The Centre of Excellence in Law, Identity and the European Narratives

The Centre of Excellence in Law, Identity and the European Narratives is funded by the Academy of Finland and is hosted by the University of Helsinki. It is located at the Centre of European Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The purpose of this CoE is to launch a new, third generation inquiry that critically explores the emergence of narratives of Europe as responses to the crises of the twentieth century and how these narratives have shaped the ideas of justice and community in Europe. It studies the foundational stories that underlie the contested idea of a shared European heritage in law and culture, such as the ideas of rule of law, equality, universalism, tolerance, pluralism and the rejection of totalitarianism, and their relevance for current debates on identity and history.

Through a return to the origins of historical narratives that convey shared roots, experiences and values, the CoE deconstructs the idea of a monolithic European narrative. It also seeks to differentiate and restore authorship to these multiple narratives by studying their original context and authors. The project investigates the connections between historical and contemporary narratives through the research collaboration by scholars of law, history, anthropology, religion and philosophy. Its main innovation is to relate these fundamental narratives by studying how the concepts of crisis, belonging and origin have been used to construct lineages and justifications. The timeframe of the inquiry begins in the interwar period, starting in 1918, and extends to the present. Earlier periods will be discussed when part of a historical narrative is under investigation. The choice of period is prompted by the continuities that are apparent from that period to the present, from the repercussions of the economic crises, value crises, crisis of liberalism and the resurgence of authoritarianism.

EUROSTORIE COE
DISCOVERING
THE LIMITS OF REASON

The project Discovering the Limits of Reason - Europe and the Crisis of Universalism argues that the idea of European universalism - the all-encompassing applicability of its values, practices and institutions - lies at the core of the modern project. This idea has legitimized not only the political development of European societies but also the propagation of European norms to other cultures. The subproject focuses on the crisis of European universalism in the aftermath of the WWI. It investigates into the unique relativisation of European rationality in the philosophical, legal, scientific, theological and anthropological discourses of the inter-war period and the subsequent attempts to rethink the idea of universalism in the works of Continental philosophers. According to the central hypothesis, the competing political responses of the mid-war period can be understood in regard to different narratives of universalism.

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