

Processes of Europeanization

by Wolfgang Schmale

Processes resulting in the development of a single European culture can be bundled under the term Europeanization. The majority of these processes played out over the long-term, but accelerated since the second half of the 18th century. Their effect served to construct coherencies out of diversity. In hindsight, the spread of Greco-Roman culture appears to have been the first source of Europeanization. Ever since, cultural impulses serving this end can be detected from a variety of sources, some being of greater importance than others. The 16th century saw a great number of such impulses proceeding from Italy and the Atlantic countries. Nevertheless, the rapidity with which goods, ideas and models of behaviour were diffused relativizes the importance attached to their geographical origin. Europe first assumed a West-East division only with the enlightenment, something which was itself adjusted with the spread of democracy to east central Europe in 1989.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Concepts
2. The history of Europeanization
3. European unification as a process of Europeanization?
4. Appendix
 1. Bibliography
 2. Notes

Citation

Concepts

Speaking of a single European culture assumes the existence of a number of processes of dissemination and harmonization, which combine to produce a single unitary culture. This does not mean that everything became unitary; cultural singularity and diversity are entirely compatible.¹ Those processes resulting in the development of a common European culture can be summarized under the term "Europeanization."² It is generally advisable to differentiate between major and minor processes of Europeanization. This differentiation may well be simple, but is of inestimable importance to the purposes of orientation. The major processes of Europeanization often correspond to the core characteristics used to refer to epochs such as the Renaissance, the Baroque age, or the Enlightenment. Minor processes of Europeanization emerge in conjunction with a large number of cultural transfers, which hone a number of cultural assets through transfer, enabling them to fit into a number of different contexts. Many objects, concepts, recipes, drinks, pieces of furniture etc. constituting everyday European life are the results of such processes.³

▲ 1

One differentiation necessary at this point is that between the inner-European process of Europeanization and something once referred to as the "Europeanization of the Earth".⁴ Although not unrelated, the Europeanization of overseas colonial possessions cannot be compared directly to the inner-European processes or at least not without a number of reservations and adaptations. Moreover, the clearly national character of the various phenomena of colonial acculturation forbids this: the colonies were not simply European, but Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, Dutch, Italian, German or Russian.

▲ 2

The most pressing question is the point after which it is possible to speak of Europeanization and its extent. As culture is a dynamic concept, we cannot assume the existence of an immutable point of reference called Europe. A geographical approach to the extent of European culture is similarly flawed, despite the popularity of this approach two or three centuries ago. Natural features such as the Atlantic or the Urals have no real significance for cultural phenomena; neither mountains nor water courses have ever succeeded in preventing cultural diffusion, at best serving only to hinder or slow its progress. Geography does not determine cultural development. Indeed, viewed in cultural terms, "Europe" has no real existence, as close inspection reveals that much of what we would initially term as being "European" does in

fact not reach to the Urals, or indeed, extends across such barriers. Moreover, much of what we would term as being distinctly European is by now, part of a larger global culture. Geographic conceptions of culture are both too large and too small to be of any great use.

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Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that many European actors did possess a geographically-based conception of Europe which may have served to determine their actions, thus implicitly controlling the various processes of Europeanization. The European Union acts in an identical fashion; in projecting its likely future borders, its conceptions of Europe coincide with the boundaries of the EU. The historical development of a European cultural reference (→ Media Link #ac) proves this point very well.

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The questions as to the "when?" "how?" and "to what extent?" of the processes of Europeanization require a cultural geography approach which can establish the locations of specific cultural assets. This heuristic approach, so far only insufficiently applied to this question, has to be complemented by parallel analysis of these assets (*Struktureme*) in terms of their quality as European *Kultureme*, i.e. cultural assets tied up with identity.⁵ They must be identified with Europe. We currently do this only in terms of our own standards and interests, which does not mean that the actors of other periods also used the same yardsticks to identify what they referred to as being "European." It is of great interest that the maps documenting the spread of the romantic and Gothic movements (two universally accepted processes of Europeanization) omit both Armenia and the Holy Land.

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The majority of the major processes of Europeanization unfolded over a long period of time, but following the general acceleration which they experienced beginning with the onset of modernity, the intervals and duration became ever-shorter. The precondition to this is of course, that the processes of Europeanization established the cultural foundations of the present day. Viewed from a historical perspective, they form coherent phenomena which hold together a considerable diverse content. In view of this, a cultural-geographical approach does not do justice to the true extent of this problem. Conflicts and debates, ideas and philosophies as well as structural processes such as nation-building or, taking a historical-anthropological approach, familial structures combine to make up the process of Europeanization. The most promising approach would be its conception as a communicative process.

▲6

The history of Europeanization

The first process of Europeanization was presented by the spread of Roman culture through the expansion of the *Imperium Romanum*. Despite the outcome, the "Romans" were not pursuing a Europeanizing agenda, and this unintended effect restricted itself to a small area south of the *Limes*. This situation is further complicated by the presence in other regions (such as the South and East Mediterranean) not usually classified as European, of the same cultural processes. Roman culture should be understood as performing a mediating function, also carrying the Greek / Hellenistic culture into the furthest reaches of "Europe". Roman cultural imperialism was also of decisive importance in the spread of Christianity, which itself is not to be classified as a unitary process of Europeanization. The Roman presence often obscures the significance of Celtic culture, which itself constituted a rival extra-regional system of trade and cultural exchange, and thus a communication system. Just as with the Roman Empire, this Celtic sphere was itself transformed by the rise of new cultures during the period of the Barbarian migrations.

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The waves of culturization found up until the middle of the 15th century and successful resistance to their progress cannot entirely be categorized as "Europeanization." Despite the vast nature of the Roman Empire, it did not encompass the entire continent, and was indeed split into West and East Rome, both of which, despite their independent development, continued to exhibit great cultural similarity. Thus for instance, the Christian Church continued to expand in both spheres, but developed a degree of doctrinal and cultural difference which eventually culminated in the Great Schism of 1054. Moreover, the two supposedly monolithic Churches also exhibited considerable diversity within their structures in the establishment of thriving regional Churches (orthodoxy) or the development of a number of "heresies" (Roman Catholicism) which attracted considerable support over a long period. Roman Catholicism experienced repeated re-

newal in the form of the development of a number of monastic and clerical orders (→ Media Link #ad). The relations between the Georgian, Armenian, Cappadocian, Coptic Churches etc. were too weak, or subject to too much disruption to enable Christianity to act as the agent of a single European culture. Nevertheless, the presence of a single European culture did effect the integration of Europe into a single, unitary salvific history. The European public sphere was permeated with relics, preferably from the Holy Lands and the Christian cultural inheritance maintained and transmitted by the cloisters as centres of literacy meant that Europe, not originally a part of Christendom, took its place in the salvific history.

Islam did arrive in Europe, but was gradually pushed back. Despite all nature of Moslem cultural transfers, there was no lasting move towards Islamic culturization.

▲ 8

Upon first inspection, the Carolingian empire appeared to develop as a cultural model characterized not only by the attempt to perpetuate to Roman antiquity, but also through the particular combination of Christianity, education, literacy, communication etc. However, the small size and relative weakness of the empire prevented this cultural model from spreading across the whole of Europe.

▲ 9

The course of the medieval period saw the development of a number of areas of cultural consolidation, in which trade and commerce created cultural enclaves with a high level of social and cultural cohesion. These developed in areas of maritime trading such as the Baltic Hanseatic area, the Mediterranean – that with a view to the maritime republics Venice and Genoa represents a plurality of different cultural spaces rather than a uniform entity – and the (South) Atlantic. In Central Europe, the Holy Roman Empire saw the development of a close infrastructural network based on road and water traffic to which other regional traffic networks were conjoined. This infrastructure enabled a high degree of cultural transfer (→ Media Link #ah), the extent and thus effect of which (in terms of Europeanization) requires close further research.

Of greater familiarity are the effects of the Romanic and Gothic movement, expressed not only in sacral and temporal architecture, but also the complex constructions of the world views with which they were associated.

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Europe in the 15th century exhibited a very diverse cultural face. After the onset of the Renaissance, Europe as such was constituted by the network of dynastic alliances (→ Media Link #ai) and family connections which fashioned the cultural plurality into something approaching a single unit. This was first borne out with the Renaissance, one very important (but not the sole) European-wide carrier of which was the courts.⁶ The Renaissance did penetrate the East, reaching Moscow, but remained limited in its northwards expansion. Working within these geographical boundaries, the extent of penetration of these various agents of Europeanization (Romanic, Gothic, Renaissance) increased with each new wave. The loss of cultural primacy of religion during the Renaissance increased the suitability of this agent for the ends of Europeanization, as the world-view which it carried was not restricted to a single religion or confession. Other cultural institutions also played a part in this process of Europeanization, such as the university, the printing press and Roman law. Although not entirely independent of religion, they acted as a cultural broker within the religious-confessional sphere.

▲ 11

The Italian Renaissance generated a cultural model,⁷ which thanks to its apparently innovative status seemed to promise a modernization. The cultural model of the Renaissance introduced a new form of Europeanization. It is the question as to of the further development of a polity which raises awareness for the value of emulating these cultural techniques, as it is associated with the positioning of this polity within the European politico-economic system. Above all else, the Renaissance led to a measure of European cultural homogeneity. On the other hand, the move towards European functional specialization resulting from European expansion on the other hand served to restrict this trend. Those countries with an Atlantic coastline specialized in trade, whilst central Europe retained an urban-based commercial landscape and Eastern Europe remained an agricultural economy. This was to have a long term effect, acting to restrict the various processes of Europeanization.⁸

▲ 12

The early modern period was characterized by contradictory processes of Europeanization. Thinking in exclusively national categories, especially with the national history-based approach developed by humanism and the development of monarchies to exclusively national organs culminated in the constitution of a number of nation states after the French Revolution. This represents both the triumph and defeat of "Europeanization": certain modes and categories of thinking (the national approach) had established themselves as a European-wide phenomenon, but had effected the actual cultural and political "division" of Europe. Nevertheless, processes of Europeanization continued to be active within these culturally-separated political units, with the pan-European dominance of a number of intellectual and political movements including the common trends of absolutism as both a form of government and an agent of modernization, the increasing significance of empiricism and natural sciences, the replacement of the society of estates by bourgeois society, "the" Enlightenment, 18th century classicism, the wide-spread nature of philhellenism and many more.

▲ 13

An important factor in this move towards a unitary culture was played by the French model of culture, the influence of which extended from Lisbon to Moscow.⁹ As with the formerly dominant Italian cultural model, its combination of a number of innovative factors promised modernization for those societies willing to adopt it. Its combination of the idea of a perfect monarchy (the core of all absolutist thought) and the enlightenment was given expression by the *Encyclopédie* as both an idea and a publication.

▲ 14

One of the most sustained processes of Europeanization is the debate held across the continent surrounding the nature of the state and its constitution and the human rights to be enjoyed by its citizens. The political settlement resulting from these debates exhibited considerable differences, but the fact of their existence (or indeed continuation) united every state. The Enlightenment set the agenda, the effects of which continue to be felt until today. Even if the traditions of the rule of law and the constitutional guarantee of human rights has a history reaching back to antiquity, the indivisible connection between a state and its constitution is a construct of the enlightenment and revolutionary period. Despite the many setbacks suffered by this agenda in the 19th and 20th century, the revolution of 1989 saw its widespread triumph (with only a few exceptions) across Europe. It thus represents a significant example of Europeanization over the long-term.

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In many ways the enlightenment debate surrounding Jewish emancipation (→ Media Link #ar) represents a culmination of a number of processes of Europeanization. A number of pan-European expulsions did not prevent the establishment of sizeable Jewish populations throughout Europe by the 18th century. Discriminatory prescriptions had pushed them into a number of economic activities, where they performed a vital role for the European economy (finance, trade, networking (→ Media Link #as) activities). Christian and Jewish scholars engaged each other in philosophical and theological debate, a process which despite being located within the broader context of Christian anti-Semitism, was not exclusively characterized by this. Thus, a Christian such as Sebastian Münster (1488–1552) (→ Media Link #at) advanced to become a leading scholar of Hebrew. The 18th century saw a number of bridges being built between the two communities, something which owed in no small part to representatives of the Jewish Enlightenment (→ Media Link #au) such as Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) (→ Media Link #av).¹⁰ Formal emancipation of the Jews, which began in revolutionary France and then spread throughout the rest of the continent in the course of the 19th century, produced a cultural *métissage* – the terms assimilation or symbiosis fail to do justice to the complex social structure resulting from this step – which greatly assisted the course of modernization.¹¹ This process of Europeanization was interrupted, indeed reversed only by the Anti-Semitism of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century.

▲ 16

The dawn of the French Revolution saw a considerable increase in the number of processes of Europeanization. Despite the increasing nationalism of the 19th century, developments in the political, literary, industrial, legal, scientific, artistic and musical life of Europe made this century the most European ever. The best expression of this drive towards cultural unity was the universal architectural and artistic homage paid in almost every European country to conceptions of European history ranging from Greek antiquity to the present. This process of Europeanization was eventually to culminate in the Europe-wide modernist and art deco movements. Indeed, it even managed to assuage the repercussions of Imperialism (→ Media Link #aw) and nationalism, both of which served more to reduce the effects of Europeanization. Moreover, *fin de siècle* Europe has to be viewed against the backdrop of what effectively was a single European economic area.

Thus Europe in 1900 was not without alternatives; the continent was faced with the choice of moving further along the road of Europeanization or continuing along the path of national particularism. In choosing the latter, the First World War had a much greater effect in generating and emphasizing national difference than did its successor conflict. Whilst the interwar period brought no significant progress towards European unification, 1948 (only three years after the Second World War) saw the formation of the first structures of European integration – the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the Brussels Treaty and the European Council.

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European unification as a process of Europeanization?

At this juncture it would appear necessary to examine the number of political conceptions of a united Europe for their Europeanizing effect. This undertaking requires us first to differentiate between two forms of this idea. The first is the unification of Europe under the rule of a single universal source of sovereignty, i.e. the establishment of a political system carried by common institutions which create and maintain peace. The European Union does not fit into such a scheme. Both the idea of and moves to realize such a European universal monarchy existed from the medieval period until well into the 16th century, and was something cultivated both by the Papacy as well as the Emperor. Charles V. (1500–1558) (→ Media Link #ax) was the last to attempt such a project, the scope of which was even to exceed the European realm. Napoleon (1769–1821) (→ Media Link #ay) was responsible for breaking up a number of empires, and establishing constitutional states in their place – constitutional monarchies as well as republics. Nevertheless, the power (→ Media Link #az) exerted by Napoleonic France did have a Europeanizing effect on the legal administrative, military, economic, scientific and infrastructural settlement. Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) (→ Media Link #b1) can similarly not be included under this perspective despite some attempts to do so. The fairly widespread consensus amongst those working for European co-operation that Europe had to be united through force if necessary and that it was Hitler's "historic mission" to do so, ignored his true intentions and the fact that his policies are entirely beyond the pale of established European civilized norms.

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A second tendency developed in the 14th century centred around the core idea of establishing institutions (a European council, European tribunal etc.) in which the individual sovereign nations could resolve their differences according to pre-established rules. The prime motivation behind this plan was to put an end to the succession of European wars. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536) (→ Media Link #b2) developed the concept of the peace dividend, from which all Europeans would benefit. The most important contribution to this trend was made in the 18th century under the catchword "eternal peace" (Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743) (→ Media Link #b3), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) (→ Media Link #b4) and others). These ideas were updated in the 19th century after the formation of the European system of nation states, and continue in the current conception of a "United States of Europe".

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In itself, the plans for the creation of a number of European institutions does not necessarily entail a process of Europeanization, although it does potentially provide a stable framework as a precondition for this process. Members of these institutions are states, i.e. bodies subject to public international law. They are expected to abide to certain common rules implying a commitment to a particular political culture. Immanuel Kant made this clear in his postulation of the rule of law as a necessary precondition for the creation of eternal peace. This principle has achieved widespread acceptance in the post-war European institutions.

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Of these institutions, the European Union, itself the product of a number of predecessor institutions and treaties, represents the most sustained expression of a new quality of Europeanization since the Second World War. Intellectually prepared in the inter-war period (→ Media Link #b5), and developed by a number of exile and resistance groups, this variant of Europeanization is called European integration. In many ways, this European integration follows the model established by the paths taken to national integration, although its current institutional expression, the EU, does not follow this national model, but a federative approach. European history has seen many such federations come and go but their legal forms exhibited (indeed they still do) considerable difference and are much less well defined than that of the nation

Finally, it is necessary to pose the question as to the existence of particular patterns of Europeanization identifiable over the course of time. One particular interpretation advanced by the literature is the common division onto an East-West schema. Such a model is certainly applicable to the process of industrialization (→ Media Link #b6) and the Enlightenment, which first developed in England, Scotland and France. From a long-term perspective cultural transfers at first moved from the (Middle) East and Egypt via Ancient Greece. The Greek, or Hellenistic culture was adopted by the Romans, who diffused a hybrid Greco-Roman culture throughout the Mediterranean area and further into Europe. Migration into the late Roman Empire from the North and East resulted in the development of new hybrid cultures and their slow establishment in the Mediterranean world. The subsequent period saw the arrival of cultural influences from all four corners of the globe each with a varying impact. Together with the ever-expanding Ottoman Empire, the cultural alienation of eastern Europe (Moscow) in the 16th century as well as the westwards expansion of Spain, Portugal and other Atlantic countries, the majority of cultural impulses came to Europe via Italy or the Atlantic countries. Nevertheless, the rapidity with which goods, ideas and models of behaviour were diffused relativizes the importance attached to their geographical origin. The East-West division of Europe, later to assume considerable significance, first manifested itself with the Enlightenment. One is inclined to think that the hanging of the iron curtain may well have accentuated this process, but such a conclusion can only be very tentative. Indeed, the (highly significant) Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) was convened following an initiative from the Eastern bloc, especially Poland. Indeed, the moves towards the democratization of the Eastern bloc countries came from behind the iron curtain and its spread gave the process of Europeanization a new East-West rhythm.

▲ 23

One other agent of Europeanization was (and indeed is) the European historiography. First manifesting itself in the 15th and 16th centuries, the word itself was coined in the 18th century, but has reached a pan-European audience only since then.¹² The conception of a singular European culture was first developed by cultural historians of the Enlightenment, receiving a chronology and being read as the story of uninterrupted progress. Although the latter is no longer a modern research paradigm, European history is written and read in a number of languages in across Europe.

▲ 24

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Appendix

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Notes

- ¹ See Vietta, *Europäische Kulturgeschichte* 2005; Schmale, *Geschichte Europas* 2001. For maps see Nouschi, *Petit atlas historique* 2009.
- ² See Gehler et al., *Europa* 2009.
- ³ For further details, see e.g. Compagnon et al., *L'Esprit de l'Europe* 1993; Köpke et al., *Das gemeinsame Haus* 1999.
- ⁴ Klingenstein, *Europäisierung der Erde?* 1981.
- ⁵ The most important differentiation between *Struktureme* and *Kultureme* is that *Struktureme* possess an identity-potentiality, whilst *Kultureme* have an identity essence. The identity-potentiality may grow into an identity essence. The identity essence can change over time. "Identity" refers to a set of spatial and personnel connotations possibly associated with a cultural object. They are to be held separate from other functional attributes also constituting the identity of a cultural artefact. The identity of a ship, chair or table, a constitution, a system of grammar etc. is that which makes it describable and distinguishable against other cultural artefacts. This identity is substantial. Personnel or spatial identity cultural artefacts such as "Portuguese," "noble", "Hanseatic", "Viennese" etc. are differentiating cultural additions which delimit an object from an "other." These delimitations are not a priori imperative, but develop under specific conditions (themselves exhibiting great variety) which constitute the subject of culture transfer studies. The conditions under which they develop are found both on the receiver side and the sender side; in both the target culture as well as the culture of origin. They refer to a non-universal "identity of origin." *Kultureme* are the smallest/smaller or larger and highly comprehensive ideal and material cultural products, which appropriate or which have been allocated collective characteristics of origin in the process of cultural transfer. They are socially (small or large collective) and geographically rooted. The connotations of origin identity are decisive for *Kultureme*. An 18th century cultural element such as the "Constitution d'Angleterre," the cultural identity of origin "d'Angleterre" is by no means interchangeable. Angleterre or anglais stands for a cultural identity of origin perceived as such. It belongs to the essence of this "constitution" and its construction as a model. This was evoked in such a way that only those socio-political structuralizations corresponding to this model were categorized as being a "constitution." *Kultureme* distinguish themselves by an identity essence, configured in a personnel-spatial fashion. *Struktureme* refer to ideal and material cultural artefacts which have an identity-potentiality but are without an identity essence. To give an example: by 1520, printing technology had become a general European *Strukturem* associated with one person, Johannes Gutenberg (1400–1468). As a "German," the name Gutenberg refers to a collective identity, that of the "Germans". The cultural artefact "printing" possessed only weak personnel or collective identity connotations and can thus be classified as a *Strukturem*. There were far too many social groups involved in the construction of the cultural artefact "book" to enable the application of a collective identity connotation. Let us take a further example: were the architects of the late Gothic buildings in Krakow or Spiš (in the present-day Slovak Republic) influenced by the fact that the Gothic style was invented on the Île-de-France? If not, the (late) Gothic style is a *Strukturem* in which the identity connotation in Europe was either incidental or no longer present. In the attempt to classify it as a *Kulturem* or *Strukturem*, we need to consider the respective world views involved, as identity connotations and essences are not objective actualities, rather are apportioned, constructed or perceived as such. The identity of origin which has developed in such a way is accepted as something objective, immovable and unquestionable, even for long periods. Ideal and material cultural artifacts are often associated with a "birth process" and thus with specific persons (or indeed a single person), a collective and a particular geographical location. At the same time, they are seen as artifacts produced by anonymous structures and (known) individuals. Without seeking to overstretch the differentiation between *Kulturem* and *Strukturem*, *Struktureme* can be located in the context of the processes of Europeanization whereas *Kultureme* must be located in

transcultural history, something in which they play a leading role. In the latter, the identity of origin remains important and to a certain extent, constitutes the attraction of cultural transfers for all those involved.

6. ^ E.g.: Dmitrieva, Italien in Sarmatien 2008; Nolde et al., Grenzüberschreitende Familienbeziehungen 2008.
7. ^ Braudel, Modell Italien 1999.
8. ^ The European status of east central Europe and its participation in the processes of Europeanization has been subject to a long debate, much of which has been summarized in Horel, Cette Europe 2009.
9. ^ A critical treatment is to be found in Beaurepaire, Le mythe 2007.
10. ^ Bourel, Moses Mendelssohn 2004.
11. ^ Karady, Gewalterfahrung 1999.
12. ^ An overview is provided by Duchhardt et al., Europa-Historiker 2006/2007.

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Link #b2

- Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1536) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/87673996>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118530666>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118530666.html>)

Link #b3

- Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/22201759>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/119510952>)

Link #b4

- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) VIAF   (<http://viaf.org/viaf/82088490>) DNB  (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/118559796>) ADB/NDB  (<http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118559796.html>)

Link #b5

- Europa-Netzwerke der Zwischenkriegszeit (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/europaeische-netzwerke/politische-netzwerke/europa-netzwerke-der-zwischenkriegszeit/matthias-schulz-europa-netzwerke-und-europagedanke-in-der-zwischenkriegszeit>)

Link #b6

- Industrialization (<http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/industrialization/richard-h-tilly-industrialization-as-an-historical-process>)