

How many worlds

Announcement

- Two papers to submit
- A joint action
- The network will gain 2000\$
- In Bialystok we discuss the papers
- Presence at the 25th anniversary of World Society Foundation, autumn 07 in Zurich

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Joint publication

Last October we proposed to submit two papers to the call of World Society Foundation „The Regional Shaping of World Society“:

- „*Globalisation and Civil Society in the NIS: Hindering and accelerating factors in Belarus, Georgia, Russia and the Ukraine*“.
- *How Many Worlds? Transnational Interactions between Western and Eastern Europe. Developments and Scenarios.*

Both propositions are accepted by the board. If we submit both papers until October 2005 the authors of the network are granted by 1000\$ for each paper.

How can we do it? We propose a two step procedure for the papers.

First, we prepared a general guideline for both articles as an expert questionnaire. It specifies country-specific questions and the call for empirical data, if they are available. Please answer them as well as you can on the basis of your background and of your knowledge.

Second, after your answers, we will propose a final redaction team for finalising the papers. It will be fine, if we could discuss the material in Bialystok.

Preparing Sofia (July 04) with the country-specific comments on the Georgia report „How Georgians view Democracy“, we started with an experiment. These cooperations are challenged by the papers.



In the meantime the diffusion of the results made progressions. At the occasion of the Eastern European Day at the University of Fribourg we elaborated a presentation under the title

„Understanding Democracy in Georgia. Five readings and a comparison.“

The paper is available on the homepage www.culturprospectiv.ch (under aktuell). It is a trial to approach the transition dilemmas and the different trends in the NIS in an open – transdisciplinary approach. However we elaborated a PPT presentation (31 slides) using empirical materials from Georgia and selectively from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

It was an exciting experiment and we guess it could be developed to a style of discussion, cooperation and publication in the next years!

Can we develop to a multinational Center of Competence transcending more and more the borders between East and West?

In a very abbreviated form we summarised the general idea. The questions posed to each team you will find in an additional document.

Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach

Therese Walter

Towards a dynamic and societal code

LOCLAB

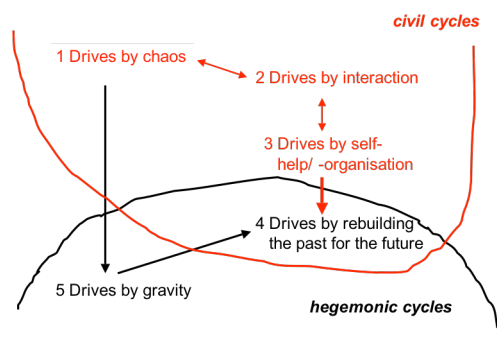
How local
labour markets
work as drives
for change?

See Newsletter VI
preparing the meeting.

“Additionally to the
postsocialist
ambivalences the
Chernobyl disaster
generated a big chaos.
How did the regions in
the three countries,
Brjansk, Chernigov,
Gomel try to react? The
project „Chernobyl
Generation“ seeks the
answers for 2006

One of the most crucial challenges is to find a general frame for understanding the drives for *change* in face of structural situations and conditions in the countries. We know that social science is trained for the description of static situations. We will not forget them but focus on insights into the dynamics observable or probable. In the image of Eastern European as well as Western societies the most interest is addressed to sociopolitical facts. The focus on society is less developed. Therefore the code should emphasize the *society and societal domains*. Figure 1 illustrates a guideline to find the modules of such an approach: The transitions trigger in each country the well known and often described *drives by chaos*, the post-socialist ambivalences, insecurities or „social entropy“. They contrast to the effects of „old“ orders as well as to „new“ ones in a characteristic way in each country. How are they responded?

Figure 1: Five modules of a code



In each country the chaos generates specific changes of *interactions*, drives for coping with postsocialist ambivalences; in Georgia and in the Ukraine, for instance, strong movements started to create a public space by demonstrations. It was strongly supported by the symbolic space generated by the mass media. As these drives often are quite visible and diffused by the international

media the *drives for self-organisation* of people remain more in the dark zones of scientific and public interest. The reason is evident: These drives are strongly hindered by the existential and structural conditions rooted in the societal situations, the social inequalities of life and the sociopsychic states of people within the polarity between the „We“ and the „They“. How can we describe the hindering and promoting of these drives in face of the different structural constraints and polarities in the countries?

How to organise the personal and collective life looking back to the past and seeing forward to the future? In the post-socialist countries the *rebuilding of the past* as response to the insecurities and future life expectations is a very essential source for drives to change. How can this process be described in the different countries? One could characterise these four drives for change as a „civil cycle“, which is more or less strong in each country. However the outcome of these trends and drives is very unclear and not stable. This fact is linked to the dynamics of the other cycle, which one can name as the hegemonic one. In each country the chaos – and the following civil drives – are controlled by the *drives of gravity*. Mainly the bigger states and nations can mobilise the central role and rich resources as a centre of the past claiming for continuity. The autocentric perspective is imposed on civil trends with two intentions – to consolidate the hegemony within the nation and in face of the international competition and power play. The smaller countries try to change the orientation to gravity centres, for instance to the West. The rebuilding of the past becomes a battle field between the agents of the civil cycle and those of the hegemonic one.

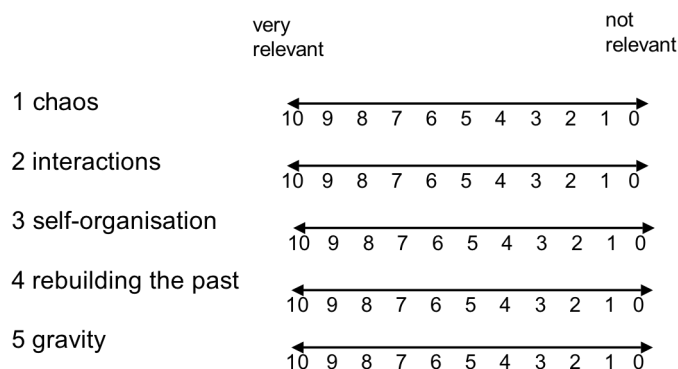
The expert questionnaire as an instrument able to learn.

In the annex you will find the expert questionnaire (as a ppt and rtf) document. Please try to reflect the questions and to give an answer. It is evident that this approach is a first step for finding the base lines for the articles. It is evident that the questionnaire itself can learn: the meanings and the interrelations of the five modules are elaborated to the code.

We are grateful if each team sends us a first draft until the 15th of August 05. So we are able to react and plan the second step (formulation of the paper) in Suprasl (Bialystok) in September 05.

The expert questionnaire: 1. Question „General ratings“

Which of the five drives are the most relevant at now for the understanding of the societal changes in your country?
Please give a rating between 10 and 0!



An experiment in Tbilisi. Reading the five modules in public space

A Summary of the Presentation on the Eastern European Day – University of Fribourg „Catching Up: Ukraine and Georgia Back on Track Towards Democracy“ 2 June – 3 June 2005

Hans-Peter Meier-Dallach and Merab
Pachulia

How can we read societal trends in the public space of a society? During the SCOPES- and INTAS-projects coordinated by us we embedded the systematic scientific work into qualitative explorations of the places where we hold our meetings. Five readings of Georgian “public stories” lead to hypotheses, which help to describe the drives for change in Georgia and to compare them with the other NIS-countries involved into the network.

Skateboards from Switzerland. From Istanbul a group of Georgian school kids fly with us to Tbilisi. They show the skateboards bought in Switzerland after they presented Georgia at an International Youth Music Festival in Zurich. They are expected and welcomed like

heroes at the airport of Tbilisi. On the airport, parents and friends, a mass of people, welcome the children like Argonauts; the interactions with the foreign context are multiplied. The youth crossing new borders and returning back is the reading off a first hypothesis, the *interaction drive*. The changes are triggered and accelerated by the new contacts and interactions with Western countries. In small states the probability for interactions is much higher than in big ones. The interaction drive explains a lot of further empirical findings.

The Zigzags in statistics. One year later at the end of 2003 we received a figure from Tbilisi. It shows the line of the optimists that say the “things in Georgia are going in the right way”. Since 96 the line jumps from 54% to 88% in 01, back to 76% in 02, up to 84% in August 03 but it falls four months later to 14%. Until today the trust to the right way regained the level of 39%. The Zigzags reflect a kind of

“Globalisation is a trigger of chaos all over the world, in Eastern as well as in Western Europe: the EU referenda changed the whole socio-political landscape.”

continued

societal Tsunami in Georgia. In Russia the chaos produced by an earthquake is soon absorbed by the endless mass of land.

In small states chaotic events or whirls can't be contained so easily; they explode, like in Georgia, even in the statistics of public opinion. The interaction drive explains very important trends, for instance, the management of ambiguities and chaos in post-communist periods. The creation of a public space by rallies and mobilisations are trials to create strong perspectives to overcome the post-soviet chaos ("momentokracja"). The second hypothesis "*drives by chaos*" was readable on the streets where the masses welcomed the outcome of the Rose revolution. They have felt that the chaotic drives could produce a "salto natale", the start to a new order and pathway to the future. It seems that in the bigger Ukraine the chaotic drives needed more power to avoid a "salto mortale" back to the established regime.

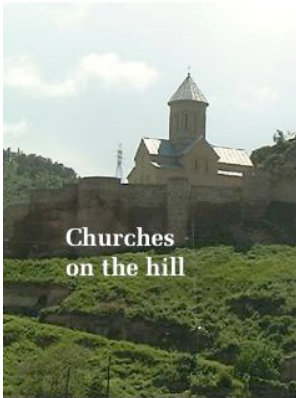
Stalin's mother remains in the grave. On Sunday we visit the Pantheon on the hill over Tbilisi. We learn to read a third hypothesis, the *drives by rebuilding the past*. Its content is to exhume bad figures of the past or to re-bury the good figures extinguished from history before. The drives from the past are evocated and steered by those of the expected future. The graveyard becomes a lake with islands of the collective memory; each of these islands generates a feeling of trust and hope that the best pathway to the future, the present and coming figures and heroes, is supported in the heritage from the past.

Churches on the hill. There is a church on a hill guarded by a monk who tells us the history of its destructions and rebuildings. Big powers imposed again and again their potency – Mongols, Turks,

Iranians, Russians. Georgia had to hold its ground against them since the early history; it fought as a geopolitical lightweight against heavyweights. The geopolitical heavyweights have a big land mass, raw materials, access to the seas, a mass of people. They feel and behave as a centre of gravity, which needs neither a justification nor a legitimacy. From this reason the heavyweights are self-sustainable as symbolic centres of gravity. Besides history and the past even god and the sacred are self-constructions: Russia invented the third Rome; Germany the Aryan myth, Stalin the Soviet religious myth, Mao the Chinese revolutionary ideology; the Iran transformed into a holy state under Khomeini.

The Georgian monk tells the story of the church as a permanent resurrection of Jesus Christ who seems to be incorporated into the stones surviving each destruction as well as rebuilding. It explains the meaning of gravity in the eyes of a weightless country: in Georgia the gravitation centre is the continuity of the religion; it is not necessary to invent god since it is sufficient to rebuild its residence. The fourth hypothesis is readable in the history told by the monk and the pictures on the walls: *the drive for gravity* if a country is simultaneously weightless.

Georgia's pathway as a lightweight is currently again very interesting. The recent events around the 60th anniversary of the Victory Day highlight the competition for the future world order. In this symbolic fight the small states, the Baltic countries and very impressively, Georgia, have to play a prominent role. What the theory stated long before seems to become current: the fights on the worldwide hegemonies are taking place in the area of the Caucasus and Central Asia (Mackinder's heartland theory).



drives for gravity

"Russia invented the third Rome; Germany the Aryan myth, Stalin the Soviet religious myth, Mao the Chinese revolutionary ideology; the Iran transformed into a holy state under Khomeini."

World_Drives

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The Eastern European network

The network includes teams from eight countries, which cooperated in a series of INTAS- and SCOPES projects: Belarus (D. Rotman), Bulgaria (E. Ignatova), Georgia (M. Pachulia), Poland (M. Bienkowska), Russia (T. Vorozheikina, Y. Levada), Ukraine (M. Churilov, O. Stegnyj), Germany (N. Genov, R. Ohliger) and Switzerland (J. Juchler, R. Schaffhauser, Th. Walter).

The teams constitute the Eastern European Branch of WORLD_DRIVES. The most important projects are:

- How Georgians view democracy? (SCOPES FGEPj65810)
- The role of regions in transforming post-communist societies: Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine as cases for comparison (INTAS-1997-02025)
- Regions in the Ukraine: dynamics, movements and politics (INTAS-94-3938)
- LOCLAB: Dynamics and social impacts of the labour markets on local communities in Eastern Europe accelerated by the EU-Integration (INTAS-04-79-6799)

continued

Indeed, the imageries produced by the press let expect a turning point. Georgia seems to be on the road to the societal models typical for the Western hemisphere. The Euro-Atlantic civilisation seems to embrace more and more the “good governed” countries of the NIS, first the small states. The emotions for this vision on the sun side of the world society are obvious in large groups of the population of these states, where to a smiling President Bush the smiling of the honoured Presidents responds. Big *versus* small seems to mutate into big *and* small. Small states are often under strong pressures by the big hegemonic states. The more important is that in periods of increased rivalry, the smalls have to be the first friends if the rival super power is in sight.

WE and THEY. Again back to 2002. We visit districts of Tbilisi, which were touched by an earthquake shortly before. Some houses are badly damaged but people remain there. Stones from broken

walls are used as barricades, which should hinder the traffic circulation and its vibrations endangering the defective houses. It is a security measure initiated by the local residents. We feel that we are seen as visitors from outside and are not part of their “WE” (the poor people) living there, but rather near to “THEY” (the rich elites) very distant from them. The fifth hypothesis can be read passing through districts and streets: *the drives by self-help for survival*. Passing through the roads in the night one can see the flares of the very small kiosks like candle lights in a church; they offer some basic things. It is the beginning of a basic democracy. The “WE” and the “THEY” opposition is a strongly felt quasi-scientific term. It reflects in an everyday language those contradictions, which describe and explain the most relevant factors essential for understanding democracy in Georgia; we illustrated them on the basis of the empirical results of research:

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