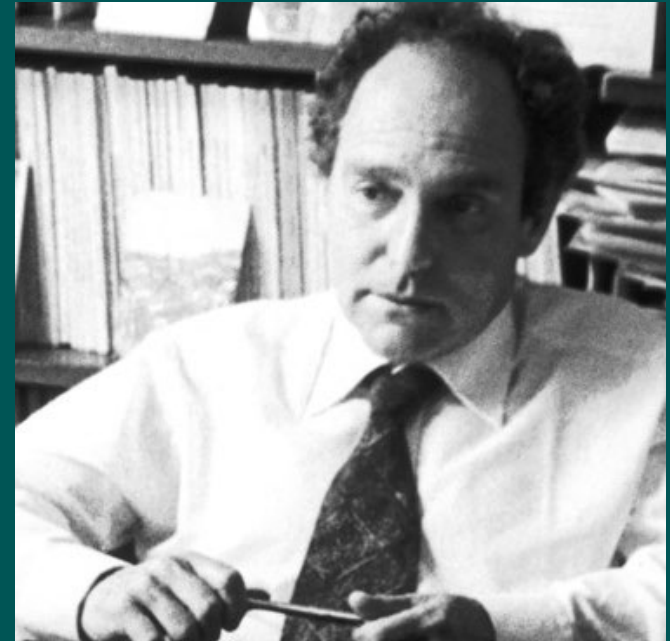
Conclusion: European society is a meaningful concept



PROMISE OF EUROPEAN SOCIETY



'I am ever more convinced that theoretical work accomplishes more in the world than practical work. Once the realm of ideas (Vorstellungen) is revolutionized, reality (Wirklichkeit) will not hold out.'



'At the base of the modern social order stands not the executioner but the professor'.



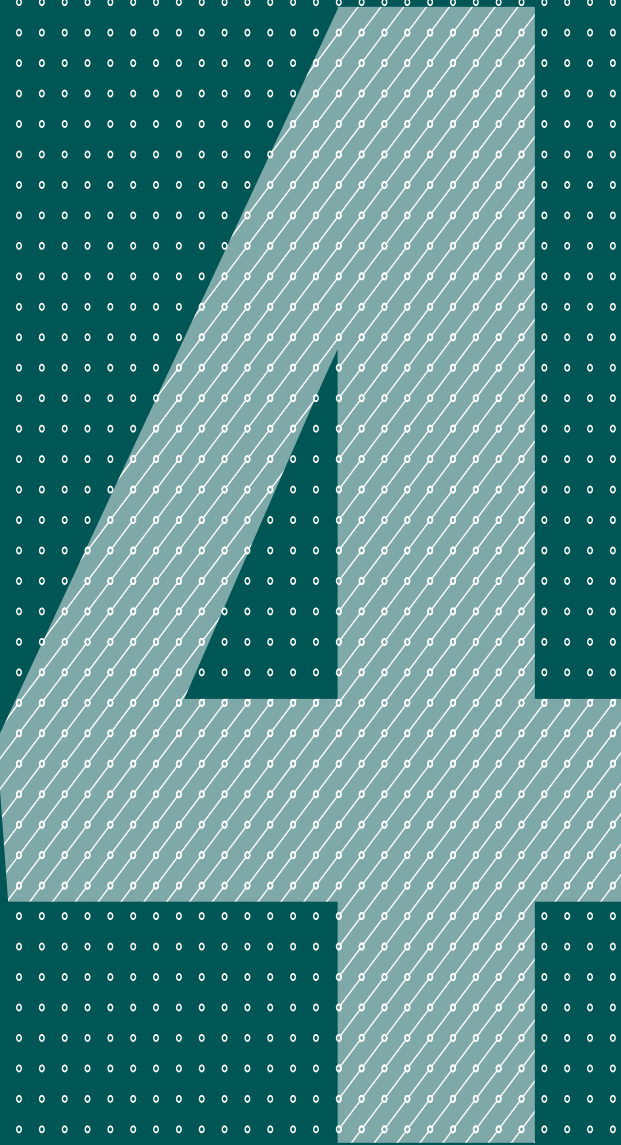
A FITTING COLLECTIVE SINGULAR

- **Modern thought relies on collective singulars (Kant, Hegel, Koselleck, Koschorke)**
- **State, people, nation, constituent power, society**
- **Filling the void after 60 years**
- **Advantages of society:**
 - No need for coercive force
 - Focus on interacting individuals
 - More open to heterogeneity
 - Conflict as normal and productive



PUSHING NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Pushing popular understanding**
- **Reframing the role of EU principles**
- **Reframing European conflicts and cleavages**
- **Reframing the role of foreigners**
- **Reframing the discourses on redistributions**
- **Pushing the EU's new principled constitutionalism**



CALIBRATING CONSEQUENCES



CALIBRATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SOCIETY-CENTERED APPROACH

- **On the legitimacy of the state-centered and the market-centered approach**
- **Refounding the authority of EU law? In whose name does the CJEU decide?**
- **European society is not an actor**
- **European society is not post-political**
- **Rather, it conceptualises the conflictual politicisation of European affairs**