

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Portsmouth
Unit of Assessment: 27 Area Studies
Title of case study: Exhibiting Europe: Transnationalizing Museum Networks and Narratives (UOP27EXHIBITING)
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The <i>Exhibiting Europe</i> project has generated change in the museum world with a pan-European reach. It has had significant impact on museum organizations, by helping them to improve their networking and lobbying activities; museum professionals, by suggesting ways to ‘transnationalize’ their activities and historical narratives; and policy-makers in the cultural and museum field, by contributing to a high level policy dialogue with the European Parliament, the European Commission and EU member-states about ways to ‘narrate’ Europe and European integration.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Kaiser joined the University of Portsmouth as Professor of European Studies in 2000. Since then he has been at the forefront of research on transnational European history and how this history is told in cultural institutions, especially history museums.</p> <p>Kaiser has pioneered work on cross-border dimensions of European integration history broadly conceived, especially the role of societal groups and networks in shaping polity-building and policy-making. Based on research in 25 archives in nine countries, his book <i>Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union</i> (PVI) traced the cross-border cooperation among Catholic/Christian democratic parties and politicians since the late nineteenth century, demonstrating how their informal coordination strongly influenced key political decisions such as the creation of a ‘core Europe’ without Britain in the 1950s, with lasting impact until today.</p> <p>The book defined a new research agenda, which Kaiser pursued further in several collaborative projects and publications (see e.g. PI & V). These publications have made a convincing case for a new understanding of the history of European integration as more than the bargaining of ‘national interests’ among governments. Instead they show how societal actors like political parties, business organizations and civil society groups have impacted on building the present-day EU and contributed to developing new common policies such as environmental protection. Kaiser has also co-edited and contributed to the only systematic summary of the state of the art in European integration history research, <i>European Union History</i> (PV) which is now widely used for advanced UG and PG teaching on Europe and the EU.</p> <p>This work on transnational European integration has been highly interdisciplinary in integrating social science perspectives with historical research. Beginning in 2008 and building on his strong reputation in the field of transnational European history, Kaiser has developed a new line of such interdisciplinary research in the collaborative research project <i>Exhibiting Europe</i>. Working with Stefan Krankenhagen (cultural studies, Trondheim/Norway, now Hildesheim/Germany) and Kerstin Poehls (social anthropology, HU Berlin, now Hamburg/Germany) he has examined if, how and in what ways historical museums and exhibitions across Europe are becoming more European or transnational in response to new challenges such as globalization and city tourism. Based on the analysis of nearly 100 history museums and exhibitions and interviews with 64 cultural policy-makers and museum directors and curators throughout Europe, this research has led to the co-authored book <i>Europa ausstellen</i> (PII) and several single-authored publications by Kaiser in journals and books (e.g. PIII & IV). He has argued in particular that the museum sector is becoming more and more Europeanized in its organisation, structures and network-type cooperation. At the same time, the museums’ changing narratives, or ‘stories’ are experiencing a ‘transnational turn’ which emphasizes connections across borders in trade, migration etc. However,</p>

these growing connections normally are not linked in the museums and exhibitions to the political history of the EU. Moreover, due to time constraints and other pressures these changes in representations are hardly reflected by museum professionals.

His deep insights in transnational European history and how this history is told in museums has placed Kaiser in a unique position to advise museums and new museum projects like the House of European History in Brussels, as well as European policy-makers.

3. References to the research

- PI.** Kaiser, Wolfram and Meyer, J., eds. (2013). *Societal Actors in European Integration. Polity-Building and Policy-Making 1958-92. Palgrave studies in European Union politics.* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke. ISBN 9781137017642 (ed. with J.H. Meyer, 1 single-authored chapter and 2 co-authored chapters), - 'realizing the promise of broad-ranging interdisciplinary research in a unique and compelling way' (Gary Marks/North Carolina); 'making a decisive contribution to the new sociology of the European Union' (Adrian Favell/Sciences Po). REF2 output: 27-WK-0004
- PII.** Kaiser, Wolfram, Krankenhagen, S. and Poehls, K. (2012) *Europa ausstellen: Das Museum als Praxisfeld der Europäisierung = Exhibiting Europe. The museum as a practice field of Europeanization.* Böhlau, Vienna. ISBN 9783412208882 - 'combines critical analysis with advice and can be highly recommended for European researchers and museum practitioners alike' (Ines Keske/University of Leipzig, H-Soz-u-Kult/H-Net Reviews). REF2 output:27-WK-003
- PIII.** Kaiser, Wolfram. (2012). The Transnational Turn Meets the Educational Turn: Engaging and Educating Adolescents in History Museums in Europe, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society*, 4(2), pp.8-22. DOI [10.3167/jemms.2012.040202](https://doi.org/10.3167/jemms.2012.040202). REF2 output:27-WK-001
- PIV.** Kaiser, Wolfram. (2011). From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Biographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums, *Culture Unbound. Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 3, pp.385-400. Accessible at <http://www.cultureunbound.ep.liu.se/v3/a25/>.
- PV.** Kaiser, Wolfram and Varsori, A., eds. (2010). *European Union History. Themes and Debates.* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke. ISBN 9780230232709. 1 single-authored chapter and 1 co-authored chapter - 'an exceptionally useful book that presents the state of the art in a well-structured manner and fully meets its own objectives. ... It also reflects about future research in this field.' (Manuel Müller/HU Berlin, H-Soz-u-Kult/H-Net Reviews)
- PVI.** Kaiser, Wolfram. (2007). *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union*, New studies in European history . Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. ISBN 9780521883108 - 'a landmark contribution' (Holger Nehring/Sheffield, in *Contemporary European History*), 'In this impressive historical study, Wolfram Kaiser breaks new ground in research on the nature and origins of European integration. ... Despite [Alan Milward's] state-centrism, it is arguably the work of this fellow historian which, in archival passion and mastery of detail, bears closest comparison to Kaiser's own.' (Shivdeep Singh Grewal/Brunel, in *Journal of Common Market Studies*)

Research for this project was undertaken with the financial support of the Norwegian Research Council and of the Foundation of History of Technology.

1. Stefan Krankenhagen/NTNU & Wolfram Kaiser/UoP, Exhibiting Europe, Norwegian Research Council, 2008-2012, NOK 7.785,000, of which £ 81,800 for Wolfram Kaiser as principal co-investigator
2. Wolfram Kaiser, Inventing Europe, Dutch Foundation of History of Technology, 2011-12,

£22,916.

4. Details of the impact

The project *Exhibiting Europe* has generated change in the museum world. Its impact has been pan-European in reach. Its significance lies in its close collaboration with prospective users and its impact on three types of beneficiaries: museum organizations, museum professionals, and policy-makers in the museum & cultural field.

Museum organizations:

At the institutional level the project team established close working relations with museum organisations. *Exhibiting Europe* became one of only eight partner projects of the Europe-wide Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO). The project team presented its preliminary and final project results at the annual NEMO conferences in Linz (2009), Copenhagen (2010) and Athens (2011), via the NEMO newsletter and at the International Council of Museums (ICOM) world conferences in Shanghai (2010) and Cape Town (2012). Kaiser focussed especially on advising these museum organizations on how to improve their cooperation and lobbying despite limited resources. As the NEMO project manager has stated (CS1), you ‘have helped our organization greatly to enhance its effectiveness. ... We now seek to work more closely with resource-rich national institutions and to harness the intercultural competence of individual museum entrepreneurs better for strengthening our impact on national and European policy-making’

Museum professionals:

The project team’s direct contacts with museum professionals created a durable academic-practitioner network in addition to generating evidence for the project. Several practitioners were involved in the project workshops in Trondheim (2008), Wroclaw (2009), Manchester and Amsterdam (2010) including the director of the exhibition company Tempora and the director of the City Museum Luxembourg. In addition, 20 practitioners attended the final conference in Oslo (2011) with mixed academic-practitioner panels including the director of the House of European History.

Kaiser also established close links with the ESF-funded *Inventing Europe* programme and has made a major contribution to the novel systematic cooperation of a team of 13 historians with major European science and technology museums including the British Science Museum. Together they have developed an interactive web-site (<http://www.inventingeurope.eu/>) hosted by the Foundation for the History of Technology which first went online in September 2012 (11.000 hits by 31 July 2013 – CS6). The web-site combines objects from the museums with stories and story pathways written by historians, making them accessible for HEI and school teachers/students and others with an interest in the history of technology. The Keeper of Science and Medicine at the British Science Museum has confirmed (CS2) that this ‘is just the way we can make most accessible and widely interesting our intellectual and physical resources’. According to the Research Director at the Deutsches Museum (CS3), this new internet facility ‘greatly enhances our opportunities as museums for engaging in an interactive way with users online, also enticing them to visit our own websites and actual material exhibitions.’ Moreover, as the President of the Board of the Foundation for the History of Technology has emphasized (CS4), ‘... the new website engages youngsters in particular, and nurtures their interest in current as well as past technological innovations. This will also increase the likelihood that they will study or work in a related field which is so important for European businesses.’

Kaiser has also provided advice, based upon his research, to museum professionals on how to

enhance their reflexive knowledge of their own transnational practices and to develop more convincing transnational narratives for their museums. He has published several pieces in internet-based European cultural magazines (e.g. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2011-11-24-kaiser-en.html>) which are widely read by curators. Moreover, he has worked closely with the project team of the House of European History, a museum of Europe and European integration history due to open in Brussels in 2015. The director and several members of the project team have frequently consulted him to ensure that their narratives reflect the ‘transnational turn’ and the state of the art of research on the history of European integration. For example, the curator, who leads the development of the permanent exhibition for the period from 1945 to the early 1980s, has stated ‘that I find many stories in your publications about transnational societal actors fascinating. Some of them will be invaluable for linking the political history and the social history of integration far more organically in our exhibition. As a result I am sure that our visitors will understand much better the connections between their everyday life experiences and memory and what happened in “Brussels”.’ (CS5)

Policy-makers in the museum & cultural field:

More recently, finally, Kaiser’s publications for a broader public together with his collaboration with museum organisations and museum professionals have led to his inclusion in a new high level policy dialogue about ‘narratives for Europe’. This was initiated by the European Parliament and is run by the cultural centre Bozar in Brussels and the European Commission. Together with c. 50 other artists, intellectuals and academics Kaiser was invited to an inaugural debate in Brussels on 23 April 2013 with Commission President Barroso and commissioners Vassiliou and Reding. On 11 July Kaiser then participated in the first ‘general assembly on forms of imagination and thinking for Europe’ in Warsaw, with Barroso and the Polish Prime Minister Tusk. This will be followed by a working dinner and reflection half-day with Barroso and the Italian Prime Minister Letta in Milan on 8-9 December 2013. The EP and the Commission expect that this high-level policy dialogue will generate new ways of ‘narrating’ Europe and European integration which should make it easier for EU citizens to connect with the EU, its institutions and policies.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

CS1. Letter by Project Manager, Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO), Berlin, 23 September 2013

CS2. Letter by Keeper of Science and Medicine, Science Museum, London, 17 October 2013

CS3. Letter by Director of Research, Deutsches Museum, Munich, 20 September 2013

CS4. Letter by Chair of the Board, Foundation History of Technology (and formerly Chief Technology Officer, Corus), Eindhoven, 27 September 2013

CS5. E-Mail by Curator, House of European History project team, Brussels, 18 September 2013

CS6. Number of hits on the Inventing Europe website (11.000 by 31 July 2013), E-Mail by Project Manager, Inventing Europe: European Digital Museum for Science & Technology, Eindhoven, 6 August 2013