

Deficiency of Collective Memory The Shaping of European Images

Part II Presence of Past

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I Whirls over Europe

Since September 2008 the flux of daily events reveal the dramatic breakdown of financial system, assessed as leading power of globalisation, the Smith scenario of one world (Figure 1). It affects the worldwide trends in three waves, first US and the linked financial players, second the emerging countries and semi-peripheries and thirdly the underdeveloped and poor countries of the South. In September 08 bad news about the failures in financial affairs predominated. But the events migrated and affected other scenarios, in October negotiating world by conferences. At a first glance, governance by state and politics was secondary but if one looks to the stories of events, competition and rivalries are visible: who will take the leading role and is able to give clarity in face of the crisis? From part I (past

periods) it is clear that the crisis touches the master model, which was basic for the building of the EU. One world as single market has had to motivate its expansion since the period of peace after 2nd world war.

In fact the present situation looks like a whirl where the EU is challenged on two axes of relations, interactions and responses. At the one hand the financial crisis created a Cassandra effect. On the axis EU and World, the external global one, sitting in one boat is felt endangered by financial tsunami. This threatening of the world is transferred to the internal European axis (Fig 3). Despite of cleavages between core members, insiders and outsiders Europe is a part in the global boat. Cassandra creates fears and in doing so order by pressure and needs for strong measures. And here, at the other hand,

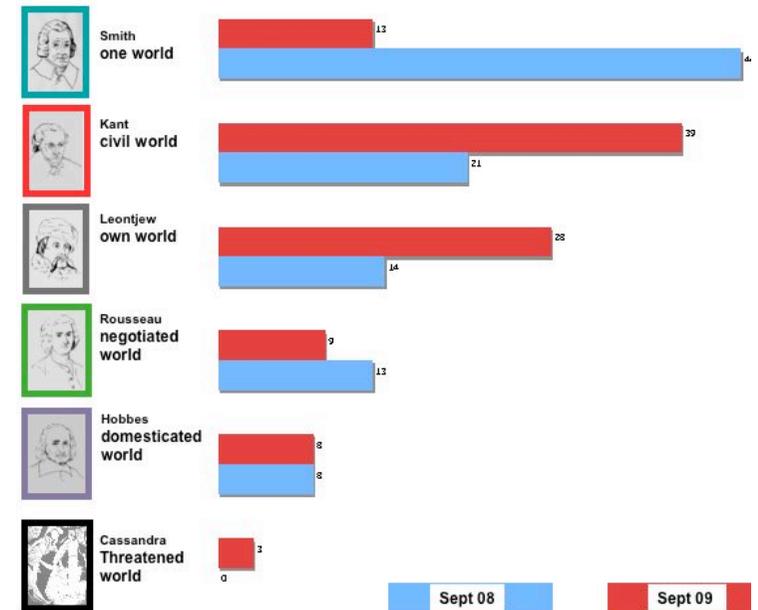


Figure 1: In September 08 the financial crisis dominated, i.e. the negative signals from one world (Smith). One year later two trends are obvious (documented also in monthly time series): (1) the scenario civil events increased and absorbed the relevance of Smith scenario, (2) the events shifted to own world (the scenario of Leontjew). In other words, the financial crisis polarises between civil and own world. See also the papers about financial crisis and the description of scenarios in: http://www.culturprospectiv.ch/de:how_many_worlds

insecurities raise. Since the leader of the global North, US, after a series of hegemonic trials (Iran, Afghanistan, Georgia, Kosova during Bush era) is affected and even responsible for the financial disasters the question of who is who in global affairs is urgently raised. A series of events document how emerging players articulate their own interests and perspectives on a global scale. The first time after 2nd world war Europe could profile its role in the world under a new constellation.

Who is who? But just in this prospect the EU shows its dilemma: the tensions on the internal axis hinder a strategy in the field “upward and offensive” (figure 3), that is to mobilise the whole European “family” for bargaining in global hegemony under the leadership of core nations and insiders of EU. Newcomers and outsiders but also insiders prefer their own upward outlooks. Poland or Czech Republic tested this field before and/or hinder a Brussels mainstream strategy of core nations. But evidently a third field of orientations is visible. Why not to seek for an energy deal with Russia (Germany) or to go a separate way with China? A series of attractive options for foreign strategies in this field have been

tested in recent times. One can expect that also the newcomers and outsiders of EU will find strategies, i. e. test and fill the field “downward and defensive”. Serbia, for instance, can play the Russian card in order to compensate the outsider status in EU due to the traumatic experiences.

Financial curtain. The financial crisis affected the parts of EU in different ways. The overall flow of bad news shows qualitative differences on a scale from state-rupture to impacts like riots, strikes to the loss of jobs, increasing poverty and reduction of welfare. Very relevant in Eastern Europe is that the crisis surprised those newcomer countries, which experienced a first wave of rising expectations since the entry to the liberal market society and EU. Simultaneously insecurities in these countries are intensified since they do not have stabilized attitudes; people show floating minds in regard to private and public issues.

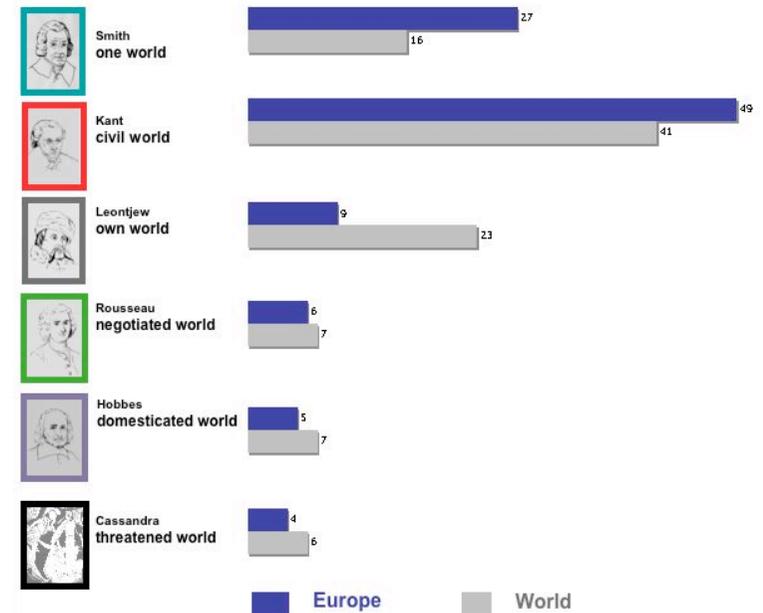


Figure 2: Regional Aristocracy. While the European Union participates significantly more than the rest of world in civil scenario (49%) and in one world (27%) it is less involved in own world scenario (9%). (Events of January and February 09). So inequalities and regional aristocracies of world society are made visible in streams of daily events. If one takes a look to them inequality is more dramatic than conventional quantitative indicators of inequality reveal.

II Europe's cathedral and its architecture

Shadows of past. Historians may say that “all things are new under the sun” referring, for instance, to the history of financial disasters. We should be careful to compare the developments of the current crisis with those in the 30ties. In fact, empirical investigations could proof that even similar periods are very individual if one could collect, include and evaluate all facts, figures and documents. But this is the critical point. People and actors are not collectors of data but act with their own specific perceptions, symbolic frames and images. As summarized in part I the EU looks back to periods shaping such significant images and models.

Need for strong images. Societies and people need especially strong images if insecurities increase. We observe it in everyday life as well as in research: people including public actors refer back to collective memories. These memories offer imaginations and attitudes about how to see and treat the environment. Nearly in all journals pictures of previous financial crises circulated. The past turns back to the present. Empirical research in Eastern European laboratory (where insecurities

due to transformation are visible) confirm that these collective memories are active. They reproduce not only but reinvent images, orientations and responses. That is the transfer of the past into the present is not passive but can gain innovative aspects. There are continuous studies proofing that, for instance, in Russia the “homo sovieticus” remains a strong focus for images and attitudes or behaviour also on post-soviet periods. Despite of radical changes the collective memory survives.

Similar observations are evident in other parts of post-socialist and Western Europe. The individual and free liberal market performance (an essential part of “one world”) lacks of a consolidated basis in memory; during crises public and state oriented models regain their power going back to those periods when people’s life and existence was protected by collective and state activities. Recently this return to collective and state protected items of collective memory is very relevant even in countries looking back to individualistic and liberal traditions, like the

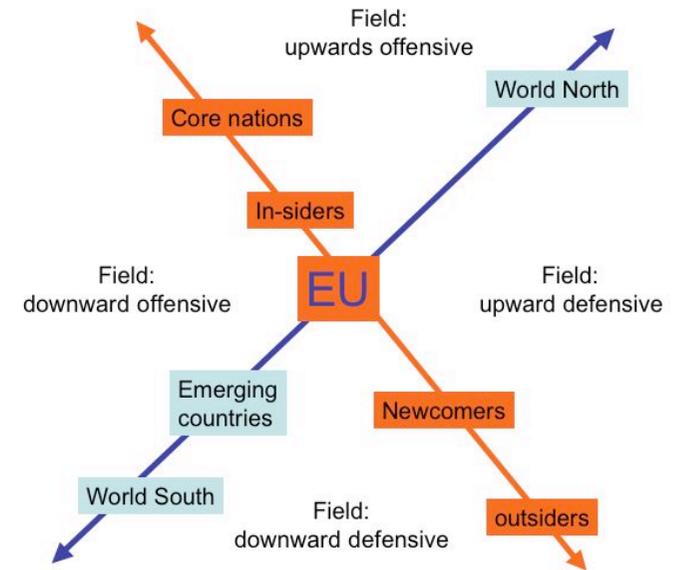


Figure 3: The axis EU and world society: member status and positions of country groups and patterns of alliance orientation (upward offensive/ downward defensive/ downward offensive and upward defensive).

United States under the new leadership of Obama.

The role of collective memory. Empirical studies show that images and conduct of a societal unit, for instance nations, are essentially explained by its collective memory. It is a central part of its (political and public) culture. But in modern nations collective memories are highly differentiated. At the one hand they reflect (1) the genesis as nation and (2) the status of the regions and actor as centres of gravity and identities. There is a lot of knowledge of this conception on national level, for instance, empirically analyzed in Switzerland and Ukraine. In the following we suggest that one of the significant problems of EU is the deficiency of collective memory. Europe tries to proceed without a cathedral.

Morphology of memory: European cathedral. One can illustrate it looking to the newcomers in the course of genesis of EU. The memory is a cathedral built by the founders and insiders of core countries in the past. The newcomers entry into the memory which is defined by the heroes, legends, stories as well as documents made by the previous members while the icons or characteristics of newcomers have to wait or are deposited outside. Indeed the

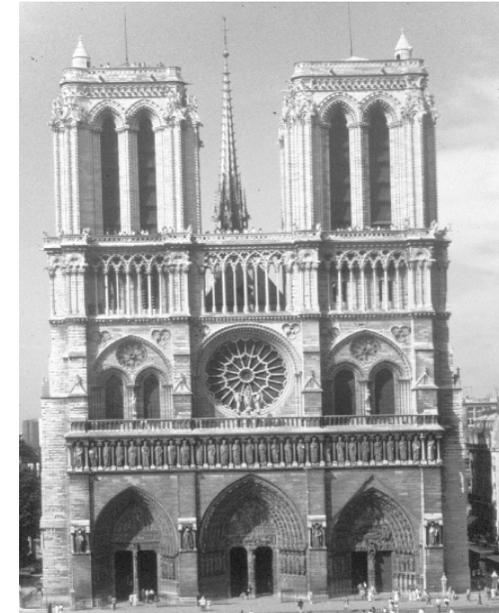
adoption to the “*acquis commun*” was absolutely prioritized before the entry. So the newcomers find the sanctuary of cathedral as the *central* parts of pan-European memory. They admire it maybe at the beginning but feel it’s made by core-nations and established by the insiders of EU.

What happens? After a certain time newcomers are installing their own parts of memory, that of national, regional experiences, their own heroes, saints and sacrum. They produce an *inward* looking part of memory, which contrasts to the central oriented one of core-nations and insiders.

We remember well that Poland’s special relations to US triggered a first divide between old and new EU in the case of geopolitics. In fact, newcomers are bringing with or create an *outward* looking memory. It goes back to experiences and periods of past affinities, interactions or traditions.

Swiss chapel. Central, inward and outward memories produce different images, attitudes and conducts. Evidently Switzerland is a microcosm for studying the role of collective memories. It is questionable of how one can take such studies for such a megacosmos like EU. However observations

Who builds the European cathedral a collective memory of EU?



The Swiss confederation looks back to a modest chapel combining an inward, outward and central looking memory.



in Ukraine or in other parts of Europe on national level can deliver promising results about the future of European super-memory.

So the newcomers and younger parts of Swiss confederation are more anchored in the outward parts of collective memory: they show more international identities and progressive dispositions than those regions, which are the stakeholders of the central part of memory. The latter strengthen the national level and the corporate identity of Switzerland as a national player.

Again the mountain regions, the ancient founders of Confederation, prefer the inward-looking part of memory. They strongly articulate local identities and conservative attitudes in public affairs. There are newcomers, especially visible in the Canton Jura, which combine the outward orientation with an inward-outlook. Empirical results confirm that the affiliation to these different parts of memory (political culture) is the strongest predictor of a whole range of relevant attitudes and conduct in public affairs. Compared to the European cathedral the Swiss case is rather chapel but evidently a very illustrative one.

Functions of memory.

EU strategies have to work with paroles, images and looks back to a series of episodes shaping models (as we showed in part I). It is evident that the insecurities of current events make visible that the European cathedral has strong deficits summarised as follows:

Super-memory of core players. It denies the national or regional memories by efforts to focus exclusively to past periods of Europe as a whole where participated the founder and core players.

Super-memory of missing topics. The EU memory creates missing values and forgets elements and events in the past, which remain relevant in regional or national experiences and cultures of members and mainly of newcomers.

Super-memory of rites. The remembrances are purely copies of former events and items, which should build a kind of archaic community. Essentially such events are, for instance, the end of 2nd world war, the entries of different countries.

Active super-memory. This strategy is evidently the most reasonable; it fills actively the intersections between national and European patterns of memory and tries to profile them as

twins; the one is national and the other European. However it seems that the twins often mutate into Janus-faces – looking into different directions, local, national versus European level.

European politics focused strongly on only one of the resources, of *one* world, the Smith scenario of economic efficiency. It was used as the “kategorische Imperativ”, the master model for EU. Will this situation used as a “creative destruction”? Is it imaginable that the European Union could be reinvented and not only reconstructed? Let’s taken a look to recent trends.

We MUST or we SHOULD. Baroso opened the recent conference of EU with “Europe must lead”. This strategy is currently the effort to push EU on the global axis offensively upward to global leadership (hegemony) with the allies of global North and selected powers of emerging countries. If we look back to past, this “MUST” strategy is rooted in governance by joint policy making (V) and transformations by norms (VI). The events let expect that joint and strengthened governance (V) and compliance to norms, mainly in financial issues (VI) predominate absolutely in regard to financial crisis.

The EU seems to mobilise its super-memory facing the financial crisis. The threats and the “one boat” situations of all members should let negate and forget national or regional matters. The current situation allows ritual references to a pan-European memory of earlier threats and events. Significantly new leadership ambitions confirm this strategy by offensive new styles evident at the case of Sarkozy, Brown, Merkel and of financial ministers in face of newcomers and outsiders like Switzerland, Austria, FL, Monaco. The MUST strategy looks like a kind of charismatic fatalism mobilising Euro-Fatalists against the Romantics (see part I, p.)

But the EU is far from a morphology, which guarantees the success for such a MUST strategy. First the internal axis of disparities are too big between core leaders (Germany, France, UK, Italy) and insiders (other Western , Southern and Scandinavian members) against the newcomers, new members in Central Eastern Europe and candidates in Balkan or outsiders like Switzerland, Norway. In Eastern European member states the super-memory is hardly contested, for instance by Hungary, remembering that currently the periods of two Europes (II) is coming back.

This is only one of a series of significant events revealing strong tensions.

The tensions inherent to the European morphology are relevant for understanding the functions of collective memories. The reverence in the cathedral is falling and dissident reactions are consciously articulated. It is not hazardous that a Czech artist David Cerny created a scandalizing art work Entropa for Brussels; it presented a pan-European memory composed by ironic and cynic installations at the occasion of inauguration of Czech Republic as presidential nation. But even earlier insiders, Ireland, show the symptoms of newcomer's dilemma. They look back to the European memory under the point of own experiences. The European super-memory of the MUST group evokes inward trends, i. e. the own national and regional memory turns back. They can go hand in hand with outward moves to countries, regions or cultures outside of Europe visible since the beginning of membership in EU.

In fact, the national and regional memories of (mainly the Eastern) newcomers have been systematically negated and denied by the super-memory. The episode agora and round tables (IV), the main contribution of

Eastern Europe to world society's evolution was denied and fragmented in a very short time. The pacification by market (I) could become a new significance if hostilities between winners and losers within EU increase. Episode II, the experiences of two Europes in Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, is forgotten in pan-European memory or has no place in the cathedral.

It remains one episode, the generation of new technological and consumer styles. Evidently this period was first ranked and attractive at the beginning of the fall of curtains. But since this period the "sex appeal" of technological and consumer's paradise has lost its power. The crisis of one world in financial terms spreads its shadow also on the myths of new technologies and consumer styles as the elixir of EU.

It is quite clear that this situation leads to the transition from "we must" to "we should". The EU has too strong tension on its axis, has not built a pan-European memory able to provide a new master model for mobilising its parts, people as well as elites. The national and regional memories are outside of Europe's super-memory. The more the

insecurities the stronger the appeal of own memories are. So as a result the EU is in fact on the track to episode VII, new diversity and recovering of national and regional identities. The must remains overwhelmingly rhetoric.

We CAN or we COULD. The plebiscites for European constitution have been the last experiment to risk the CAN-mode to create European community by plebiscites. It failed even in a core nation, in France. The following treaty tried to pass again by the mode of must (without options of plebiscites) but again failed in Ireland and in Czech Republic. Imagine that Baroso would say “we can lead” instead “we must lead”. In that way the EU would open a new period of chances. First a big stress between Atlantic and the borders of former SU would be dissolved. The modus of “can” means a radical change of master model. Europe is primordially participating in the global scenario of civil world. It is an optimistic outlook of European as well as global developments. But if we analyse the events in civil world scenario where Europe participate actively one observes a strongly biased guideline. “Civil” means judging, assessing the “bad” things.

Europe plays the role of a teacher addressing the rest of the world.

The change from must to can opens another chance. In European recent history newcomers (and outsiders like Ukraine, Russia, Georgia) demonstrated how round tables and public mobilisations could trigger transformations with very high risks. It is evident that the European super-memory will remain as long a failed construction as it is not filled by the cosmos of diversity inherent to Europe’s national and regional landscape.

Alternatives. The collapse of Europe’s master model, that of one world, could be an incentive to invest into other and alternative resources and scenarios of development. So the cycles of “musts” which become “should” could be ended. It is necessary to change to the era of “we can” or “we could”. Cathedrals have been built not under time stress but absorbed hundreds of years. And cathedrals created a macrocosm of microcosms risen in various resources and scenarios of development, civil society (Kant), negotiating communities (Rousseau), one world (Smith), domesticating order (Hobbes), own world (Leontjew) and in responding to threatened world (Cassandra).