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1989, the ‘others’ of Europe and some implications for a political Europe

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Abstract

An enlarged EU might be structurally integrated, but the ways in which pre-1989 EU members used to imagine their counterparts during the Cold War period have profoundly influenced the ways in which ‘east’ Europe has been and still is thought nowadays (hence the remaining ideational divergences within a political Europe). The paper argues that European construction and post-1989 enlargement of the EU towards East imply a form of subtle and untold domination of the Western part of the continent subtlety and at times unconsciously by institutions of the EU or by academic discourses on Central and Eastern Europe. Such domination, as an unintended consequence, is best explored on the ideational level and through the central role that 1989 has taken in this process. Discussing slope-metaphors and allochronisms in the field of a European common memory, this paper shows how artificial distances are created between Eastern and Western Europe. By combining allochronism and heteronomy, we have coined the new term of ‘heterochrony’ to express the situation in which a given group does not have the capacity of choosing its own laws and the cognitive means to think of itself and where such situation is due to reasons of different time location (in that case in a backward situation) than other autonomous groups. Such heterochrony might lead to a halt of transnational cooperation in Europe and have negative impacts on the self-perception of Europe.

Keywords

European identity, European memory, symbolic other, othering process, 1989, path-dependency, neo-institutionalism, allochronism, heterochrony, western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, history, self-understanding of Europe.

1. Introduction: Othering process, cognitive means and time.

We will discuss in this paper the view that the enlarged European Union we now live in and which we intellectually perceive is as much the direct result of 1989 than it is of the efforts to create the first European Communities in the 1950s. The breaking apart of the Communist block ushered in a new era for a political Europe where positive features (EU enlargement commenced in 1995 by incorporating the hitherto 'neutral' states of Austria, Finland and Sweden, not to mention the 2004 and 2007 enlargements) coexist with more problematic ones (unsolved security agreements between the EU and Russia, some occidentalist reductionist ways of describing Eastern Europe in urgent need to catch up with (Western) Europe, or the stumbling blocks still existing between East and West on the debate of a common European memory). One could say that 1989 'made' Europe, but in an imperfect manner. So, what has been the impact of European integration on 1989? Prior western European integration facilitated and legitimated, it may be surmised, the notion of a 'return to Europe' voiced by the dissidents and revolutionaries in the Soviet bloc as well as the Gorbachevian notion of a Common European Home. Yet, how was the transformation of Europe after 1989 constrained and enabled by the pre-existence of a common western political project?

1989 'made' Europe because what was hitherto a divided continent now became united. More specifically, the revolutions of 1989 brought in their wake German unity. Negotiations regarding German unification and the integration of this new Germany into western structures were to change fundamentally the reality and the idea of Europe. One could say that Germany epitomizes the problem of an enlarged Europe Union to 27 members: by incorporating the *eastern* part *into* the *western* part of the FRG, the historical experience and identity of the GDR tended to be written off and to disappear (and quite symptomatically, they are dubbed the 'new' *Länder* so as to insist that things had be started anew there) based on the assumption that they had little, or simply nothing to offer to the western experience or ways of doing politics and of imagining itself.

We will argue that a same phenomenon has happened between EU15 (western Europe) and the new 12 EU member states: 15+12 may have created an enlarged EU that is now indeed structurally integrated (or in the continuous process of complete integration), but the ways in which EU15/West Germany used to imagine their/its counterpart(s) during the Cold War period have profoundly influenced the ways in which 'east' Europe has been and still is thought nowadays (hence the ideational divergences that this conference tries to tackle). Put differently, the process of ideational convergence that EU enlargement should have carried through and fulfilled in the period 1989-2004 was profoundly and negatively affected by an occidentalist bias in which the GDR/Eastern Europe was thought not on the basis of its own merit, features or characteristics but as the negative Other of an integrating Western Europe. 'Othering' mechanisms most frequently contribute to simplifications and negative stereotypes, and this paper will discuss some of these mechanisms and their consequences in the power relation between eastern and western Europe. Of interest for us here will be the case of collective memory around European themes, political contributions to a European *acquis* and questions of collective autonomy, and how 1989 has been a turning point in such problematic mutual perceptions between Eastern and Western Europe. The paper will not discuss the institutional arrangements of post-1989 EU life but dwells at length on ideational and cognitive issues for two reasons. One because 'Europe' (as a political project) needs to rethink itself if it wants to be more inclusive and more democracy-friendly (the self-reflective dimension of Europe). Second, because for individuals and state to feel as fully equals within the

European realms need not just to have the same access to EU institutions but should also have equal access to cognitive means¹ (the capacity of auto-institution on the cognitive level).

Of central concern in this paper is the study of certain discourses articulated around deep differences between East/West and favoring dichotomous understanding of Europe. We will try to understand why such discourses occur, what are their meanings and discuss some of their examples, a famous illustration being that of Norman Davies when he dissects the division ‘East and West Europe’. In that perspective (and in his critique the occidentalistic-cum-orientalistic framework) Norman Davies shows how the famous curriculum course on ‘Western Civilisation’ introduces sloppy reasoning and judgemental dualisms of the following kind:

1. That the western and eastern halves of Europe are separate entities with little or nothing in common.
2. That Eastern Europe is not really part of Europe, or not part of ‘the real Europe’.
3. That the East-West division of Europe, which can be observed in different manifestations at different times, is fixed and permanent.
4. That ‘the West’ is superior.
5. That all summaries of Western civilisation / European history can safely omit anything which belongs to the different and inferior East. (The only exception to this rule is Russia, which, being powerful, automatically qualifies for inclusion.) (Davies 2006: 60).

This type of idea is also somehow embedded in much of the political science literature dealing with democratization and civil society promotion. There, one can find similar biases simply in the fact that ‘transition’ has to be managed from outside by western donors (instead of counting on local forces), or that civil society often has to be constructed and engineered into the right type of political participation (rather than leaving the existing institution choosing their own course of action and rhetoric to do so).²

Attila Melegh, in a recent stimulant book, questions also such dualisms and argues that an East-West slope runs across the self-perception of Europe. This slope implies a sense of normative judgment where the west is the positive endpoint of the slope (embodied by a liberal humanitarian utopia) that easterners of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) are supposed to climb to reach ‘freedom’, ‘democracy’, ‘market economy’ and the like, while on the lower end, an abnormal East is trailing behind in a state of ‘backwardness’ in which the legacy of the past or ‘incomplete nationalisms’³ weighs heavily (Melegh 2006: 1-3). Melegh’s point is obviously not to ‘measure’ at which points various countries, institutions or individuals are positioned onto this slope, but “is rather how these ‘East-West slopes’ based on the idea of diminishing civilization toward the ‘East’ enable the translations of ‘liberal humanitarian utopias’ onto a global scale and how the related identity structures actually operate and transform themselves into social and political action or individual narratives in the context of Central and Eastern Europe” (ibid: 2). In other words this imaginary slope has a constitutive role in the self-perception and self-understanding of people of and involved with Central and Eastern Europe.

We will argue in this paper that European construction (around the EU, alternatively referred to as ‘Europe’ as oppose to Europe, the geographical space independent of the political Union) and enlargement of the EU towards East imply a form of subtle and untold domination of the Western

¹ I draw here inspiration on the work of Castoriadis for whom autonomy is not just a political autonomy a la Rousseau, but also the capacity to choose its cognitive means to do so (Castoriadis 1986, 1997 and 1999). We will develop later this point in the part dealing with heterochrony. See in particular Section 3.b.

² For a critique of this Promethean conception of democracy and civil society promotion which does not consider enough local resources and that has negative social effects, see, e.g., Hann & Dunn (1997) and Mendelson (2002).

³ For an overview of the alleged defect of Eastern European nationalisms, see Todorova (2005).

part of the continent subtly and at times unconsciously by institutions of the EU or by academic discourses on Central and Eastern Europe. Such domination, bordering at times with coloniality⁴ as an unintended consequence, is best explored on the ideational level and through the central role that 1989 has taken in this process. That there was a relation of power between the EU and (soon to be) candidate Eastern European states in the period 1989-2004 is out of doubt (one just needs to think of the Copenhagen criteria to respect in order to become part of the club). The sub-hypotheses we are exploring here is that domination is not a conscious fact but a consequence of *institutional* practices rooted in a European community born during the Cold War and of certain academic devices reinforcing divides between social groups (in our case, the ‘east’ and the ‘west’). In this process, 1989 played a particular role by leaving a lasting imprint on official discourses on Eastern Europe and influenced by a reading of Communism having atomized and destroyed all positive constitutive elements in Eastern Europe that had no other issue but to catch up and emulate the western ways of doing.

Such view can be found elsewhere nowadays in some of the debates about a European memory and historical representation of Europe. To advance a metaphor, we could say that on the theme of European memory and identity, there is a sort of East-West slope running across the continent where, e.g. Eastern Europe still needs to come to term with the Holocaust and still needs to do some work on its collective history with regard to the extermination of Jews.⁵ We argue that there is a slope here as well, because differences in the *Vergangenheitsbewältigungen* tend to be expressed not only in normative term (‘they must come to term with this problem’, or ‘they have not done their homework’, etc.), but also in terms of different time locations (‘they are trailing back on the work on memory, etc.). Johannes Fabian, in his important albeit little quoted work on *Time and the Other* (1983), underlines that one of the favorite ways for anthropology to ‘make its objects’ is through time and what he terms ‘denial of coevalness’ (Fabian 1983: 32) or ‘allochronism’ (from the Greek ‘allos’ for ‘other, and ‘xronos’ for time). Allochronism could be defined as the (usually forced) positioning of one’s group in a different time than that of the reference group. His thesis is that “anthropology has emerged and established itself as an allochronic discourse; it is a science of *other men in another Time*. It is a discourse whose referent has been removed from the present of the speaking/writing subject” (ibid.: 143).

Although Fabian criticizes the discipline of anthropology (for its contribution to the realization of colonialism), his arguments runs parallel to that of Melegh, when the former sustains that anthropology “promoted a scheme in terms of which not only past cultures, but all living societies were irrevocably placed on a temporal slope, a stream of Time—some upstream, others downstream. Civilization, evolution, development, acculturation, modernization (and their cousins, industrialization, urbanization) are all terms whose conceptual content devices, in ways that can be specified, from evolutionary time” (Fabian 1983: 17). The problem with such allochronism and slope-metaphor is not that they ascribe people definitively to a certain place, or position on the scale of civilization or of *Erinnerungsarbeit*, but that they create artificial distances between different groups and that they ‘otherize’ given social groups. They put certain groups in a more active (the one judging the time location and deciding of the allochronism) or passive stance (the group lagging behind⁶). The negative results for the group at a lower end of such othering process and delineation

⁴ Melegh defines coloniality as “a system of power understood as a complex form of domination, including the hierarchical classification of the populations of the planet, the reformulation of local concepts of space and time, the export of sexual energies into the ‘East’, the ‘imperial gaze’ and most importantly the *colonization of consciousness*. The latter point can be summed up as ‘an energy and a machinery to transform differences into values’ and as the consequence ‘subalternization of knowledge and societies” (Melegh 2006: 29. His emphasis).

⁵ See Troebst’s seminal papers (2005, 2006 and 2007) on that matter.

⁶ Todorova (2005: 163f) also uses the concept of allochronism with regard to a certain analysis of the temporalities of Eastern European nationalisms.

process between active/passive, modern/traditional is first that, as Melegh argues, it affects the self-understanding of such people leading to discriminatory or racist views, and second that it disempowers them putting them in a situation of heteronomy⁷. By combining allochronism and heteronomy, we have coined the new term of 'heterochrony' to express the situation in which a given group does not have the capacity of choosing its own laws *and* the cognitive means to think of itself and where such situation is due to reasons of different time location (in that case in a backward situation) than other autonomous groups. Let us see now how such theme can be found in the post-1989 phase, how this has become an institutional problem and how it relates to the question of European memory.

2. Three questions on 1989, Europe: Directions and Pluralities

If there was an impact of 1989 on European 'integration'⁸, there is probably also some reflections to gain from the following reversed question: What has been the impact of European integration on 1989? In other words, has the transformation of a *post*-1989 eastern Europe been constrained by the *pre*-existence of a common western political project, west of the Iron Curtain? If so, how? To give short answers to this question, we will resort to three sub-questions.

The first question: *Has there been an impact of 1989 on European Integration? If so, of what kind?* This is well beyond the scope of this paper, and 1989 surely had a variety of impacts on European integration and European societies at large. A short answer, easier to give now that the 2004 and 2007 enlargements took place is that the collapse of Iron Curtain has allowed the entry of former communist as well as some neutral countries into the EEC/EU. 1989 has, in a way, given a new impetus towards a revamped and enlarged common 'European House' (to take the phrase of Gorbachov). But why was it that 'Europe' became the roof for integration of a post-1989 eastern Europe? This leads us to the second question.

What has been the impact of European integration on 1989? The response, though seemingly tautological, is simply another wave of 'European integration', yet of another kind. Since the EEC was one of the most effective supra-national political institutions at the time of the collapse of the Soviet empire, the model of European integration provided a direct blueprint or a clear horizon for eastern Europe (hence the (problematic) notion shared by many that there was a 'return to Europe'). The process is what is referred to in neo-institutionalist parlance as a case of path-dependency. Once the project of an effective European community was re-launched in the 1980s and that political momentum was given towards further integration by the 1987 Single Act, the existing and *already* expanding European institution was the natural candidate at the time of the Soviet collapse to preside over renewed collaboration between East and West. Other 'pan-European' institutions existed and mattered already back then, like NATO, Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Council of Europe, but since the post-1989 task included also the question of German re-unification (a still very sour point to many European states back in 1989, and an issue that had driven a decisive wedge in the East-West relationship in the

⁷ To define heteronomy, we will tap again into the work of Castoriadis. Autonomy, as pointed earlier, is the capacity to choose its own laws and the cognitive means to do so. An autonomous society is one that has the capacity of auto-institution, that is the capacity for societies to *openly* 'call into question their own institution, their representation of the world, their social imaginary significations' (Castoriadis 1997: 17).

In an heteronomous society, there is no capacity to choose its laws and/or there is closure on the cognitive level. By closure Castoriadis means that a given society does not have the possibilities to choose the ways and means in which they reflect about themselves. Closure implies the law of others imposed on this society.

⁸ The term 'integration' would be discussing since it is highly contentious. For a discussion of the term 'integration' see the work on US-influence on the first steps of European construction in Winand (1993) and Aldrich (1997).

nascent cold war in the late 1940s), the issue of East-West unification *had* to be subordinated to a *political* forum with *binding* supra-national powers and in which the *USA* could have a say.⁹ NATO could not be such a forum (because of its military nature and the reluctance of the Soviet Union/CIS to abandon all of its sphere of influence—although NATO was also part of the discussion back in 1989, as much as it is still part of the problem in Europe now if one just looks at the stand off between Russia and Europe on the question of Georgia this Summer), while the Council of Europe and the CSCE (transformed in 1994 into the OSCE) were only too loose inter-governmental institutions to be able to decide on such important matters. Moreover, as observes Delcour (2008), by the time of the Wall collapse, the EEC was already engaged in managing a flow of aid to Poland and Hungary and therefore the EEC was the natural candidate to cope with the task of helping Eastern Europe out of planed economy and of bureaucratic dictatorships.

Why would path-dependency be important in this phase of transition? Because institutions (such as that of the EEC and EU) have their development constrained by past learning processes and organizational memories rather than by totally new external impetuses.¹⁰ In our case, the institutional lasting imprint we will look is that of the cold war vision of Eastern Europe (See Illustration 2 below) that had been totally destroyed by the Soviet domination and which was therefore to be rebuild and reconstruct from scratch.¹¹ The EEC (soon to become EU) which was well active by 1989 as an inter-governmental forum, and which in part had just started working with some Central European countries, was therefore the natural candidate to oversee the re-birth of ‘Europe’, east and west alike, launching a new phase of European integration. This leads us to the third level of questioning, which has to do with the nature of ‘Europe’, as a political project, and the consequences of this dominant position acquired in 1989 by ‘Europe’ which was born out of the western European experience of integration.

What has been the impact of a pre-existent integrated political western Europe for eastern Europe? ‘Europe’, as a political project born of the creation of the first communities in the 1950s (European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community, EURATOM) was not a ‘neutral’ or ‘technocratic’ project, but was clearly a political project favoured and largely funded by the USA in the immediate post-WW2 period (Aldrich 1997). If one wants therefore to understand what has been the impact of a pre-existent political Europe (EEC) on the post-1989 Europe, one has to understand not only the EEC in the 1980s but also the origins of this political Europe, for it carries in seeds certain traits of the 1950s that might be (or have been) detrimental towards eastern Europe four or five decades later. It is thus important to understand the *biases* that ‘Europe’ has both for eastern Europe and for Europe as a geographical entity. It is puzzling to note, first of all, how the term “Europe” is now widely referred to as a short cut for a *political* Europe embodied now by the EU, yet, when one opens a history book on Europe, very little will be said about this political Europe, or that it is not so well ‘integrated’ with the history of European states (just to take two

⁹ On how the USA’s influence over Europe gradually vanished from the 1980s onwards, see Lundestad (2003).

¹⁰ On path-dependency and neo-institutionalism in general, see DiMaggio & Powell (1991: in particular pp. 192ff).

¹¹ One could argue that path-dependency is also important here because the nature of European construction has been to turn its back to a past of national antagonism and enmity (e.g. France vs Germany) and to construct a positive collaborative project instead. The period 1989-1991 is another moment where Europe is reluctant to look at a certain past of rather unorthodox cooperation in the field of military cooperation in the shadow of the NATO and of unpleasant alliances and flirts with extreme right-wing groups in Western Europe. The so-called GLADIO network of stay-behind armies in case of Soviet invasion was behind the strategy of tension by western European governments in the 1960s and 1970s. Ganser (2005) discusses at length these networks. It is interesting to see that these were partly made public around 1990 and 1991, but passed the Fall 1991, all European governments then refused to participate and comment on their existence. Can this be another impact of 1989, namely a sort of *Flucht nach vorn* to avoid to deal with western European sore experience and concentrate on enlargement instead?

examples, we can quote the work of Tony Judt (2005)¹² or Harold James (2003), where the question of European integration occupies only a tiny portion of their influential works on Europe taken as a geographical aggregation of nation-states). So there is a discrepancy between the avowed goal of a political Europe to represent an integrated physical Europe in general and the place granted to this political project in historical works (and probably in the mind of most Europeans). This discrepancy is nonetheless interesting for us because it indicates that the political project of ‘Europe’ has been trying to project the idea of a common European fate as a basis for a full integration.¹³ It is this project, that one could qualify as hegemonic since it tends to erase other narratives and tends towards its own satisfaction via diverse institutional means. ‘Europe’ disposes of many ways and institutions through which it can diffuse its visions of ‘Europe’. These institutions take various forms, mostly cognitive ones by playing on European symbols, historical memory, etc. although the financial aspect is no less important, with massive projects on European identity, history, funded by the Commission over the last ten or fifteen years. Interestingly, the two declarations by the EEC/EU dealing explicitly with the need to bolster a common European identity were passed by the EEC in 1973 (Copenhagen Declaration) and in 1983 (Stuttgart Declaration), well before the end of the Cold War and in a period where ‘Europe’ meant western Europe.¹⁴

The surge of such literature on a ‘cultural’ Europe is one manifestation of a rather recent way of conceiving of ‘Europe’ as a place allegedly sharing a same cultural stratum.¹⁵ If we take the representation of European construction in a selection of European textbooks, we can see that there is a Europeanisation of the historical representation of ‘Europe’. By Europeanisation, we mean that we are not only witnessing the drafting of a common supra-national curriculum around Europe and the publication of common European textbooks in France and Germany,¹⁶ but also that there is a convergence in terms of what ‘Europe’ is about: National different views about European construction gradually vanish and leave place to a common narrative around a cultural Europe (Challand 2009). 1989 is presented as an important unfolding moment for ‘Europe’ since it offered the possibility for eastern Europe to converge and follow the path of western Europe.

The following map (Illustration 1) exemplify this occidentalist vision of Eastern Europe whose future depends on the west: once the Soviet block collapsed, Eastern Europe defined as ‘Balkanised’ will gradually transform (‘Occidentalise’ itself) and thus become an extension of western Europe (and here of the broader political environment of the post-9/11 era).

¹² Although, interestingly for our Conference, Judt’s narration precisely starts in December 1989.

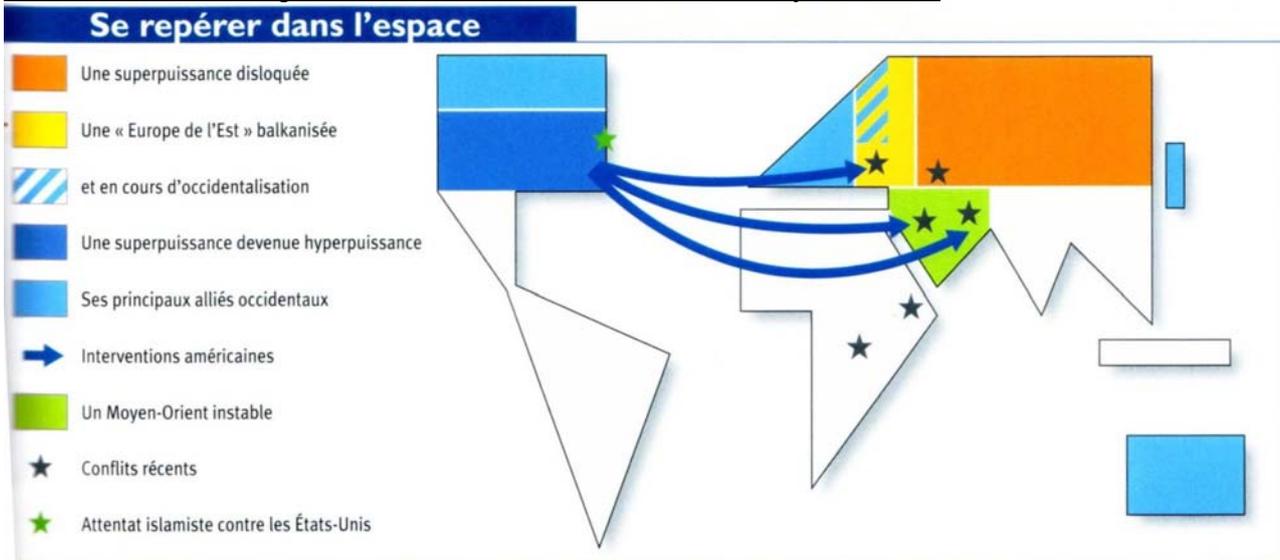
¹³ On the European identity debate, see Stråth (2005, 2007), Larat (2005), etc.

¹⁴ On the timing of such declarations, see Shore (2000).

¹⁵ I am grateful to Chris Amrbruster for observing that this literature on a cultural Europe is also an effect of 1989 and the ‘return to Europe’. The cultural claim to Europe could be made most easily from CEE on the basis of religion, art, literature and so on because other political and economic claims to Europeanness across the whole continent were perceived as weak. Back to a certain idea of ‘slope’.

¹⁶ See e.g. Delouche, F., & al. (1992). *Histoire de l'Europe*. Paris: Hachette, or Delouche, F., & al. (1997). *Histoire de l'Europe*. Paris: Hachette.

Illustration 1: The Impact of 1989, seen from a French History Textbook



Source: Binoist, B., & al. (2004). *Histoire. Terminales ES et L* (1st ed.). Paris: Magnard, p. 147

Such occidentalist representation mirrors what we have called earlier the lasting imprint of cold war visions of Eastern Europe and, which, in a way, pre-announces a hegemonic western European agenda on defining it. Illustration 2¹⁷ is a political poster of 1952 calling for the creation



B7 Westdeutsches Plakat von 1952

Illustration 2: West-German poster for a European Defence Community, 1952.

of the European Defence Community (a plan later voted down by the French Parliament in 1954). One sees that unity is needed to protect against the flood of red blood (a common way to refer to the communist threat), which tries to break into a peaceful and blossoming land. Europe is here still a loose understanding of anti-communism and not uniquely of the Six first member states (the banners listed here is more than those of the Six who joined the ECSC in 1951). While there is prosperity west of this 'wall', east of it, there is nothing but a turmoil of destruction and havoc provoked by the red peril. Let us now see more into details how the institutionally hegemonic views favoured by (western) 'Europe' tends to be problematic for a post-1989 Europe.

¹⁷ Reproduced in Funken, W., & Koltrowitz, B. (2003). *Geschichte Plus. Ausgabe Sachsen Gymnasien* (1st ed.). Berlin: Cornelsen - Volk und Wissen Verlag, p. 81. For a detailed analysis of the 'others' of Europe, see Challand 2009.

3. Projecting Europe

Projecting the integration of Europe on the basis of a common fate (and we touch here on the theme of the self-reflective dimension of Europe outlined in the introduction) is problematic in three senses.

3.a) Negative Western stereotypes of CEE as a land of emptiness?

First, in this vision of an always expanding (western) political Europe, it is as though eastern Europe does not have anything to offer to European integration. In the three questions I have raised above, it is as though eastern Europe was the land of emptiness, with no wealth, knowledge, institutions, or history upon which a post-1989 Europe could draw resources, only the passive receptacles of information, good practices and projects to be funded by Brussels (Illustration 1 perfectly matches this distorted reading). But is it the case that eastern Europe was so void of any internal resources for the project of European integration? Surely, the imposition of Sovietization and Stalinism had dire consequences in terms of cult of personality, control of the Communist Party and loss of economic, political or cultural autonomy. Yet, there were diverse attempts within eastern Europe to remodel socialism with a human face or to propose autonomy with different forms (certain writings of Castoriadis (1976) such as the *The Hungarian Source* are reminders of internal dynamics that have been overlooked and possibly forgotten in contemporary historiography), and Yugoslavia was a living example of what we could call a possibly creative de-alignment throughout the cold war, not to mention Charter 77 and many other non-orthodox communist underground movements in eastern Europe inspired by the Helsinki conference. Yet, by portraying eastern Europe as a single entity, one tends to lose these elements and consider only the common exposure to Soviet totalitarianism, which will not do justice to different national experiences and legacies. Paul Blokker's latest work (see his paper for this Conference) is precisely about retrieving the positive impact of central and eastern European political thought on political theory in general deserves particular attention against a reducing view on eastern Europe, while Christian Domnitz has presented elsewhere a typology of rich discourses about Europe that emerged in the *Ostblock* in the period 1970-1990 (Domnitz 2008). This latter work demonstrates how certain themes of a cultural Europe premised on Christianity or other historical traits have also emerged in the shadow of communism and highlight some common ground between East and West of Europe, far from views depicting Eastern Europe as void of possible contribution to Europe at large.

3. b) 'European' identity and history

The second problem with a certain idea of 'Europe' is related to the question of collective identity (and we will touch here on the necessity of auto-institution on the cognitive level introduced in the introduction). As known from social sciences, the question of identity is a very slippery one for it automatically refers to a political project and/or point of view (Wagner 2005). With regard to collective identity¹⁸ one should always consider the relation of a polity to its present, future but also to its past. An integrated Europe in the present form is an agglomerate of 27 member states whose future is to aim at integrating into a single market and, possibly, expand to include new member states in the future. Even if the stress is put on the *acquis communautaire* (expressed generally in legal terms) as a binding common element to the 27 member states, there remains the dividing element of different historical pasts. We could say here that western and eastern Europes (if we take these two realms as cohesive entities for the sake of the intellectual exercise) are in a

¹⁸ Another *quaestio vexata* is the difference between individual and collective identity. On this topic, see Winter & Sivan (1999: Intro), Bottici (2009).

situation of allochronism, in the sense that they are not in the same position and situation with regard to their past and do not have the same critical distance to their own history in order to perform the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that any polity has to perform after traumatic experiences.

Judt perfectly demonstrates how the end of WW2, Soviet rule and the liberation from USSR's yoke have provoked serious distortions of the past and have made of the past 'another country' (Judt 2002). Thus, the imposition of a Soviet totalitarian domination and the destruction of eastern European's public spheres, the remoulding of national pasts according to class struggle lines, the many *damnationes memoriae* and violent purges imposed during forty years, not to mention the problematic return of newly rediscovered heroes resisting Sovietization in the last 15 years (*ibid.*) and the surge of destructive nationalisms since the fall of the wall are all examples that the past still weigh heavily on eastern European shoulders. Yet, this weigh is difficult to tackle for not enough time has passed since. Western Europe, on the other hand, has had more time to confront its past and reconcile certain divide that traumatic experiences such as WW2 or the political instabilities of the immediate post-war in France, Italy or Germany provoked (yet, this does not mean that the *Bewältigung* has been perfect neither completed).

On the question of collective memory and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, the work of Stefan Troebst (2005, 2006) is most useful for he points to the fragmented themes of memory across Europe. If the Holocaust is a fundamental point for collective western European memory, other themes occupy the fore of collective debates in Central and Eastern European countries, changing from the trauma of foreign occupations and dismemberment by Nazi and then Soviet troops (Poland, Baltic Countries, e.g.), the Gulag experience, or also the terrible recollection of Holodomor (the 1932-33 famine in parts of the Soviet Union which struck large parts of Ukraine). Troebst is correct to state that the 2004 enlargement has revealed the depth of the difference in terms of collective memory between East and West Europe.¹⁹

Henri Rousso's article on the dilemma of a European identity (2004) is central for our discussion of heterochrony. Rousso indicates first that there seems to be a pattern in which collective occultation and recollection of historical traumas follow one another (amnesia, anamnesis, etc.). Second, there are also uncompressible times through which historical memory has to go through before any given large social group is able to accept a commonly shared interpretation of the collective past: one cannot expect that a society will deal with its past right after the end of a traumatic experience. Judt's concluding essay 'From the House of Dead' of his *Postwar* (2005) shows the timing and length of occultation of certain debates. To come back to the theme that 'Europe' is in need of a common memory to reinforce its sense of identity, one should note that if 'Europe' is about using western European historical experience as a possible foundation for a European identity (as a way to go beyond war between nations, and per *antonomase* a war between France and Germany), then this historical experience might not be easily accepted by Eastern Europeans for two reasons. First, because not all Eastern Europeans have the same traumatic past to confront (Troebst 2006) and because they are in a different phase of their work on memory (*Erinnerungsarbeit*) since they have just come out the traumatic Soviet domination for forty years.

We are now back to the allochronism question. If one sustains that Eastern Europeans are dragging their feet in acknowledging the centrality of the Holocaust for a common European identity, this is not just putting them in another time (a la Fabian), but it is also *forcing* onto them a certain theme to confront at the expenses of those considered more urgent by the collective memory

¹⁹ „Auch der Holocaust-Holodomor-Gedächtnisgraben ist erst im Zuge der EU-Erweiterung sichtbar geworden. Um Überschwang der Nach-Wende-Zeit waren diese Themen nicht erörtert worden. Die öffentliche Diskussion hat gerade erst begonnen.“ (Troebst 2005).

of this region. It is in this condition that an allochronic statement ('they are dragging their feet..') becomes an alienating statement leading to a situation of heterochrony, that is a situation of cognitive heteronomy motivated in terms of different time locations.

The literature on Central and Eastern Europe and from Eastern European writers abound of the theme of allochronism. The idea of a 'return' to Europe implies in an indirect way different time locations and the necessity of 'touching base' with the main time of Europe. Some of Czeslaw Milosz's writings about his experience as a Pole in western Europe is tainted of connotation of backwardness and how this self-perception has affected him and co-nationals.²⁰ Note that allochronism is by no means a feature of western Europeans, but also by eastern Europeans themselves²¹. Barbra Törnquist-Plewa notes that "Polish 'Euro-enthusiasts' who advocate a speedy integration into the EU are deeply critical of Polish society and accuse it of being conservative, limited, fanatically religious, nationalistic, burdened with the heritage of the past and immature." (Törnquist-Plewa 2002: 237). The fact that allochronic trope can at times become heterochrony is exemplified in the following quote of Janis Peters, Chairman of the Writers' Union of the Latvian Republic and Latvian writer answering a comment in 1989 about Russians: "The proposition that the Russians are worse off is no consolation for the Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians, or a reason for waiting for a deteriorating situation also in the Baltic area. Why compare us with less developed regions? Compare us instead with Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark" (quoted in Karlsson 2002: 182). Here clearly the writer expresses the view that the Baltic countries resent being ascribed to a backward situation and would prefer to choose to be compared and be part of the more advanced Scandinavian club.

Heterochrony is therefore a serious hurdle in the ideational convergence of self-perceptions as 'Europeans' by Eastern Europeans. This impression for Central and East Europe that a certain past and certain type of *Erinnerungsarbeit* that provide significance mostly to western Europeans are leading Eastern Europeans to a certain form of resentment towards 'Europe'.²² Törnquist-Plewa stresses in the Polish case that "identification with Europe is made difficult by the fact that Poles do not feel accepted by those they want to identify with" (Törnquist-Plewa 2002: 239). This problem can hardly be written off for large parts of Eastern Europe which has suffered from external power (*Fremdherrschaft*) and it is extremely important to acknowledge this problem. So, while Troebst is right in pointing to a variety of traumas that Europeans have to confront, one should also think of the timing of trauma elaboration and *Erinnerungsarbeit*. One cannot therefore expect, e.g., Estonians to recognize the centrality of Holocaust for a European memory, when it is still facing burning questions about the past of Soviet occupation and Russification policies (Kattago 2008a) and has become (again) independent 'not even' twenty years ago. Any society should therefore have the right, on a cognitive level, to say: "Holocaust, or Holodomor, is not the central worry for us *now*" and assert its own priority in terms of collective memory, *if* such statements are accompanied by a corollary moral obligation to acknowledge the suffering of others. If not, there is an imposition from outside²³ of a given memory agenda that prevents full autonomy for that society. As put by the Estonian scholar Siobhan Kattago (2008b), there should be, between eastern and western Europe an 'agreement to disagree' on memory and cultural identity.

²⁰ See some quotes in Törnquist-Plewa (2002: 232ff)

²¹ This echoes the existence of oriental 'Orientalists' (à la Said) described in the context of the Middle East by Sadiki (2004: 180ff). Note that these oriental orientalist or in our case Eastern European allochronists are an indirect witness of a profound asymmetrical relations between two polities.

²² Similarly, in Turkey, many people are becoming increasingly Euro-skeptic in part for the reasons stated here.

²³ This is not to say that foreigners should have no say in the public debates about collective history and memory of another country. At times it can be salutary, if one think of the role of Paxton for France to eventually confront its Vichy past.

3. c) Europe as a western European experience

The third and final problem with a certain projection about the integration of Europe on lies in forcing the possibility of a common fate (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) for the whole of Europe. If this is done too rigidly, and by not taking into consideration the fact that by ‘European’ experience we speak in reality of *western* Europe’s historical experience, then it will be difficult for Eastern Europeans to accept a new imposition of a hegemonic past (Judt 2002). Indeed, there are some biases on the history of European integration that are the result of the context of the nascent Cold War which witnessed the birth of the first European institutions that still loom over certain debates and themes. Looking at the history of European integration through the prism of the Cold War, as done by Messenger (2006) is a good reminder (against the euphoria of federalist historiography²⁴) of the serious security considerations at stake in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the time where the first European communities were founded. What such history does not tell us really is that the context of Cold War served also an ‘imaginary war’, to take the phrase of Kaldor (1990) where the enemy was not so much the external ‘other’ (eastern European communism, or Stalinism as it was frequently described) but the internal ‘other’, namely the opposition of the western European communists in western Europe (or the red threat in the USA of the McCarthy era). The consequence of this was that for a few decades the discourse of the threat of the Soviets and of Stalinism (which was tied to the first years of the European communities) served the purpose of taming part of the political forces in the Europe of the Six (communist parties and trade unions in particular), undermining thus the possibility of representing the construction of a new Europe as a political project of *all* its citizens, and even in some cases alienating some segments of the population from supporting the European cause.²⁵ So one consequence of the brandishing of external other’s threat for ‘Europe’ with a view on internal affairs was that it turned effectively this external other into a forgotten other of Europe, in the sense that it reinforced the view that Eastern Europe was totally equated with threat and no other potential constitutive elements.

In a parallel way, and to come back to current times, one could say that a political Europe ought to be careful when representing itself as a positive project offering equal opportunity for all in its drive to open up new horizons for eastern Europeans and integrate into (western) Europe. After all, there is a sense of a Europe with two speeds, on the one hand, one within the Euro-zone and (at least until to the first days of 2008) with a differentiated access to mobility (with the Schengen area) and a reality of a prosperous western Europe and, on the other hand, still devastated socio-economic landscapes of the former eastern block. The contrast between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ *Länder* in Germany is a cruel reminder of this two-speed Europe. So to take up again the image of the Cold War, it is one thing to remind us of the historical origins of ‘Europe’, but another are the long-lasting consequences of the Cold War: to a certain degree, European integration of eastern Europe has overlapped with the military expansion of NATO, the history of ‘Europe’ is mostly that of a western Christian (be it Catholic or Protestant) Europe (at the expenses of an Orthodox and also from a Muslim Europe). Current debates about civil society, economic development, or standards of living still echo some of the debates of the 1950s about democracy and development (thinking back on Lipset’s *Political Man* (1960), or his ‘Requisites to Democracy’ (1959), or Rostow’s *Non-communist Manifesto* (1960), etc.). The Cold War might be over in facts, but ‘Europe’ might still carry along some of its scoria (Laqueur’s *Last days of Europe: Epitaph for an old continent* ought to be read critically in this light, I think). It would instead be interesting to explore, in the line of Domnitz (2008), another type of historiography that looks at the point of view of the ‘other’, in this case Eastern European themselves, that considers dissident intra-east European points of view both of the past and current times, or that sheds new lights on the continuing tensions within Eastern

²⁴ See Dinand (2006) and also Kaiser (2006).

²⁵ It is interesting to see how communist parties of western Europe have changed their position on Europe from the 1960s onwards, gradually becoming less anti-Europeanist to declared pro-Europeanists for most of them nowadays.

European societies *after* the 2004 enlargement. The best example consists of the puzzle of violent riots in Hungary to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1956 stand off, a proof of a continuing malaise despite a ‘successful’ transition, while the conflict over the Soviet War Memorial in Tallinn illustrates the need for non-hegemonic interpretations of the past in post-national polities (Kattago 2008a).

4. A final word: *The Other of Europe and Heterochrony*

This paper is a call to consider eastern Europe not simply as the void ‘other’ of (western) Europe by 1989 and to avoid western-euro-centrism at large when looking at European integration and 1989. Indeed when the presence of external ‘others’ loom over certain political debates or serve as a marker of differentiation between large social groups, this is often done at the expenses of a sound discussion of each other’s points of view and all too often serve only emotional purposes (one of which can be a *repli identitaire* fed by collective resentment) and lead to essentialisations both of the internal content of what ‘Europe’ is about (in terms of borders, culture, identity, or memory), and about its ‘others’—past and present ones.²⁶

Since Eastern Europe is the geographical space from which the ‘other’ of Stalinism and communism threatened the Europe of the Six in the 1950s, one should examine the relations between a political Europe and Eastern Europe also in this light and with great attention. Surely Eastern Europe no longer represents such an ‘other’ for a political Europe, but lasting imprints of the cold war period and mental maps (as shown in Ill. 2 and its contemporary version in Ill. 1) might render this work difficult. Now that ‘Europe’ is made of 27 member states, surely the centre of gravity of a common political Europe has moved eastwards, a fact that one could clearly perceive in the latest round of harsh negotiations (especially from Poland who tries to maximize its full membership into the EU and does not hesitate to behave, at times, in an arrogant manner since it is now part of the club) around the Treaty of Lisbon signed in December 2007. Yet, when it comes to writing the history of Europe or the description of ‘Europe’ as a cultural entity, the centre of gravity probably still has to be re-adjusted accordingly, giving more voice and space to eastern European experiences and projects. If not, one risks creating artificial binaries rendering ideational convergence around the EU impossible.

Such binary divides can also be found in the self-reflective dimensions of Europe when a certain type of occidental literature contributes to otherize through a variety of means and tropes about Central and Eastern European societies. One dimension of this contemporary ‘otherization’ process that we have discussed in this paper and which is, in our view, understudied, is the question of allochronism and this tendency to ascribe groups to different time locations. We have argued that the capacity of auto-institution on the cognitive level is as important for the viability of the European project as structural convergence around the EU has been and is for the 12 new member states. This capacity of auto-institution for Eastern European societies is currently most vividly necessary on the field of *Erinnerungsarbeit*, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and collective memory around the question of a ‘cultural Europe’. If not Eastern European societies feel that they are

²⁶ For some preliminary conclusion on the study of Islam and Turkey as the ‘other’ of Europe, see Challand (2008). For a plea to be more inclusive about the nature and content of ‘Europe’ see Shore (2000: 63):

“[...] Creating the ‘European identity’, as depicted in EU discourse, entails a degree of exclusion of the Other. [...] ‘European identity tends to become meaningful only when contrasted to that which is not Europe. As Europe consolidates and converges, and as the barriers between European nation-states are eliminated, so the boundaries separating Europe from its Third World ‘Others’ have intensified. [...] The problem with this approach to identity is its absolutism: its failure to recognise cultures as composite and hybrid entities.”

placed in a situation of heterochrony, this condition might lead to more than 'mere' ideational divergence, but possibly outright political standoff between different parties. Without referring to the question of heterochrony, the situation that Troebst describes about the impasse around the creation of a European Network of Memory and Solidarity (Troebst 2007) between Germany and Poland is, in part, close to one of heterochrony and where the current situation is an effective end to transnational collaboration. Difficult in these circumstances to envisage further 'integration' and larger debates about Europe as a cultural project. Going back to a better understanding of 1989 might instead lay the path of a richer and more diverse understanding of what constitutes Europe, East and West.

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