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Klaus von Beyme

# On Political Culture, Cultural Policy, Art and Politics



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Max Beyme, "Fall out" [Ausfall], May 2012. *Source* Reproduced by permission of the artist



# Introduction

I enjoyed the two volumes that Dr. Hans Günter Brauch has edited for me and I would like to thank him for this honour. The selected chapters represent the three main topics of my scientific work on

- Political theory and the history of political ideas;
- Comparative politics in West and East;
- Cultural policies and arts and politics.

The first two parts were included in the previous volume: *Klaus von Beyme—Pioneer in the Study of Political Theory and Comparative Politics* (PSP 14). This second volume *On Political Culture, Cultural Policy, Art and Politics* (PSP 15) includes a few articles on Comparative Politics in Eastern Europe. My teacher Carl J. Friedrich wanted me to submit my second work on Russia as a “Habilitationsschrift”, the second doctorate that was a precondition for a professorship in Germany at that time. I refused and said to him, “You can publish the book on ‘Soviet Federalism’ in your series, but I will submit to the faculty a study of Western countries (*Comparative Parliamentary Systems*)”. As I wrote in a publication edited by Hans Daalder, I have always wanted “to walk on two legs” (PSP 14)—ever since the time I was accepted as a student in 1959/1960 at the Lomonosov University in Moscow and as a research fellow at the *Russian Research Center* at Harvard University. The Lomonosov University was kind enough to honour my early decision by granting me an ‘honorary professorship’ in 2010.

The third topic is a revival of my interests as a young man and as a student. I worked for 2 years in a famous German publishing house and I studied the history of art as a minor subject. Only in my later years was I able to afford time for my six books and many articles in the field of culture, arts and politics. This special interest I shared with my son, Maximilian von Beyme, who is a media editor at ‘Deutsche Welle’, but as an artist he prefers to be called Max Beyme. When he was 14 years old, we made an excursion to the valleys of southern Germany. Both of us painted a pleasant panorama from a city wall. A distinguished gentleman looked over our shoulders and commented to me: “I like both pictures, but if I had to choose which one to buy I would prefer your son’s painting”. This was the moment I discovered that someone who is more talented must replace me as

a painter, and I decided to work only on the history of the arts in the future. I am grateful that Hans Günter Brauch had the idea of illustrating this volume with some of my son's paintings, which sometimes (the huge wall for instance) even relate to the topics of my writing.

Heidelberg, 19 April 2013

Klaus von Beyme



Max Beyme, "Taccoland" Last exit before singularity, December 2011. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

# Part I

## Transformation Theory



Max Beyme, "Borderline" [Grenze], July 2007. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

# Chapter 1

## Historical Memories in Political Theories: 'Conservative Revolutions' on the Road from the 'Culte Du Moi' to the 'Culte Du Nous'

### 1.1 Introduction: Search for Historical Memories in Political Theories in the Age of Ideologies

Political theories have always had a complicated relationship with past and future.<sup>1</sup> Until the events of 1789, the notion 'revolution' was hardly ever employed for political transformations, but was used rather in Copernicus' sense, "natural turmoil not under human control". The 'right to resistance' in Catholic as well as in Protestant theories normally *was aimed at the restoration of a 'good society', lost by arbitrary rule*. This meant that a positive image of the past still existed. With the French Revolution, old types of historical memories in terms of a biblical narrative, applied to national histories and supported by the iconography of rule with its pedigree from King David of Jerusalem to Louis XIV, lost their credibility. The only exception to this was the extreme right, in the work of thinkers such as Bonald, de Maistre or the early Lammenais. Even an influential book such as Chateaubriand's *Génie du christianisme* (1802) was too close to romantic 'sentiments', and was sometimes suspected of being 'protestant'. Chateaubriand's only political book, *La monarchie selon la Charte* (1814), was an astonishing document, demonstrating the acceptance of the 'faits accomplis' of a representative system. It documented a change to a kind of 'status quo conservatism', which was no longer oriented towards the 'status quo ante' before 1789. The past was reconciled with the present in the name of a changing future.

A different attitude to temporal structures was present in 'secularized theodicies'. Evolutionist models of history—"les grandes chronosophies", mixtures of "periodization ex post facto and prophecies for the future" (Hartog 2003: 22)—describing a kind of intrinsic momentum of history have been proposed from Condorcet to Hegel, Saint-Simon and the Utopian Socialists, Marx and Comte. If the *Weltgeist* did not produce the proper results, an 'enlightened intelligentsia' felt entitled to

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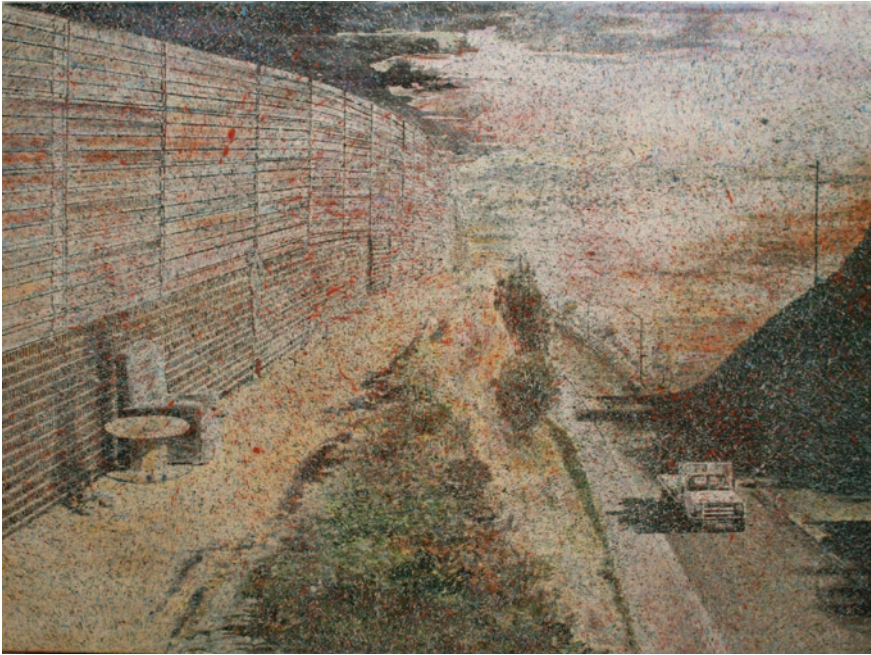
<sup>1</sup> This unpublished text was written as a paper for a working group at the "Maison des Sciences Humaines", Paris, 2005.

nudge historical development into the desired direction. Memories of the past were only used to reconstruct the steps which served for the implementation of a new and better future, as in the work of radical liberals and socialists of various shades. Reinhart Koselleck (1989: 374) was right to say “The smaller the historical experience, the greater was the expectation for the future”. There was no experience with building a new society after revolution. The importance of old notions was ‘temporalized’ and continued to live in the ideologies of the political camps from 1789 onwards. In times of revolution, the complexity of a quasi-five-party system was reduced to a dualistic code, which has been ideologized later in the works of Carl Schmitt and Niklas Luhmann as the normal course of development of political ideas.

The arrangement of conflicting parties changed, however, when the impact of the three French revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848 was weakening. Left and right elements merged in some ideologies. This was predominantly due to the change in the conservatives in the party spectrum, who were no longer simply ‘counter-revolutionary’ as in the time of Bonald and de Maistre. The conservatives no longer defended the *status quo ante* or the *status quo*. Nietzsche was rightly called a ‘conservative anarchist’, Barrès was no longer an enemy of the French revolution. To the extent that the right had proclaimed a counter-revolution, even before this era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century some thinkers, such as the Spaniard Donoso Cortés, had developed elements of what was later dubbed ‘conservative revolution’, such as the idea of the ‘king’s dictatorship’.

There is a long-standing demand for a *comparative social history of political ideas*, but nevertheless most studies are devoted to a single country. If we do dare to deal with political theories of the past from a comparative perspective, there are six European countries which offer a full spectrum of all the three major ideologies (liberalism/radicalism, conservatism and socialism and communism). *Britain* is not included in this study because her elites were basically satisfied with their system, so much envied by the moderate liberals and conservatives on the continent, in the tradition of the reception of Edmund Burke’s theories. Britain’s memory of the past was characterized by a reasonable continuity. Most thinkers believed in the ‘grown institutions’ which needed no written constitution in the style of French ‘logomachie’. Most English thinkers only envisaged incremental changes and demonstrated a normal relationship to past, present and future.

*Italy* is also excluded because the incorporation of the Vatican state after unification in 1860, and the Pope’s condemnation of electoral participation by the Italians, prevented the development of a normal conservative party. The liberals from Cavour to Giolitti were all-embracing, but degenerated after 1876 in the era of Depretis’ *trasformismo*. Only in 1919 did a Christian Democratic Party under Don Sturzo take shape, and it immediately received about twenty per cent of the vote, but this was too little and too late to avoid the transition to fascism. There was much conservative thinking from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, but the basic desire was to return to the pre-parliamentary functioning of the still valid constitution of 1850, the Statuto Albertino, under the slogan *Torniamo allo Statuto*. This is also a kind of historical memory, but one which remains within the possibilities of interpreting the existing system.



“McCarthy's Dream” [Mc Carthys Traum], March 2007. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

A comparative study is thus basically confined to four major continental countries: *France*, *Germany* and the two more marginal powers *Spain* and *Russia*, which developed a historical image of their own. A large-scale comparison in a short paper needs some schematization to serve as guideline to the treatment of important political theories. The age of ideologies is characterized by strong political influences on historical memories:

- by *parties and ideologies*;
- by *unusual historical events* such as revolutions, lost wars, major reform movements as a challenge to conservative groups, too much stability and inertia blocking elite mobility, or the opposite, too much instability of the system causing status anxiety among the elites;
- the impact of mostly conservative political thinkers, which directly influenced politicians via the *mass media* in semi-democratic or democratic systems;
- and the impact of *short-term and long-term archaic memories* back into history to revitalize lost elements of the country's history. The more miserable the present state of a political system, the more *archaic memories are used in order to mobilize the elites and the masses*.

The rise of democracy and equality created *status anxiety* among privileged social groups. Politics was no longer capable of shaping the whole of society, which had

become extremely complex. With the rise of Capitalism, the *economic subsystem* seemed to undermine political power and this was one of the reasons why many political thinkers stressed the *cultural subsystem* as an ally for ‘*the political system under siege*’. For the first time in history, political theories were grounded on the ideas of cultural elites—from Nietzsche and Barrès to Unamuno, the Neo-Slavophiles, parts of the German ‘Conservative Revolution’ and even Carl Schmitt.

## 1.2 France

On the continent, France was still the major political power, though Russia and Germany had grown stronger and Britain had increasingly interfered in continental politics since Napoleon. In European political theory, France remained a country of intellectual reference, though her intellectual contribution did not match the level of the eighteenth century. New intellectual powers also appeared in this area, especially Germany. Large parts of European political theory were memories of the past of another country, that is, a commentary on the virtues or vices of the French Revolution. This memory did not fade even in times of restoration, because France periodically renewed revolutionary memories, as in 1830, 1848 and 1871. Even when a revolution did not take place, the country was deeply divided. There were two Frances: one revolutionary republican, laicist, radical-liberal, and the other conservative, Catholic, monarchist. In the third French Republic from 1875 onwards, Bonapartism tried to combine monarchism with some socially radical elements.

The major intellectual figure in this quasi-bonapartist attempt to overcome the gap between the two Frances was Maurice Barrès (1892–1923). He was elected as a deputy for General Boulanger’s group in 1889. No other political thinker, not even Mazzini in Italy, was as exclusively nationalist in his writings as Barrès was in his main political work *Scenes et doctrines du nationalisme* (1902). Why nationalism in France? The country seemed most fortunate in her history, because she was able to retain most of her historical acquisitions and was the model of a unified nation-state at a time when Italy and Germany had reached external national unity but still lacked the internal homogeneity of a ‘grown nation’. The answer was simple: as the scheme suggests, revolutions and lost wars were the most common reasons for a new paradigm of national history. France had lost a war in 1870 and with it part of her eastern territories. Though (with the exception of the area around Metz) they were populated by a German-speaking population (only the upper class had completely turned to the French language), the loss was heavily felt by a thinker from Lorraine. Historical memories had to compensate for political losses. On the basis of social Darwinism, he developed a theory of ‘tribal nationalism’. Nations were considered as organisms like plants. ‘Organic solidarity’ in the ‘realm of the dead’ was proclaimed in a kind of proto-fascist ‘blood and soil mysticism’. Only occasionally did his ahistorical geopolitical ideas meet with rational consideration, when he discovered that the river Moselle was still beautiful even under German rule and that nature has a ‘cruel indifference’ towards political feelings.

In spite of this insight his general conclusion was voluntaristic: “Nation is acceptance of determinism” (1902: 8). In his book *Le culte de moi* (1898: 30), he was still an individualist in the tradition of Taine and Renan. The book is full of allusions to Goethe, Byron and Heine and is a non-political demonstration of aestheticism. But now the nation was considered to be above the individual, and he turned to a *culte de nous*. In his book on nationalism (1902: 17), he contradicted his former ideas and declared “there are no personal ideas”. The influence of Renan remained alive, however, in so far that he stuck to Renan’s idea that a nation has to be reproduced by everyday plebiscites. His social Darwinism did not lead him to biological racism. France was not an ethnic but a political unity (1902: 20). The secret plebiscite included Alsatia and Lorraine, whatever language the inhabitants spoke at home. Nationalism for Barrès was ‘empiricism’. Oddly enough, the old individualism was still visible when he wrote in a letter to Charles Maurras (Corr. 1970: 333) of his personal fanatical love for Strasbourg and Metz. His nationalism was a kind of nationalized *culte du moi*. In a novel about a group of college students under the title *Les déracinés* (1897), he demonstrated the reasons for the political decline of France. He was not just motivated by a normal hope for military ‘revanche’, as were so many other French writers of his time. His book of 1902 demonstrated the reasons for this territorial loss in a deep analysis of the historical memories of France. France had not only lost a war and some territories but had succumbed to German philosophies such as Kantianism, which made the country intellectually defenceless. Administration, religion, industry and interest groups had helped undermine French strength and were summoned to combine their efforts for the resurrection of France (Table 1.1).

Whereas Catholic reactionaries like Charles Maurras hoped for a revival of the monarchy, Barrès remained in his heart a Jacobin republican. The exalted cult of Napoleon made it possible to combine, in the movement of General Boulanger, right-wing extremism with radical republican phraseologies against the ‘rule of mediocracy’ in the Third French Republic. Barrès had always defended religion against the attacks of republican laicism. But the church for him was an aesthetic and national issue, not a deeply entrenched belief. In a nationalist ideology, everything under the sun was included in the ‘national heritage’. Barrès demonstrated this by fighting against the system of classification of national monuments, which privileged some cultural highlights. Barrès fought for the preservation of the smallest church, as unimportant to the history of art as it might be, because of its contribution to French historical memory. The *national heritage industry* was anticipated before it developed in France.

The elections of 1889 were disappointing. Only twenty-two Boulangistes were elected, as against fifty-two Bonapartists, eighty-six royalists and 230 republicans. Only Catholics who felt suppressed and had become temporarily political could be mobilized by Boulanger’s group, with its rhetoric ‘in search of the true France’. When the movement quickly failed, Barrès again found cultural reasons to explain the disaster: he blamed Boulanger for his lack of a doctrine (1902: 97). His book contained the label ‘doctrine’ in its title, but this was misleading. The book was a loosely-knit collection of essays.



**Table 1.1** Scheme of the varieties of historical memory in the four major continental countries

Reasons for discussions on the 'right' historical memory	Spain	France	Germany	Russia
Revolution	1848 and various pro-nunciamientos	1789, 1839, 1848, 1871	1848, 1918	1905
Lost Wars and Relative Decline of Power	1898 against the USA	1870/71 against Germany	1918 against 'the World'	1856 Crimean war against Western powers, 1904-05 against Japan
Internal Reform	Europeanization	Laicism, Radical socialism	Parliamentarization, presidentialization after 1918	Reforms of Witte and Stolypin
Ultra-Stability	Era of Canovas del Castillo	Hegemony of radical Republicans	Imperial semi- autocracy	Imperial autocracy
Ultra-instability	Since 1911	Since 1899	Since 1918	Since 1905
Opposition Thinkers	Ganivet, Unamuno de Maeztu	Barrès Maurras	Nietzsche 'Conservative Revolution'	Neo-Slavophiles Eurasians
Historical Memories Short-term	Siglo de oro Hispanidad	Bonaparte	First or coming 'Third Reich', Prussia	True autocracy or obshchina pre-Peter I
Long-term	African roots	Celtic roots	Teutonic roots	Slavic roots

Source The author

As with most thinkers in search of the right historical memory Barrès, a typical French intellectual, posed as an anti-intellectual and ridiculed “the logicians of the absolute” (1902: 45) for their individualism. The Dreyfus affair—the unjustified imprisonment of a Jewish officer under suspicion of being a spy for Germany—became a turning point in his thought. The two Frances split again, most vehemently. Zola wrote his *J'accuse!*—and Barrès opposed the republican ‘Manifesto of the intellectuals’ (1898), written in support of Dreyfus. That Dreyfus was guilty he concluded simply from “his race” (1902: 152). The campaign was a protest against pacifism and internationalism. A new wave of mobilization was organized by Charles Maurras’ *Action française*, who cooperated with Barrès until 1900. Maurras’ ‘integral nationalism’, however, deviated from Barrès’ ideas because it was monarchist and Catholic and in vehement opposition to all memories of the history of French revolution. As early as 1889, Barrès wrote in a newspaper article: “we are the sacred canaille of 1789 and 1830” (quoted in: Sternhell 1978: 65). Barrès did not accept a restoration of the monarchy (1902: 98) and he had no trust in metaphysical values. He developed a kind of nationalist piety in a cult of death and blood and soil which found followers in Spain from Ganivet to Unamuno.

The difference with Jacobinism was that Barrès was no centralist but a regionalist. In this respect he had accepted ideas from all the political ideologies from Proudhon’s anarchism and Tocqueville’s liberalism to Le Play’s authoritarian conservatism. The centralist French system was blamed for having lost Metz and Strasbourg. He even quoted Bakunin: “Centralism is a cemetery” (1902: 501f.). Regionalism was considered an instrument of defence and attack. He did not simply dream of reconquering the lost territories. But the regionalist autonomist movement of Alsatia under German rule was not accepted because it laid emphasis on being ‘Alsatian’ and neither German nor French (1902: 292). Regionalism proved to be only an ideology in support of nationalism. *Regionalism* as a non-national level of identification was not welcome. His historical memory went back to the ‘Austrasian Kingdom’, with its capital at Trier (Trèves). When such dreams lost their abstract absurdity when France won the next war and her territorial problem was solved in 1918, Barrès became more reasonable. Rhenania now could stay German, it should simply be liberated from Prussian dominance (1923 article, quoted in: King 1933: 250). The literature of the Vichy regime in France, when the country again lost a war against Germany in 1940, made frequent use of Barrès’ idea that the Rhine should become a link combining France and Germany and not a hostile borderline (Madaule 1943: 262).

Barrès was the first to illustrate a typical trait of right-wing ideologies, the use of radical historical memories of the nation: the nation was the main goal. Ideological purity was not required. He frequently appealed to the workers in the mines of Lorraine, as in his *Programme of Nancy* (1902: 432–440), and urged them to vote nationalist in order to save their existence against the Polish workers intruding from the east. Nationalism and socialism were to be combined in one organizational idea when socialism was finally liberated from its “poison of liberalism” (Corr. 1970: 374). In this respect, radical republican nationalists were more open to the social question than other right-wing ideologies. Mazzini in Italy had

already demonstrated this before Barrès became internationally influential in his thought.

The historical memory of *Charles Maurras* (1868–1952) developed in a different direction. He did not accept the French revolution and human rights. In contrast to Barrès he was an enemy of romanticism and a partisan of ‘order and reason’ in classicist art (OC II: 31). Memory of his past was expressed by reaction: “First politics, first reaction—reaction until the recovery of society”. Nationalism for Maurras was “a cult of the fathers” and a deep respect for history (OD: 11, 19). The restoration of monarchy needed a king who would serve transitorily as a dictator, an idea which he took from Donoso Cortés in Spain (OC II: 381). Parliament should have only an advisory function, with ministers responsible exclusively to the monarch. He hailed the “veritable ministerial dictatorships” which France had known from Richelieu to Guizot (OC II: 390). Equality in his theory was detrimental to society because it was the cause of a second evil: the rule of money (EM: 19, 43). The slogan of the Republic needed to be changed to ‘liberté, autorité, responsabilité’. It was clear from the theory and practice of the *Action française* which Maurras guided that liberty stood no chance against the two other principles of authority and responsibility; these meant a restoration of absolute monarchy, since Maurras did not accept the Orleanist version of monarchy: *Le roi règne mais il ne gouverne pas*. As an ardent monarchist he therefore faced a predicament. He hated the Orleanist way of parliamentary rule, but after the death of the ‘legitimate’ heir to the throne he had to communicate with the branch of Orléans and the Comte de Paris.

In his comparison of three right-wing movements, the German historian Ernst Nolte (1963: 88f.) has defined fascism as ‘revolutionary reaction’. Barrès in this sense was closer to left-wing fascism than Maurras, who was included among the three fascist movements on the continent. Nevertheless the paradox of history made Maurras, a thinker too reactionary to be prone to fascism, a fascist because he became the ideologue of the Vichy regime and was imprisoned for the rest of his life in 1945 (released in 1952). Before the 1930s, when the Republic was in serious danger of being overthrown by right-wing extremists, Maurras was not taken seriously. It is not by chance that the Dadaists in Paris under the guidance of Breton organized a mock trial of Barrès as the incarnation of reactionary historical memory in France—exactly because this right-wing Jacobin was dangerous in the light of French historical memory because of his “crimes against the security of the intellect”.

### 1.3 Spain

Spain, like France, was frequently shaken up by revolutions and *pronunciamientos*. The lack of continuity and the existence of two camps in a latent civil war, which finally raged from 1936 to 1939, was compensated for by an integrating political philosophy which lessened the rifts in Spanish society described so aptly by the poet Machado: “Espanolito que vienes al mundo—te guarde Dios, una de las dos Espanas hay que helarte el Corazon!”

In Spain there was an old undercurrent of political thinking even before defeat in the war against the United States and before the loss of many colonies led to a movement towards archaism in political thought. The idealist philosophy of the German Kantian *Karl Christian Krause* merged with Spanish mysticism. ‘Krausistas’ and ‘traditionalists’ agreed that Spain should open herself to European influences. The defeat in 1898 strengthened the ‘Generation of ’98 which included various writers and thinkers, from Unamuno to Ortega y Gasset. Most of them began as rather anarchical leftists and ended as ultra-conservatives. A debate on Spain’s special mission was launched; its only equivalent was Neo-Slavophilism in Russia.

*Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo* (1856–1912) began the long-lasting debate ‘Spain versus Europe’ in a talk honouring Calderon in 1881 and in the book *Ciencia Espanola* (1876). Everything about Spain was lauded—even the Inquisition. The idea of a special mission had been a tradition in Spanish political thought since *Juan Donoso Cortés* (1809–1853) (O III: 154); he had written “France is nothing without Spain. We are the civilization in contact with Africa”. The other famous reactionary thinker, *Jaime Balmes* (1810–1848) (OC VI: 461), falsified social reality in Spain—the country with the highest proportion of noblemen in Europe!—by claiming that Spain was the most egalitarian country in Europe and that Catholicism created a unity of government with the people.

The generation of ’98 followed the speculative aesthetic approach to the analysis of historical memory in great measure, even though even Menéndez, in his analysis, had already admitted that Spain’s backwardness was mainly the product of intolerance and an uncreative science. The most famous book for the generation of ’98, *Idearium Espanol*, was written by *Angel Ganivet* (1865–1898) a year before the Spanish defeat of 1898. It became a kind of revelation for a whole generation of Spanish intellectuals. The book was considered as a kind of testament because a year later, while serving as Spanish consul in Riga, he chose to commit suicide. Ganivet was in favour of a *Europeanization of Spain*, but in a typical Spanish way since he also believed in the moral superiority of his country compared with the technical civilization of Europe. As an intellectual from Andalusia, he identified Spanish successes in history with the ‘meridional tradition’ of Spain and the ‘African links’ of the south, which Unamuno was to popularize later. As with the French right, centralism was blamed for the decline. The memory of history was also a revival of regional cultures. Thinkers from the marginal regions, Ganivet from Andalusia and Unamuno from the Basque Country, were at the forefront. Regionalism was not a conservative concept. In the tradition of Proudhon in France, *Pi y Margall* had developed a progressive federalist plan for ruling Spain. Right-wing regionalism was, however, influenced by Barrès and his philosophy of blood and soil. The ‘spirit of the soil’ was lauded and a speculative geography was offered, including oddities such as that the poorer regions of Spain preserved more wisdom than other regions. The Spanish decline, according to Ganivet (1957: 128), was due to ‘abulia’, a kind of ‘paralysis of the will’ in the people. Like Balmes, he took on the pose of a doctor healing a collective disease. Though he was close to the state apparatus as a diplomat, he claimed that the reorganization of state power,

a basic demand of some liberals, was of minor importance. In a second book on the future of Spain (1957: 151, 161), dedicated to Unamuno, he criticized ‘the spirit of Don Quixote’, which haunted the Spaniards. Unamuno later interpreted this spirit in a positive way because it led Spaniards to the drive for immortality (1951 I: 189ff.). Ganivet concluded with a radical antithesis, typical of at that time marginal countries such as Spain, Russia and even Germany: either submission to Western Europe or a national concept of resurrection.

*Miguel de Unamuno* (1864–1936), a thinker who initially combined socialism with religious elements—he called it ‘baptized socialism’—was better-known abroad than most other writers of the generation of ‘98. In his 1895 collection of essays *En torno al casticismo* (On authentic Hispanicism), he developed the typical concept of “history as an unchangeable fate of nations”. Spain, underprivileged by nature, cold in winter and arid in summer, owned an invariable treasure: ‘faith’. His popular Catholicism was not church-oriented, however, and he confessed to oscillating between faith and inability to believe. Spain’s ‘eschatological impulse’ was to be combined with European technical progress, according to his 1906 book *Sobre la europeización*. He confessed to being not European but African, belonging to the Berber tribes. Whereas the young Unamuno still recognized the lack of freedom embedded in Spanish intolerance and argued that Spanish traditionalism was mere rhetoric without social content, he now raised the antithesis of ‘Spain and Europe’ to a metaphysical opposition. He openly renounced European science and the illogical oscillations of his thought were justified as ‘paradoxes’—in positivist thought the classical strategy of immunization against criticism. Fascism in his view was unnecessary in Spain because it had remained neutral in the First World War and had not suffered additional territorial losses as did the ‘crucified nation’ Germany (a title normally appropriated by Poland). The leader of the fascist Falange, Primo de Rivera, visited Unamuno in Salamanca in 1935, but he was not able to recruit the grand old man of political thought. This did not prevent the Fascists from using various elements of Unamuno’s thinking for their own political purposes.

Whereas Ganivet and Unamuno were concerned with the internal values of Spain, later thinkers such as *Ramiro de Maeztu* (1874–1936) und *José Antonio Primo de Rivera* (1903–1936), the son of the former dictator, added to the new historical memory nostalgia for lost possessions in Latin America. As in Germany or in Russia since pan-Slavism, geopolitical thrust started to replace clericalist thinking in terms of the church. Neo-imperialism was mitigated, however, by a vague philosophy of a common tradition of all Spanish-speaking nations bound up in the concept of ‘Hispanidad’, which included both Portugal/Spain (1952: 27). This concept of ‘Greater Spain’ was founded on the greatest Portuguese poet Camões, who in his epic *Os Lusíadas* had used the words “huma gente fortíssimo de Espanha”, Spain in a geographical and not a political sense. A few dictators in Latin America, such as Perón, Trujillo and Stroessner, were intrigued by ‘Hispanidad’, but they used it as justification for their own rule, knowing well that Spain did not have the power to transform this ‘passéist’ ideology into a ‘political future’.

## 1.4 Germany

No other defeat had so deep an impact on the intelligentsia of a country as the First World War had on Germany. In Russia the term ‘conservative revolution’ was used as a book title by Yuri Samarin as early as 1875. Many thinkers, from Donoso to Nietzsche, have been associated with this epithet. Maurras used it in 1900, as did Thomas Mann in his *Russian Anthology* (1921). A group of minor ideologues in Germany was associated with this label, made popular by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1927; they claimed that a ‘revolution of the mind’ could create a revival of society. What was revolutionary was the idea that a cult of movement could no longer tolerate a static view of society. For many writers, this included a *dialectic of failure* and a somewhat unconservative praise of nihilism (Niekisch 1965: 249, 254). The German poet Gottfried Benn (*Sämtliche Werke*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 1986 I: 174) was typical of this *nihilistic mood* and for the pose of *heroic decisionism*, where what had to be protected was unknown, given that the past was no longer acceptable:

und heißt dann: schweigen und walten,  
wissend, dass sie zerfällt,  
dennoch die Schwerter halten  
vor die Stunde der Welt.

The particular contribution of Germany to the revolutionary conservative wave was different from other countries in two ways:

- There was rarely any religious zeal involved. There was a latent nihilism in the tradition of Nietzsche. It was not by chance that some of these thinkers committed suicide, including Arthur Moeller van den Bruck (1876–1925) and Karl Haushofer (1869–1946). Geopolitical ideas were to replace religion, not just in Haushofer’s work but even in that of a religious Catholic like *Carl Schmitt* (1888–1985), who discovered the *Nomos of the Earth* (1950).
- Germany had no monarchical dynasty to offer which was acceptable to the conservative revolutionary thinkers, though the last emperor Wilhelm II was still alive in his Dutch exile. The Reich was widely used as a term, but the Second Empire (1871–1918) was rarely introduced as a framework of German identity-building. At another time, this caused a flight into a vague idea of a future ‘Empire’. The term ‘Reich’ exists in other Germanic languages. The Netherlands have a ‘Rijksmuseum’ and Sweden her ‘Riksdag’. But only Germany was so politically untalented as to transform the unfeasible idea of a ‘Reich’ into a political ideology, and this prevented a modern ‘nation-building’ such as France had achieved since the late middle ages.

Since German history was more complicated than the history of other nations, the point of reference was rather diversified. Most reactionary political philosophies in other countries could identify with the ‘state’ or the ‘people’. The state was considered incomplete after heavy territorial losses, and the people, living in many ‘irridentas’, had to serve as a nucleus of the ‘real nation’. This prepared the way for racist

thinking in the group defining itself as ‘völkisch’, without major intellectual contribution. A cult of the *Germanic tribes* was generally combined with a somewhat pagan philosophy, which even characterized the work of *Oswald Spengler*. It was the less rational equivalent of a cult of the Visigoths in Spain or the Varangians in pre-revolutionary Russia as the early ‘nation-builders’. In an ontological way, historical memories not only discovered ‘the enemy’ (Carl Schmitt) but also the ‘friend’. For some French right-wing thinkers it was Germany, in the German equivalent it was Russia (Ernst Jünger: *Strahlungen*. Tübingen 1949: 385). This ontological idea of friendship inspired many conservatives to deal with the Communists in the Soviet Union, even in the deeply reactionary Weimar army. Imperialist undercurrents had been present since Friedrich Naumann’s book on the ideology of ‘Central Europe’ (*Mittleuropa*). Catholic theoreticians like *Othmar Spann* in Austria were oriented towards the first Empire (ending in 1806). Moeller van den Bruck (1923) used the old millenarian notions of Joacquino de Floris and forecast the coming of a ‘Third Reich’. The first Reich was apolitical in Moeller’s perception, while the second Reich under Prussian dominance (1871–1918) was considered as only a transitory phase. The Third Reich was to move from illusion into real politics. For other protestant writers, the first Reich was ‘too Catholic’. The German imperial idea, which contributed to preventing the country’s developing into a normal national state, was present in different shades. Spengler’s mysticism of a great empire transcended German national boundaries and Jünger even foresaw a ‘Weltstaat’ (1960: 75) which would doom the pluralism of egoistic states in the future. A conservative state nationalism was already in a minority. Some theoreticians drew inspiration from another myth: *Prussia*, which was declared to demonstrate ‘true socialism’ (Spengler) or a ‘lifestyle’ of its own (Moeller van den Bruck). As in Russia and Spain, but differently from France, some of these writers, such as Hans Freyer/Edgar Jung (1930: 280), criticized the overemphasis on nationalism, which they identified with rotten democracy. In addition, Carl Schmitt was a Catholic etatist rather than a German nationalist.

The anarchy of myths about the past was finally blown away by the Nazis. They soon marginalized Rosenberg’s ideology of Germanic Teutonism, in the long run they ousted the term ‘Third Reich’ from the vocabulary, they imprisoned radical conservative revolutionaries like *Ernst Niekisch* (1889–1967), and they even killed the moderate writer *Edgar Jung* from the circle of Hitler’s ally von Papen.

## 1.5 Russia

Russia underwent a Neo-Slavophile renaissance in the early twentieth century as a reaction to humiliations in the war against Japan, the revolution of 1905, the decline of genuine Russian movements such as the Narodniki and the rise of Marxism. In the works of *Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov* (1853–1900), teacher of a whole generation, who in 1883 broke with the Slavophiles and fought for the unification of all churches, nationalism and national self-mystification was still anathema. There was a preoccupation with religious thinking, even stronger than

in Spain. There were few exceptions to this rule. The work of *Vasily V. Rozanov* (1856–1919) has been interpreted as an almost Dadaist shade of anarchism, sometimes dubbed ‘leftist fascism’. The religious dimension was reduced to a strange violation of all moral rules (in his cult of the phallus for instance), the criticism of a church “hostile to life and lust” and the apocalyptic vision of a civilization doomed to death. Only the apolitical character of his thought, “God does not want politics any more” (Rozanov 1970: 204ff.), was typical of his generation.

Even a reasonable thinker such as Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev (1874–1948), who had started as a ‘Legal Marxist’ and had participated in founding ‘Osbovozhdenie’, the nucleus of a Liberal Party in Russia, remained apolitical. Berdyaev (1991: 133) confessed that the beauties of nature in the Black Forest attracted him more than the political debates of the founding fathers of a liberal group. This again demonstrated the alienation of large parts of the Russian intelligentsia from politics, something which contributed to the failure of liberal constitutionalism in Russia and strengthened the chances of the leftist radicals.

When Berdyaev turned to Christianity in the spirit of Solovyov, he remained full of hatred for the ‘official orthodoxy’ because it ruined authentic religious feelings (1991: 202). He was not a nationalist, but mystical ideas such as the ‘Russian and Asiatic soul’ crept into the works of these eminent thinkers (Berdyaev 1990: 8, 59), without having an imperialist meaning. In a time when pan-Slavism acquired political and imperialist connotations, the theories of the religious thinkers such as Berdyaev, Bulgakov and Trubetskoy were remarkably far from nationalism. This, maybe, was the main difference between the religiously overhauled self-identification of political philosophy with its past in Russia and in Spain. Whereas the Spanish thinkers still started from the assumption that church and state in Spain lived basically in harmony, the Russian thinkers were ‘revolutionaries of the church’, heavily criticizing the state. State criticism was an old tradition in Slavophile thinking in the nineteenth century. The older Slavophiles had always opposed the rural community (*obshchina*) to the *state* created by Peter the Great as ‘a European product, alien to the Russian spirit’. Concrete historical memories of the ‘societal nation’ of older Russia in the age of spreading capitalism in Russia could no longer be preserved. The *obshchina* was dead, and the Neo-Slavophiles had to accept it. But theoretical equivalents were found. Abstractions such as *obshchestvennost*’, not qualified by adding concepts such as ‘religious’, were used to strengthen the traditional criticism of statehood in Czarist Russia. Ideas like those of the early Lamennais that the Church had to be liberated were revived in Russia, combined with the hope that the state would be liberated at the same time. The slogan of many neo-idealists, gathering around collections of essays from *Problemy idealizma* (1903) to the *Vechy* (1909/10), ‘men not institutions’, was rather dangerous, because Russia had no constitutional and organizational structures in the Western sense.

The few thinkers who were not concentrating on religious problems had to resort to geopolitics, as in Germany. A late product of utopias in a wider geopolitical context were the *Eurasian* thinkers such as *Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoy* (1890–1938) and *Piotr Nikolaevich Savitski* (1895–1968). The movement was a reaction among émigrés in Sofia. Prague and Paris became centres in the 1920s. ‘Eurasia’ was an entity whose boundaries were approximately identical with the boundaries



of the Soviet Union. The Eurasians did not accept a hierarchy of higher and lower cultures. European Christianity was described in rather negative terms. They shared with the Slavophiles a critical assessment of the modernizing periods of their history, such as the experiments of Peter the Great. In 1928 the movement split and Trubetskoy left it. This episode of interpretations of the past after a loss of self-identity by war and revolution would hardly be noteworthy if there were not a certain revival of these ideas in Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union, this time as a comforting philosophy looking for equivalents of the broken Soviet Union.

## 1.6 Conclusion

The development of historical memories in four major continental countries demonstrated a certain asymmetry of temporal development, the *Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen* (the unctemporary elements of contemporary events). The most astonishing mode of thinking was experienced in Germany, with a regressive backlash of irrationalism in the Weimar Republic. Spain and Russia, as the marginal countries, wracked with the inferiority complexes of declining empires, humiliated by lost wars, and anxiety-ridden by continuous social unrest, developed the most irrational images of their own history. But the late modernizers have only done what the forerunners—France with the early utopian socialists, Germany with the Young Hegelians—did half a century ago: they launched a highly self-denigrating debate with a strange love for theological argument and a striking contempt for the political systems of their time.

In all the four countries the conservative revolutionaries were less interested in *action directe* as propounded by the syndicalist Georges Sorel in France, a message which was accepted by the Italian fascists sooner than by the French left. They called for an ‘intellectual revolution’. The more religion-minded the thinkers, the more metaphysical the appeals to a ‘revolution of the spirits’ sounded. The ontological opposition of ‘society’ to ‘the state’ had equivalents in Russia. Sometimes society was identified with ‘the church’. Only the Neo-Slavophiles developed an increasingly hostile attitude to the Russian church, which they considered as a ‘mere bureaucracy’.

Parallel to development in the arts—and some of these writers were a kind of avant-garde poets in their respective countries—the relationship between past and future was rather mixed. Revivalist arguments taken from an embellished past and futurist visions of a coming ‘empire’ were strangely intermingled. The neo-conservative wave, which could be generalized as a ‘conservative revolution’, was fundamentally critical of the system. Whereas in Germany, France and Spain these thinkers fought against parliamentary democracy, but longed for a ‘strong state’, and partly remained ‘technocrats’ in their arguments—like Ernst Jünger or Hans Freyer in Germany—this was not the case with some of the most important Neo-Slavophile thinkers in Russia.

All four countries had something in common. The former terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ frequently did not apply to these reconstructors of historical memories. Past memories and future visions were combined and leftist and right-wing arguments and assumptions were frequently combined. Barrès remained a conservative Jacobin,

Niekisch in Germany posed as a 'nationalist Bolshevik' and Berdyaev was critical of Leninism, but not of the revolution. Many of these thinkers remained anarchist rebels beneath a conservative-sounding terminology. The past was selectively used for a somewhat futuristic image of forthcoming developments.

Political theories thus showed striking similarities with the development of avant-garde art: once the fundamentals of traditionalism had been left behind, even conservative thinkers competed for ever more radical innovations. The very rapid intellectual 'actionisme' contributed to a rather short life for these ideas in the first half of the twentieth century. There are many revivals of philosophies declared obsolete, from neo-Kantianism and neo-Hegelianism to neo-Marxism. But the conservative philosophers of a merger of past and future are unlikely to undergo a revival in the future.

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## Chapter 2

# Historical Memory in Nation-Building and the Building of Ethnic Subsystems

### 2.1 Introduction

Most studies of ‘historical memory’ in political science—and especially when the authors prefer the term *historical knowledge*—suffer from two disadvantages: they remain ‘histories of ideas’, rarely examining the impact of those concepts on political decisions; and they are concentrated at the national level because historical memory is conceived as ‘national historical knowledge’. To overcome these shortcomings:

- (1) Political scientists should deal with the impact of these concepts on nation-building, decision-making and international relations. Historical memory does not remain passive knowledge but is used by political elites to strengthen nation-building. Since there were no neatly defined nations with one language as the most common vehicle of historical knowledge, especially not in Eastern Europe, minorities had to be assimilated. *Assimilation* was generally a euphemism for more or less cruel ‘nation-destroying’.
- (2) Political science should not just consider the central level of identity-building but should dig into the details of the historical memories of subnational ethnic groups and regions. The branch of knowledge most open to this kind of question is the study of *federalism*. Though federalism is older than the revival of the small nations and was originally not used to accommodate ethnic groups, it was at least open to taking cognizance of the existence of subnational historical memories transformed into demands for ‘recognition’.

The historical memory of groups is not something which can be derived from the mere existence of a group. Marx recognized that “*Klasse an sich*”, the objective existence of a group, is politically relevant only when it turns into “*Klasse für sich*” group consciousness. *Constructivism* relies exclusively on the subjective side of group identity. One does not have to be a radical constructivist to recognize that historical memories are created. *Traditions* have an objective existence, otherwise

cultural anthropology would not be possible. But traditions die out if they are not *reinforced and cultivated*, by families, communes, regions and political entities.

The rise of national states has been labelled with the euphemism *nation-building*. This term with its positive connotations obscures the fact that it was combined with *nation-destroying*. The two earliest nation-states in Europe, France and Spain, were the most nation-destroying 'nation-builders' in the era of absolutism. In France regional privileges largely disappeared, with exceptions in Alsace and elsewhere, particularly after the Great Revolution. After the abolition of historical regions and the introduction of departments, the new entities were so artificial that they were hardly able to develop a regional identity. In Spain Aragon, in a union with Castile on equal terms since 1479, lost its institutions in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1707, because it fought for the Austrian pretender, Don Carlos, and the victorious Bourbon dynasty took its revenge. Regional historical memories were extinguished most effectively the more national states modernized. The highest degree of brutality was reached with dictators like Stalin and Franco, even though both came from regional cultures, Georgia and Galicia respectively. Not only authoritarian politics were detrimental to the traditional historical memories of groups. Liberalism, combined with the idea of the national state, fought for collective rights in the name of *human rights for the individual*. Even if this predicament was solved by autonomy and federalism, non-political forces were the great 'nation-destroyers': modernization, technology and the global market. In Friedrich Engels' words, regional nation-destroying continues 'because the locomotive overthrows the push-cart of regional cultures'—even in Mecklenburg, the most backward area in Germany.

Political action was a nation-destroyer, but nation-destroying in many cases caused a counter-movement of nation-building on the basis of suppressed or under-privileged territorial subsystems. Between nation-building on a 'national' level and nation-building on a 'regional' level sometimes *federalism* was the institutional possibility to make different historical memories compatible via regional autonomy in second-tier issues (except foreign policy and defence policy). Because federal devices sometimes failed, international protective institutions for minorities were established after World War I. *Self-determination* became a slogan, but international law as well as dominant interests in the international community in the era of declining imperialism used the principle rather arbitrarily for fear that the colonies might ask for the same rights. *Recognition* for many groups was as important as *redistribution* and *participation* in central institutions. When the process of *decolonization* was finally successful, the new nation-states were confronted with a host of subnational 'historical memories' and political demands for the future.

The author tries to show in this paper:

- (1) The *conditions for recognition of different historical memories* and their possibilities for identity-building within the framework of a larger 'national' state. *Nation-building was accompanied by successful nation-destroying* of the smaller historical regional entities.
- (2) These possibilities vary according to the *dominating paradigms in political theory*. Liberal individualism and rationalism were hostile to the

identity-building and historical memories of regional cultures. Postmodern *constructivism* with its tolerance of incompatible cultures and pluralism influenced political actors, though the debate between constructivists and essentialists created new problems for those entities asking for *recognition*.

- (3) *Language policies* are the most common instruments for identity-building by national and regional ethnic elites.
- (4) *Self-determination and affirmative discrimination* became in the late twentieth century a driving force for ‘recognition’, autonomy and the possibility of cultivating regional ‘historical memory’. Making ‘recognition’ universal, however, created *new predicaments because of competing identities* even at a regional level.

## **2.2 Nation-Building as Potential Nation-Destroying: Liberal Individualism and Rationalism Versus the Search for Identity and Historical Memories of Subnational Regions**

Nation-building in modern nation-states in the North Atlantic area has generally been influenced by rational liberal philosophy. Cartesianism and rationalism were strictly individualistic. Civil rights were recognized for individual citizens, not for groups. Every attempt to claim human rights for ethnic groups was therefore regarded as dangerous in constitutional law and still more so in the law of nations. The search for *identity* was frequently opposed to *reason* because it was considered as purely sentimental (Ignatieff 1994). Nationalism was reduced by radical liberal thinkers to “constitutional patriotism” (Habermas), but many regional and ethnic subgroups were not able to identify completely with their national constitution, with the exception of the bill of rights. Even in this field they fought for more collective group rights.

The older types of pluralism have never demanded substantial national identity. Sometimes they were multinational empires who needed ethnic and cultural groups only for raising taxes and left a broad international autonomy to the rest of the administration. But these, such as the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and the Czarist Empire in Russia, and more recently the Soviet Union, fell apart in spite of a degree of pluralism. The ideology of the Soviet Union contributed to this collapse by claiming that the search for national identity leads to ‘false consciousness’. The ethnic groups in Soviet federalism were recognized and defined strictly according to ‘objective’ linguistic and economic criteria. Politically it was made sure, however, that their aspirations did not go very far beyond the right to create folk dance groups (von Beyme 1964). Authoritarian national states restricted possibilities for the cultivation of historical memories to the extent that in Catalonia under Franco, for instance, only the monastery of Montserrat and the Barcelona soccer team remained as symbols of cultural memory.

The successful alternative to imperial pluralism was the nation-state in an immigration society such as the United States. It was characterized by a 'benign neglect' for *cultural and ethnic groups*, and considered as the first victory of the modern building of national identity over the pluralism of empires (Anderson 1991: 191, 197). Once the Americans had severed the ties with their English compatriots, linguistic borders seemed to be insignificant. The new myth of national independence was more important than the allegedly outdated myth of the 'common cultural heritage' of all those who spoke English. The national emblem, the eagle above a bunch of arrows, symbolized the harmony of various cultural traditions and historical memories.

Early federalist systems were constructed to reconcile regional demands. But they were not meant to improve ethnic representation. The German Empire that existed till 1806 (which in the late Middle Ages had committed the error of adding 'of the German nation' to the title 'Holy Roman Empire') and the German confederation of 1815–1866 contained many non-German territories. Even Switzerland, later the standard model of multinational federalism, was initially dominated by Swiss-German speakers and the *zugewandten Orte* were benevolently treated like dependent territories. Only after the era of Napoleon were they able to implement equal rights for their Cantons (Forsyth 1989: 3). In the USA the founding fathers made a presumption of ethnic homogeneity. Jay spoke in Federalist 2 of a "united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in manners and customs". Even in Spain after Franco no more than three out of seventeen autonomous units were established on the principle of sub-state nationality, and even then this applied to only 30 % of the population. Historical memory for this privilege was directly relevant, because the three groups were called 'historical nations'. The nonsense of 'historical nations', unfortunately transmitted via Hegel and Marx, was widely accepted even by non-German nationalists. In this view, Poland had a right to be reconstructed, whereas Ireland, Slovakia and Slovenia were doomed to assimilation.

It was not until the nineteenth century that thinking in terms of national and ethnic groups came to prominence. Nationalism was generally promoted by liberal political forces who tried to mitigate the collectivist implications of the nationalist doctrine. They tried to combine individualism and nationalism and identified a clearly defined 'ego' which can decide between various identities and states, and no longer needs the collectivist intermediation of regions, communes, family estates. The liberals hoped to promote a convergence between objective national criteria and the subjective decisions of free individuals. The French revolution, therefore, brought in plebiscites for the first time, as in the cases of Liège (1795) and Mulhouse (1795). In the Italian Risorgimento, plebiscites were widely used after 1860. Self-determination was, however, handled in a rather opportunistic way. Geographical exceptions to the rules were admitted. The French population in the Italian Valle d'Aosta did not get a chance to state its opinion through a referendum. A plebiscite was included in the peace treaty of 1866 between Prussia and Austria after the war with Denmark. It was, however, never implemented, in

order not to create a precedent for the Alsatians and French who demanded a plebiscite in Alsace and Lorraine. Ernest Renan in his lectures at the Collège de France under the title “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” pleaded for the free will of the people of Lorraine. In a letter to David Friedrich Strauss, Renan criticized the objectivist German concept of belonging to a nation and rightly predicted that 1 day the Slavic regions within the German Empire would also argue for separation in the name of their Slavic descent.

The new national states were not always consistent in their attitude. The German Empire (1871–1918) claimed the population of Alsace and Lorraine. Many of these, especially in the upper classes, felt like Frenchmen. They had to be German, however, because they spoke a German dialect at home. The Slavic minorities such as Poles, Mazovians and Kashubes, however, were treated as Germans because they were loyal Prussian citizens even though they spoke a Slavic language at home. In many political theories, Germany is considered as “biological essentialist” in the definition of her citizenship. But the Germans have been induced to this attitude by frequent losses of their compatriots (1866 the Austrians, 1918 Alsatians, people of north Schleswig, western Prussia and Upper Silesia, 1945 the East Germans. The essentialist definition of a German was meant to offer privileged access to those who no longer belonged to the German territory. Even after 1945, the division of Germany caused a continuation of this deviation from Western European ideas of citizenship. Only in 1990 did reunification make it possible to get rid of these objectivist biological criteria concerning the question of who can be considered as a ‘German citizen’.

The German delegation in Versailles after the First World War recognized that the suppression of plebiscites in 1871 was unlawful. But the new victors of 1918 proceeded as arbitrarily as the former victors of 1871. In some cases plebiscites were held. The right of the Austrians to join Germany was not only suppressed, but even the self-nomination of the Austrian Republic as ‘Deutsch-Österreich’ was prohibited. Wilson’s nationality principle was violated for many opportunistic reasons: in South Tyrol geopolitical reasons preponderated (as with the case of the purely French city of Metz in 1871, which Bismarck did not want to incorporate, but the military insisted). In the Sudetenland historical memories were used for the violation of the principle of ethnic self-determination: the ‘integrity of the Bohemian crownlands’. In minor cases even railway lines were used as a pretext to infringe on ethnic borders (the case of Gmünd). In the Italian–Yugoslav quarrel about Fiume/Rijeka it was still clear that the principle of self-determination was not treated as a binding legal question, but rather as one of political opportunity (Heidelmeyer 1973: 37, 52).

The allied victors knew that a just solution had not been found. Therefore they created a complicated network of protection for ethnic minorities in the Versailles peace treaty (Art. 86, 93). But only a few minorities benefited from it, such as the Swedish minority on the Aaland Islands, the Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia, the Galicians and the population of Memel (Klaipeda) after its incorporation in Lithuania. Complaints about violations of minority rights were possible, but the minorities themselves could not resort to the Council. The International Court had to decide unanimously and was not obliged to transfer the matter to the Council of

the League of Nations. There were, however, some minor decisions for the protection of minorities, such as the Poles in Danzig or the Germans in schools in Polish Upper Silesia (Wittman/Bethlen 1980: 35).

After the First World War President Wilson and the European statesmen also deviated from the 'colour-blind tradition' in setting up a new international organization, the League of Nations. It largely stressed the rights of ethnic minorities because the new borders and new states had created a host of new units, claiming national identity in the name of some historical memory. The system failed and collapsed under the attack of the defeated nations which turned to dictatorships.

After the Second World War the United States stressed universal rights. This *universalism* served also as an instrument to involve the collectivist-minded Communist systems. Following the collapse of the bipolar system because of the erosion of Communism around 1990, minority rights were again increasingly demanded. International organizations such as the *Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (1991), the *European Council* (1992) and even the *United Nations* (1993) competed with declarations. The CSCE even created a *High Commissioner for National Minorities* (1993) (documents in: Hannum 1993). The declarations remained vague. Where bills of rights were contradicted, this was scarcely debated, in order not to devalue the new rights by comparison with higher-ranking rights such as 'personal freedom of the individual' and the principles of democracy and social justice.

Nation-building in the nineteenth century was successful to a large extent, even in the case of latecomers such as Italy and Germany, and in the twentieth century Poland and the Czech Republic. Nation-building included *nation-destroying* in marginal areas and in the case of many smaller ethnic groups, from the Aaland Islands to South Tyrol. The smaller entities tolerated the pressure to assimilate because the myth of national identity-building included the promise of modernization and well-being. In the period of post-materialism, however, ethnic groups which rank highly on the scales of post-materialism developed by Inglehart (1977: 237, 260) began to ask questions about their own identity which could no longer be dismissed as the 'pre-modern' aspirations of 'hillbillies'. Karl Deutsch (1972: 9), in an ironic definition, called a nation a group of people unified by an erroneous assumption about a common ethnic origin and a common antipathy for their neighbours. Since in the North Atlantic area hostilities between neighbouring 'nations' generally tended to diminish, internal conflict and pluralism could no longer be suppressed in the name of some 'national interest' and 'unified strength'. The term 'nation-destroying' was directed against all those theories which opted for assimilation, from Marxism to Karl Deutsch's theory of communication.

### 2.3 The Struggle for Recognition and Self-determination

The era of classical modernity was dominated under the influence of Socialist ideologies by conflicts with the aim of *redistribution*. Postmodern ideologies, on the other hand, promoted the struggle for *recognition*. In the sphere of international



law, the demand for recognition was focused on the demand for *self-determination*. Recognition was demanded by other groups; first of all the group needed to recognize itself. It did so by mobilizing its historical memory against the overwhelming influence of national definitions of self-identity which minority groups did not share. The minority problem, from a global perspective, proved to be a majority problem. This majority, however, was composed of hundreds of minorities. The Atlantic Charter drafted during the inter-allied conference in London in September 1941, which included the Soviet Union, already announced its consent for coming territorial changes, but a positive right of self-determination for ethnic groups was not recognized. Churchill wanted to restrict self-determination to those areas occupied by Germany, but he was afraid that after the war it might be applied in the colonies. The forthcoming victors were close to a kind of ‘saltwater thesis’. Self-determination and the right of secession were restricted to overseas colonies, and were not granted to ‘aboriginals’ and ethnic minorities (Kymlicka 1998: 131). In the consolidated democracies, even most minorities have accepted this and renounced the right to secession in the name of self-determination. In Spain, according to surveys only a minority of 7 % favour secession from the national state. In the Basque Country the figure was higher: 19 %; in Catalonia it was 17 % (Moreno 2001: 68f.).

International lawyers did not yet dare to apply the principle of self-determination to territorial conflicts. This was seriously discussed only later when *identity policy* became a fashionable idea. Sceptics gave an early warning against the consequences of this new development because of the sheer number of subjects who might demand self-determination among the 15,000 cultures in the world. Some authors even spoke of “ethnographic surrealism” (Clifford 1988: 119). The principle of self-determination, combined with utopian constructs of historical memory and of a coming future, contained the danger of a complete fragmentation of the world and a further alienation of thousands of groups haunted by the spectre of identity politics. The good old device of mitigating territorial conflicts via *federalism* was too symmetric in its way of thinking. Postmodern identity seekers longed for *asymmetric rights* even if the majority, like the Anglophones in Canada, recognized a “multination conception of federalism” (Kymlicka 1998: 129, 146ff.). Canada seemed to be classical model for the consequences of recognizing multinationalism: Pierre Trudeau as a French-speaking Canadian prime minister gave more rights to the component units in a “Charter of rights and liberties”. Nevertheless, ten provinces felt that their identity had been neglected. Quebec declared the Charter to be an ‘imperialistic yoke’ and the 633 ‘aboriginal first nations of Canada’ protested because their rights were not protected against encroachment on the part of the provinces. The English or French minorities in various provinces were also not satisfied (Tully 1995: 11f.). This example proves that a solution to recognizing all historical memories and accepting their rights to autonomy and self-determination is hardly possible. This is why the Spanish solution, with no overall concept but granting *pre-autonomias* to various areas just when the central government was being confronted with new demands, demonstrated some wisdom. But it also created new demands. The Catalan CDC Party fought for Catalan privileges but was eager to restrict them to the three

'historical nationalities' (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia) (Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 279). It was supported by the Constitution (Art. 148.2) which required more than an absolute majority for such demands from the regions. It envisaged, however, the possibility of a later procedure that after 5 years would give 'equal rights' with other privileged areas. A *symmetric federal solution* in Spain seemed to be impossible because there were so many groups of different levels of importance and with different historical traditions. It was, however, easier in the case of Belgium, where only two major language groups had to be accommodated. The 'federalism of dissociation' in Belgium subordinated every consideration to ethnic questions. It did not respect the traditional provinces, and dissolved a historical entity like Brabant along language lines (Delwit et al. 1999: 53).

## 2.4 Language Policies as an Instrument of National and Regional Identity-Builders

There are certain positions of compromise between essentialists and constructivists in social theories. Not every mythic narrative is accepted by the target group. Constructions need a certain basis in social reality. There is a kind of *Wahlverwandtschaft* (kinship relation) between construction and reality (Benhabib 1999: 25). Even if a scholar has proved that the allegedly ancient Scottish 'highland kilt' was invented by a Quaker in the early eighteenth century who came not from Scotland but from Lancashire, this invention took root only within a familiar cultural setting. 'Inventors' have to resort to existing elements of the historical memory of a group (Kapferer 1987: 211).

Political activities have played the role of an intervening variable and the result of politics sometimes seems to be approval of constructivism and sometimes not. In a comparative perspective, areas which develop *regional parties* are successful in preserving their historical memories, traditions and autonomy. Most European areas developed such parties. But in the long run only those parties are successful identity promoters which play a role in national politics and sometimes tip the balance in government-building, such as the South Tyrol People's Party in Italy or the Catalan and Basque Parties in Spain. But even in cases of stable political organization within the regional identity-builders, success is not guaranteed. There are obviously limits to the success of identity policies if the identity myth is far beyond the experience of most regional people.

The most common instrument of identity-building is *language policy*. Its effectiveness also varies. The enormous propaganda efforts for identity-building in the Soviet Union and in former Yugoslavia were not able in the long run to create a new national identity even though there was even a single dominant language—Russian or Serbo-Croat. Even the statistics from the Soviet Union prove that the success of language policies can meet with resistance. Estonia was economically and culturally the most developed republic in the Union. Nevertheless, more than a quarter of its population claimed not to be able to speak Russian (figures in von

Beyme 1988). Apparently this perception was not dictated by reality but rather by the expression of hidden resistance to ‘Russification’. For decades we were taught a ‘Serbo-Croat language’. After the dissolution of the federation the Serbian language in the remnant of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Macedonia) was reduced in the Constitution to two dialects, written in Cyrillic characters (Art. 15 in the Constitution of 1992). Even the USA experienced anxieties about declining like former Empires, and strengthened the language requirements for its immigrants.

Democratic politics has been called “politics in the vernacular” (Kymlicka 2001: 213, 220). This should not be taken literally. Multinational countries have always been able to change the balance of ethnic groups through migration, and not just in the early days when ‘going west’ in the USA meant encroaching on the rights of the Indian tribes. Only well-organized minorities such as the Québécois were powerful enough to obtain some influence on immigration policies. Nevertheless, the problem remains that newcomers prefer to learn English. Thirty-seven per cent of Canadians with some French background spoke English at the workplace in 1975, whereas only 6 % of predominantly English-speakers turned to French in a comparable situation (Meisel 1975: 350). The *protection of national languages* in democracies has to be reconciled with the principle of *equal opportunities*.

The size of the constructed macro-aggregate is no determinant factor for its success. *Revivals* rarely have been as successful as the rediscovered Hebrew culture in Israel. In Ireland, similar efforts to revitalize the Gaelic language have scarcely been successful. Even decades of bombing have not produced the result that the majority of the population of the Basque Country in Spain uses Basque as its first language. All Basque speakers are bilingual, as most people were in the former Soviet Union. The Basque language is spoken only by a quarter of the population of the region. The majority (59 %) in that area speaks only Spanish. This is one of the reasons why the historical Basque movement relied more on claiming their old rights and *fueros*, whereas the terrorist branch of the movement today hopes to bomb the country into linguistic homogeneity. Even in regions like Catalonia where command of the regional language is better developed, there is a gap between those who speak Catalan (68 %), and those who are able to write it (39.9 %) (figures in Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 158ff.). Historical memory thus remains partially illiterate and is bound to ‘oral history’. Since Spain follows the liberal principle of a *dual school system* which leaves it to the parents to decide whether their children go to a school where all the subjects are taught in the regional language, it is unlikely that the figures will quickly improve. The alternative *monistic model of homogeneous school districts* in Switzerland and in Belgium is less liberal, but in the short run produces more homogeneity. But even this model is permanently under threat from immigration, which blurs the borderlines of ethnic groups.

Recognition is no one-way street. The dominant group has to recognize the particularities of regional cultures without prejudice—and vice versa. A recent (2005) survey by SOFRES in France showed that Alsatians were recognized by 96 % of French people as being the same as any other French person, even though they are sometimes ridiculed for their heavy quasi-German accent. Only the Bretons

ranked above this level (98 %). Corsicans (89 %) and French Moslems (79 %) ranked below it, and even below black citizens of the Antilles (90 %). After the Second World War, Alsatians were still suspected of being half-German. In 1946 only 65 % of the French recognized them as “normal Frenchmen like others” (Sondage 2005: 62). Successful integration and regional policies apparently have a big influence on mutual recognition. It is not by chance that the French authorities only recently accepted bilingual street signs in Strasbourg, since the autonomist movement has withered away in this area.

Language policy is not only an instrument of central ‘suppressors’. As soon as a sub-unit has won its privileges from the central government, it normally resents the fact that historical boundaries do not coincide with the language group. Most historical ethnic autonomous areas in Spain did away with the traditional boundaries of administrative units and thus proved to be as reckless modernizers as the central government used to be, if on a smaller scale. Historical memories create new *irredentas*. Some Catalans claim that Valencia and the Balearic Islands should belong to ‘Greater Catalonia’. Both speak a variant of Catalan, but both claim to be independent ‘nations’. In the tiny state of Andorra in the Pyrenees, only 35 % of the people speak Catalan. Nevertheless, the Constitution of 1993 made it the only official language. Basques and Catalans complain about the respective minorities in France—inaccessible to them, a permanent *irredenta*.

In the postmodern age of ‘political correctness’, even the successful American model has run into trouble. It has not yet disintegrated, but conservative thinkers such as Huntington are afraid that in the long run this might well be the result of the ‘struggle of cultures’, which is not only being waged on the global stage. This increasingly has linguistic aspects, since Spanish is spoken by more than 11 % of the American population. Almost two-thirds of American students choose to study Spanish as a foreign language. Demands for bilingualism in the south-west of the USA are increasing. The Afro-Americans benefit from these quarrels and gain an advantage because they after all speak English and so are not partisans in the ‘War of Cultures’.

Older specialists on questions of minorities, such as Nathan Glazer (1978: 221), continued to fight against *affirmative discrimination*. Public policy, according to this concept, should take no account of differences of race, colour or ethnic group. A Jewish scholar, as the exponent of a well-assimilated minority, was, however, suspected of promoting the special interests of his group. The Jews are not among the deprived groups in the country and even in religious matters, with the exception of some religious sectarians, they tend to remain silent, so that they are more easily able to accept this liberal ‘colour-blind’ point of view than the torchbearers in the struggle for the rights of the black population or the Hispanics. Ideological liberals tend to oppose all theories of *affirmative action* and claim that these measures aggravate isolation and alienation from the overall goals of the nation, without solving the social problems of these groups (Kymlicka 1995: 4). The division of state and religion was extended to cultural and ethnic groups: *state demos* should remain separated from *social ethnos*. This parallel between religion and *ethnos* makes little sense, however. People can change their religion, but not their race or ethnic origins, and mostly not even the accent in which they speak the dominant ‘state language’.

## 2.5 Essentialists Versus Constructivists: The Predicaments of Regional Historical Memory and Justice for all Subnational Units

In the age of decolonization not only did the number of nations grow, but so did the number of countries with mixed ethnic composition. A pioneer of studies of ethnic groups, Walker Connor (1994: 29), counted and found only 9.1 % ethnically homogeneous entities among 132 states. Dominant ethnic groups ruled in 18.9 % of cases, where they counted for more than 90 % of the population. In 23.5 % of cases the largest ethnic element ranged from 50 to 75 %, and only in 29.5 % did the dominant ethnic group constitute below 50 % of the national population. These data demonstrate the enormous need for nation-building propaganda. Dominant ethnicities use the myths of their group and pretend that they are valid for the whole population of a nation-state. Ethnic and cultural subsystems react by developing their counter-myths. These tend to be the more constructed the less historical continuity a group was able to develop. The Slovaks, for instance, always under the domination of other groups, mostly Hungarians and Czechs, in the preamble of their constitution went back to the ‘Grand Moravian Empire’ in the sixth century in order to justify their claims for autonomy and independence, though this empire embraced many other areas, from Poland to Hungary. The Croats extended the ‘constitutional poetry’ in their preamble back to many centuries of Croatian struggle for autonomy against Hungarian domination in their historical estates.

Most ethnic groups in modern national states share the same traditions of individual rights. Nevertheless, Norway insisted on splitting from Sweden in 1905. In 1992 Slovakia left the nation of Czechoslovakia—with no historical memory of this entity—which had been ‘invented’ by Masaryk after the collapse of the Hapsburg monarchy. If it were claimed that the two cases were conflicts in a still pre-democratic world, the same could hardly be said in the cases of Belgium and Canada, two democratic countries permanently on the brink of disintegration along ethnic lines. Democratic surveys have shown that, even when it comes to the same values, ethnic groups, because of their different historical memories, have different attitudes. French-speaking Canadians proved to be more cynical about whether their government was trustworthy, but on the other hand they were more tolerant towards the economic and fiscal policies of their rulers than the Anglo-Canadians (Meisel 1975: 325). In the case of separation or institutional quasi-separation, as in Belgium, historical traumas were more decisive than the legal convictions of the ethnic groups involved. This can be shown even for normal democratic states. Nowhere does the right of citizenship live up to the expectations of a constitutional patriotism oriented towards human rights. Why does a native criminal have more rights in some respects than a useful and assimilated alien resident?

The post-nationalist age in Europe created the paradox that ‘national identity’ was *de-mystified* but smaller regional identities were *re-mystified*. It could be shown, especially in America, that symbolic policies with their cult of the flag, the national anthem, historical narratives, ceremonies and monuments contained

highly irrational elements. But the identity-building of the smaller ethnic units demanded even more irrational ontological definitions of their national or regional or even tribal identity. They used a kind of *tu-quoque argument* and claimed that no unit could demand higher dignity simply because it had a longer tradition of statehood to promote its ideas of national identity. No narrative of identity can claim higher rationality and all the theories of nation-building and their reconstruction of the historical past in a rational perspective are suspected to be on the same irrational level (Gellner 1987: 3, 178). New postmodern theories have even tried to deconstruct the individual as the only subject of human rights, and literature has experimented with the negation of the 'creating ego' as well as with coherent work as its outcome. Debates between neo-liberals and communitarians have tried to settle some of these disputes. There are enlightened mediators between the two positions who claim that the whole dispute is but a debate among intellectuals sharing the same liberal basic values (Kymlicka 2001: 21). In mature democracies even ethnic and religious minorities (with the exception of ethno-religious fringe groups such as the Amish or the Jewish Chassidists) do not challenge the basic legal convictions of the Nation.

An important argument against the feasibility of universal recognition of various entities with their own historical memory was the fact that in many countries development by now is *intercultural*. Cultural differences can no longer neatly be separated. Cultural difference is no panopticon of fixed and incompatible reconstructions of the past and visions for the future. The dominance of 'civilization' over 'culture' was increased by the modernization process, and it became the centre of sociological theories of history from Toynbee and Ogburn to Alfred Weber and Spengler. Frequently the USA is blamed for promoting *Americanization*, which blurs the borderlines between various cultures and historical memories. It is mostly overlooked that those products taken for American homogenizers of cultures are already frequently 'made in Hong Kong'.

The debates about regional and ethnic identity in established national states are waged by two camps: essentialists versus constructivists. Constructivists hint at the *myth-building power* of 'historical memories' and deny that there exist clearly defined objective territorial entities. The *alien* is everywhere, and with growing migration he is present even in marginal areas. Oddly enough the reaction of the East German population in marginal areas towards a small number of aliens is more intolerant than in cities crowded by foreigners, Berlin, for instance, mockingly called 'the fourth largest city of Turkey'.

Common destiny is constructed by ethnic ideology and common enemies are easily discovered. Those having a national passport are reduced to *aborigines* (Singer 1997: 38ff.). Ethnocentric activists of the majority group claim that under the pressure of migration *ethnocide* is under way (Meyer 2002: 71). Active genocide of the fascist period by militant regional homogenizers is reduced to an ideology of defence. It sounds less fascist, but the boundaries between the groups are again elevated to ontological heights.

The anti-essentialists are in danger of also putting forward essentialist arguments, as in the question of whether 'recognition' or 'redistribution' is more

important for the momentum new social and ethnic movements develop, though they agree that there is no longer any god-like point of view from which one can pass judgement on the developments in identity-building and historical memories (Fraser in: Fraser/Honneth 2003: 231). The constructivist explanation has the virtue that cultures and their historical memories are not interpreted as compulsory limitations. *Reflexive self-criticism* in postmodern times always includes the claims of other cultures (Benhabib 1999: 52). Anti-essentialism counters the *holism of cultural essentialism* with the praise of a 'pluralism of perspectives and cultures'. Nevertheless, even some pluralist ideologies, especially gender and ethnic groups, turn out to be essentialist as soon as they argue on the basis of 'biological constant factors'. Whereas the dominant great aggregations—male chauvinist society or the dominant language group—are deconstructed, the newly-discovered minority is cemented in terms of an entity which cannot compromise over essential tenets of its culture and historical memory. Enlightened feminists have tried to diminish this danger and have claimed only a *tactical essentialism* in favour of a *good common cause* as long as they have to fight for the rights of their group (Calhoun 1995: 202). But we have seen many tactical beliefs turning into stable ideologies.

In the era of postmodernism it is recognized that ethnic identity and its historical narratives aimed at promoting 'historical memory' can never be fully rational. The constructivist thinkers take it for granted that ethnic historical memories are "invented". Traditions seem to be mostly invented. Only 'customs' have an objective historical justification, according to a typology created by Hobsbawm (1983). But traditions can never be invented arbitrarily. Where new states were created, the cultural elites had to invent more historical memories than the elites of established nations need for national cohesion, especially when they showed no inclination to resort to the traditions of the *aborigines* as in Australia. In other more recent nations, such as Mexico, the native element was so important that it could be used as one element of a myth of the two merging historical memories. Art (Orozco, Rivera) and literature have contributed largely to forging an ideology of this merger.

The extension of autonomy and recognition was meant to create more freedom and democracy. But sometimes the politicians of regional areas, who create their own historical memories, are in danger of promoting ethnic purges. This was obvious when Yugoslavia collapsed. The trials at The Hague have not yet clarified all the violence and genocide committed in the former Yugoslav republics. But even below the level of war-like purges we have to ask to what extent the collective rights of a territorial sub-unit may restrict individual rights in the name of group solidarity. This is an urgent question in those areas where minorities work with coercion in and outside the group, from the Basque Country to Iraq. Defenders of collective rights justify this, hinting at the possibility of dissenting individuals in democracies 'opting out' and moving into another area. In the Basque Country not only have about a thousand people who oppose ETA policies been killed, but about 200,000 citizens have left the area, and the majority of those who speak exclusively Spanish is frightened, as are moderate Basques (Thibaud 2005: 70).

This conviction of the Basque essentialists frequently contradicts another value so dear to many ideologues of minorities and their historical memory: *Heimat*, the right to live in one's home area.

Even in peaceful Switzerland there was a case of ethnic violence, the case of the French-speaking 'Jura' within the canton of Berne. Ethnic conflict lines were reinforced by feelings of religious identity. Until 1815, the Jura belonged to the Archbishop of Basel and remained Catholic in a protestant canton. Even a referendum could not solve the problem because the anti-secessionists in the south remained faithful to Berne. The new canton of Jura finally embraced only the north. The question of the Jura remained unsolved, as did the Irish question after the division of the island (Höpfinger in: Gerdes 1980: 59).

Historical memories are manipulated according to the expected economic development of groups. Recently the environmentalists have discovered that 'Small is beautiful', and universalized the principle of small groups within a nation-state. The poor periphery in some federations seemed to carry the main burden of technical and economic development in the use of natural resources. Even areas which were not the poorest areas of the nations, as in some parts of Scotland or Spain, started to rebel. Devolution and decentralization has been developed in order to prevent over-exploitation of regional resources by national and transnational corporations (Kothari and Camilleri in: Hampson/Reppy 1996: 154ff., 122ff.). But there are many problems concerned with protecting regions which can only be solved at a national level. Excessive decentralization, as demanded by eco-regionalists and ethnocentric groups, may result in territorial small groups that remain helpless before the trend towards globalization (Kymlicka 2001: 142f.). The Spanish flexible policy towards the autonomous regions seems to be more successful. In Spain the privileged autonomous areas, with the exception of Galicia, were never underdeveloped. The Basque Country even became a leading economic centre and its banks sided with Madrid centralizers. Its position became weaker as the other areas developed (in terms of per capita income, the Basque Country has declined to fifth place after Madrid, the Balearic Islands, Navarre and Catalonia) (figures in Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 72). Apparently older hypotheses of deprivation which reduced the struggle for self-determination and autonomy to marginalized poor people have been shown to be false. In Western Europe, South Tyrol was the first area to use force, though only against 'things' (such as pylons) and not against 'persons'. Its inhabitants were ridiculed as hillbillies, but even when the movement began it was one of the richest rural areas in Italy. The Basque Country used to be the richest province in Spain, but nevertheless caused unrest. Scotland got richer through its oil, but this has not stopped it demanding more autonomy. Questions of historical memory and political identity are becoming more acute, as we know from studies such as 'The Silent Revolution' on post-materialism (Inglehart 1977). After these experiences, we have to be prepared for more demands for autonomy and ethnic identity, especially if globalization progresses as quickly as it has in the last two decades.



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## Chapter 3

# The Concept of Totalitarianism: A Reassessment After the Breakdown of Communist Rule

### 3.1 Arendt and Friedrich: Two Concepts of Totalitarianism in Political Philosophy and in Comparative Politics

The primary contribution to disseminating a debate on totalitarianism stems from two German scholars who had emigrated to the United States, Hannah Arendt and Carl Joachim Friedrich. Other German scholars generated various abstract concepts, but few of these ideas found such wide acceptance, even among empirical scholars, as totalitarianism as an element in a typology of power relations. It was more than coincidence that Germans engaged more closely than other nations with creating such a comparison of different dictatorships on the basis of one concept: Germany is the only country where both types of totalitarian rule were established in succession: Nazi dictatorship (1933–1945), and Communist dictatorship in East Germany (1949–1989).

Much of the credit should go to Hannah Arendt for popularizing the concept of totalitarianism (Arendt 1951, 1958, 1966). Sometimes Friedrich was criticized for having adopted her concept in a rather pedestrian way, reducing it to a type of total social control in modern dictatorship, omitting the wide historical connotations that the concept involved in Hannah Arendt's work. At a conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1953, Hannah Arendt related it to 'universal complicity' and 'organized guilt' (Friedrich 1954: 337).

She took issue in particular with the adaptation of Friedrich's version of 'totalitarianism' at the hands of another émigré from the German-speaking areas, Karl W. Deutsch (1954: 309). In Deutsch's version, in keeping with his cybernetic approach that emphasizes communication and mobilization, totalitarianism characteristically involves the "extreme mobilization of the efforts and resources under its government". The coercive mobilization was exemplified by a then popular joke: "In a democracy everything that is not forbidden is permitted, under an authoritarian regime, everything that is not permitted is forbidden; under totalitarianism everything that is not forbidden is compulsory". This view was later expanded in Deutsch's seminal book *The Nerves of Government* (1966: 195f.). Deutsch made a first attempt

to differentiate authoritarianism and totalitarianism, a distinction which became important for the debates in the late 1950s and in the 1960s when the Soviet satellites were increasingly showing signs of discontent. In this view, authoritarianism was weak in its ideological emphasis and was rarely mobilized for the goals of the system. Totalitarianism justified its much more brutal coercive strategies with the superior ideological goals of the system. Deutsch compared, as did Friedrich, Communist and Fascist regimes. Hannah Arendt, on the other hand, had some doubts about the description of the elements of totalitarian rule in Friedrich's work, which was not published until 3 years after the 1953 conference but which was known from numerous articles by Friedrich. Arendt saw no similarities between the two varieties of totalitarianism where purges were concerned. There was no purge after the liquidation of the Röhm clique in Nazi Germany as "the extermination of ethnic groups can, of course, not be considered a purge" (Arendt in Friedrich 1954: 338).

This truism hinted at some fundamental differences in the perceptions of two former German citizens: Arendt was descended from a Jewish family, and anti-Semitism in its apocalyptic consequences made Nazi 'totalitarianism' unique for her. Hannah Arendt in her outlook was close to her former teacher, the philosopher Karl Jaspers, who accepted a chair in Basel because he was disgusted with the superficial way Germans handled the problem of collective guilt at Heidelberg. The Germans, and their new American allies, limited their efforts after the war to cases of 'criminal guilt'. Political, moral and metaphysical guilt, which Jaspers and Arendt detected in Germany, were overlooked. Jaspers opposed the demonization of the Nazis and invented the concept of the "banality of evil" which Hannah Arendt later popularized in her book on Eichmann, much to the dissatisfaction of many Jews in America.

The correspondence between Jaspers and Arendt, first published in 1985, sheds light on how both authors converge and diverge in their thought. The metaphysical problem of 'shared guilt', even among the Jews, was much resented in the works of both Jaspers/Arendt (1985). The post-war letters between the two philosophers are essential for a reinterpretation of Hannah Arendt's concept of totalitarianism.

Arendt certainly differed from Friedrich in that she was forced to leave Nazi Germany, whereas Friedrich had already voluntarily emigrated in the 1920s. He was more optimistic than Arendt and Jaspers that a new Germany could be built on the ruins of the Nazi empire. Friedrich was silent on normative questions. He remained empiricist. But in his heart he was an old-fashioned patriot and resented the partition of Germany (he was born in Leipzig), whereas Jaspers and Arendt thought that it had to be accepted. In this respect, Jaspers chose to ignore certain chauvinist features in Max Weber, whom he admired most of his contemporaries. Arendt encouraged him to display more dissent, having read Max Weber's opinion that "he would accept an alliance with the devil for the reconstruction of Germany". Arendt/Jaspers (1985: 52) did not believe in the official West German ideology that Germany had a right to be unified. Both disliked the SED regime, and neither was interested in equating it with Nazi rule. For Arendt, totalitarianism was a unique philosophical problem. This meant that, unlike Friedrich, she was not concerned whether the Soviet satellites, including the GDR, were "definitely totalitarian", as Friedrich (1954: 338) argued at the conference that he had organized in 1953.

As political philosophy and empirical political concept-building are both justified in their own right, both conceptions of totalitarianism, the normative and the descriptive, will continue to coexist. The normative conception enjoyed a huge revival after the end of totalitarian rule. Most of the anti-Communist dissenters in the period of Communist decay needed the concept of ‘totalitarianism’ as a contrast to their ideal of a civil society, just as after the war ‘totalitarianism’ was very popular because it was the counter-concept to the democratic revival. Parallels have correctly been drawn between Jaspers and Havel in their concept of totalitarianism (Ballestrem 1995: 117–125). Even the idea of guilt was to be found in the work of Havel, who hardly knew Jaspers’ post-war political writings (Havel 1991; Jaspers 1963). Both emphasized the total evil of totalitarianism, that penetrates and poisons all the social and human relations in a society. Whereas in the early 1970s Alfred Meyer, Peter Christian Ludz and the present author developed concepts that increasingly diverged between the “strategic totalitarian party clique” and the “new professional and more liberal intelligentsia”, the sense of guilt among the intellectuals after 1989 was as strong as in the work of Arendt and Jaspers: Jens Reich in his farewell to “old existential lies of the intelligentsia”, confessed that even the anti-ideological experts left the old vehicle of Communism only at the last moment because they had been privileged and integrated into bureaucratic totalitarian rule. It was not so much repression, emphasized in Friedrich’s early contributions, which kept them silent, as a lack of courage and the temptation of a life with the privileges of the *nomenklatura* (Reich 1992: 20).

There were certain parallels between the new anti-totalitarian intelligentsia and Jaspers in 1945 with respect to the resort to *anti-politics*. Havel (interview in *Der Spiegel*, 48, 1992: 173), when in power, later relativized this concept, reducing it to a battle cry against totalitarian rule which could not be applied to the budding democracies. Jaspers, completely alienated from West German politics under Adenauer, upheld, without using the term, many of its implications and added a distinctly sour note to the intellectual climate in Germany.

In analysing what happened under Communist rule, Arendt’s concept of totalitarianism is indispensable for *political philosophy*. *Empirical comparative politics* will, on the other hand, try to explore whether Friedrich’s more descriptive concept of totalitarianism was appropriate for analysing the totalitarian systems that have fallen.

### 3.2 A Retrospective Justification of the Concept of Totalitarianism?

The concept of totalitarianism, in the descriptive version of Friedrich and Brzezinski more a conglomerate of characteristic features than a theory, found wider resonance even among analytically minded scholars after the collapse of Communism, apart from the philosophical needs of those authors mentioned above. The delight at the collapse of the totalitarian threat was accompanied by

witch-hunting and the question of who was to blame. Most retrospective work was an excuse for failing to foresee the collapse and an attempt to explain the implosion of Communism, contrary to what had been predicted.

In the 1980s many scholars working on Eastern Europe had abandoned the totalitarian model, some even earlier than this. When Friedrich prepared the second edition of his work in 1965 and Brzezinski was no longer available for the revisions, the present author was asked to take over from Brzezinski. I refused because I was no longer convinced that 'totalitarianism' could explain what happened in the Soviet satellite states. In the meantime, I had turned to studies on the Franco regime and was puzzled by the fact that a quasi-fascist system which was much more totalitarian in its combative phase than Mussolini's Italy (concerning which Friedrich had induced another student of his to write a controversial monograph on totalitarian fascism (Germino 1959), was in the process of disintegration. Working with a concept of the pluralism of organized interests and elites, as developed simultaneously by Gordon Skilling, I demonstrated similarities between the Soviet satellites and Franco's Spain (von Beyme 1968, 1970, 1974). But there were also differences: Spain, in my view, was on the road to a developmental dictatorship of enlightened technocrats, whereas the Communist regimes were modernizing, regimes *ex tunc*, at least in certain areas such as urbanization, secularization, literacy, and mobilization. We failed to see that part of the rapid economic modernization was still the more or less old-fashioned mythology of heavy industry, rather than a road to a form of modernization appropriate to the conditions of less-developed East European countries. I cannot boast of having refused totalitarianism *ex tunc*. Friedrich's influence on my work was too deep and my first monograph still carried 'totalitarianism' in its subtitle (von Beyme 1964). My doubts about the viability of the concept of totalitarianism began to grow only in the mid-1960s.

In the late 1960s American political science showed a growing interest in authoritarian rule under one-party systems. In 1970 Huntington and Moore published a well-known collection of essays to which Friedrich made a contribution on the failure of a one-party system under the title 'Hitler's Germany'. Friedrich clung to the results of the Bracher School, which emphasized totalitarianism because it rejected the concept of 'fascist regimes' applied by the Left. He did not take cognizance of the more modern social history school, represented by Hans Mommsen and others, who saw pluralist chaos even within the totalitarian rule of Nazi Germany and the increasing tendency of bureaucratic sub-apparatuses in the regime to work to their own agenda. Nor did Friedrich integrate into his work the seminal comparisons in the volume by Juan Linz, Moore and others (Huntington/Moore 1970; Bracher 1987).

Friedrich was not involved in German debates (Backes/Jesse 1984). He did not care who in Germany abused the conception or for what purposes, which made this debate so sterile for the next 20 years. But Friedrich's natural liberal conservatism was inclined towards the options of the Bracher School. Starting with Ernst Nolte in 1963 even conservative historians began to employ a comparative concept of fascism. The comparison between Nazi and Soviet rule was still made in

Nolte's work, but increasingly to show that Nazi brutality was only responding to the patterns of terror first developed in Soviet Russia.

When Ludz and the present author turned to Alfred Meyer's concept of *consultative authoritarianism*, this was an approach exclusively meant to describe Communist systems undergoing a certain process of pluralization. The illusory implication that the new professional intelligentsia might turn into a counter-force against the strategic elite failed, as mentioned above; but not completely.

This development of totalitarian regimes towards authoritarian rule which had to tolerate more than Friedrich's "islands of separateness" (Friedrich 1965: 279), created regimes less unique than the 'unhappy few' countries subsumed under the concept of totalitarianism. The present author proposed comparisons between Communist and non-Communist systems under the heading of *comparative functional analysis* without accepting the whole functionalist mythology and terminology (von Beyme 1982). The totalitarianism debate went on. But innovations in Communist studies through the interest group approach, elite theories, and policy-oriented studies did not make use of the concept of totalitarianism and sometimes even polemicized openly against it.

The collapse of Communism reversed the alliances in some respects. The more old-fashioned scholars, such as Conquest or Tucker, were lauded in Moscow. The more progressive writers in Communist studies were invited only to the Gorbachev foundation, though Gorbachev himself, as long as he stayed in power, was most enthusiastically supported by former adherents of the paradigm of totalitarianism, such as Boris Meissner in Germany.

The failure to foresee the collapse of Communism was retrospectively linked to having erroneously abandoned the totalitarian model (Hacker 1990: 17). The positivist mainstream of Communist studies was blamed for having collaborated with totalitarianism, thus prolonging its life (Hacker 1992). It was a typical German debate, like that after 1945. In other countries scholars had to admit errors, but there was no intellectual civil war on the question of totalitarianism. Did totalitarian models anticipate the decline of Communism?

Among the early scholars working on totalitarianism Karl Deutsch (1953: 331), was one of the few who in 1953 had already come to the conclusion that "totalitarianism is by no means immune from processes of disintegration". He expected, however, like most of the later writers on dictatorship, that disintegration would result mostly from the internal conflict among elites, a case which fits only Romania.

Hosts of scholars later claimed to have predicted the actual developments. Indeed, many have presented an analysis containing crises and contradictions. But it was an analysis conducted in much the same fashion as that which was applied to democracies. There is also a plethora of crises. It was only the Marxist structuralists who sometimes concluded from this that the great collapse should have been expected. Even Soviet Russia had not really believed in the massive failure of capitalism since the days of Eugen Varga (von Beyme 1987: 26, 38). Friedrich (1965: 375), in the second edition of his book, clearly stated that "one possibility should be excluded, except in the satellites: the likelihood of an overthrow of these

regimes by revolutionary action from within". The totalitarian model thought of the end of totalitarianism only as a consequence of war. That is what happened to Nazi Germany. Fortunately the implicit assumptions were not applied to the Soviet Union. The nuclear stalemate prevented this.

Brzezinski did not cooperate in the second edition of this prognosis, that erred in expecting stability. In a Festschrift for Friedrich Brzezinski (1971: 389), he even announced his growing dissent with his former teacher. The practice of totalitarianism had for him become dysfunctional even in the Soviet Union. A successful revolution within a socialist system, however, was also for him hardly conceivable, with the exception of his native country, Poland. Totalitarianism as a model, like its totalitarian leaders, was convinced that total social control could work over decades.

After the 1968 uprising in Czechoslovakia, the Brezhnev doctrine was meant to stabilize the totalitarian system. The only country in the Comecon which did not cooperate was Romania. Consequently, Ceausescu had to develop his own security system. He built up the *Securitate* as an army. Oddly enough, in the crisis of 1989 it was this second army that entered into the conflicts with the regular army which, after some wavering, sided with the insurgents. Therefore the only revolution in 1989 that resulted in bloodshed was a consequence of Romania's not recognizing the Brezhnev doctrine.

The Romanian example demonstrated, however, certain weaknesses in those models that considered totalitarian control as the most effective means of stabilizing a socialist system. Totalitarian leaders and Western theoreticians of totalitarianism had one thing in common: they believed in the efficiency of security bureaucracies. The students who worked with the totalitarianism model usually thought that totalitarianism was contagious. Contacts between Western democracies and the totalitarian regimes should be kept to a minimum. Everywhere treason and subversion were imputed. Sometimes there were, of course, naive attempts to contact the totalitarians. This is not only true of certain 'fellow travellers' who systematically underrated the crimes and inefficiencies of socialist systems. But in the long run, the liberal mainstream had enough confidence in the strength of the democratic creed to advocate greater contacts with the totalitarian regimes. The outcome was a manifest conversion of the *nomenklatura* elites in the Eastern bloc to *social democracy*, which contributed to the peaceful end of Communism. Without this infiltration of Western thought, the representatives of totalitarianism would probably have preferred the Chinese solution of Tiananmen Square.

There are many reasons for the decay of socialist systems, but the contribution made by the stubborn followers of totalitarian models to toppling the systems was hardly visible. This did not, however, prevent them from adding insult to injury in their dealings with those liberals who cooperated with the totalitarian regimes. There was a widespread conservative campaign, especially in Germany, against the Social Democratic leaders who allegedly prolonged the lifespan of the GDR by contacts and financial help. The conflict has had, however, only a few repercussions, because it has been shown that the most conservative politicians, such as Franz Josef Strauss, from the other end of the party spectrum had done just as much as the SPD in maintaining contacts with the SED regime in East Germany.

The only early alternative to totalitarian models was offered by *theories of convergence* between capitalist and socialist systems. When Pitrim Sorokin launched his theory for the first time in America, it was considered a convergence of a kind of nostalgia for Sorokin's old motherland with the USA, the writer's new home country. Later, however, this kind of nostalgia was filled with hard indicators, especially in the time of high growth rates in Communist countries. Theories of convergence started from the assumption that the two competing systems would experience a peaceful rapprochement. The prognosis was a peaceful mixture of both systems, not the collapse of the socialist side. Convergence theories, relying on the integrating force of technological developments, were too optimistic about the innovative capacities of socialism. Capitalism did incorporate some elements of planning and welfare state ideology, originally developed in socialist thought. Only the market economy proved to be capable of 'mixing and matching', of integrating elements from disparate systems. Socialism, on the other hand, was frequently urged to integrate elements from Western systems, such as the market economy and democracy, but the Communist regimes failed to create such a synthesis and eventually collapsed because of their inability to amalgamate competing elements in one system. Socialism stuck with its metaphysical bias towards total planning and state property. In spite of certain successes in the sphere of distribution, further innovations in socialism could not be afforded. Even existing benefits were of little use to the citizens of socialist countries, who compared their situation not so much to their own past as to the standard of living in the Western democracies.

There was only one approach to theory-building that correctly predicted that Communism was unviable, but it was more a meta-theory than an empirical sociological theory: the *autopoietic theory of systems*. Particularly on the European continent, there were many defectors from Parsons' version of systems theory. The second paradigm in systems theory was deeply influenced by developments in biology and physics, by theories of chaos and fluctuations. The Maturana and Varela approach to systems theory influenced the social sciences. Those who applied Maturana's theories (1985) postulated that the dominant capitalist system had a natural tendency to impose its code on the rest of the world and to 'enslave' divergent concepts of social and economic order. This meant that socialist countries had no chance of surviving in the ocean of a world market economy.

This approach was, however, somewhat abstract. The development was to take place in a self-referential evolutionary way. Actors were hardly involved, and indeed the peaceful revolutions of 1989, without revolutionary cadres with their clear ideology and complete counter-programme against the old regime, resembled the 'evolution without actors' which was the basic assumption of the autopoietic school of thought. The prognosis was general and lacking in concrete data. The autopoietic school avoids exact prognosis and resorts to the assumption that only historians can reconstruct *ex post facto* why actors at a given moment were able to overthrow a social system. Communist studies had hardly taken cognizance of this approach and only after 1989 did they develop a level of intellectual curiosity about this kind of theory.

Most other theories about the development of Communist regimes were below this level of general evolution of world systems. Hardly any of these correctly forecast



the end of socialism. Closest to such a prognosis was the Soviet dissident Amalrik (1970). His prediction that socialism could end in 1984 was out by only about 1 year, if we accept 1985 as the beginning of the end of Communism. Nevertheless, the reasons which he gave were completely wrong. Amalrik expected the failure of the Soviet Union to meet the challenge of the rival Chinese system. In his scenario, the socialist system would succumb only to another system which would become even more powerful. Another prediction of Soviet collapse was presented in Carrère d'Encausse's "empire éclaté" (1978). She correctly anticipated that the Soviet Union would experience problems with its ethnic groups. The rebellion of ethnic groups was not, however, the reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union. The causal relations rather worked the other way round: when the Soviet economic performance declined and was no longer able to guarantee a decent standard of living to the peripheral non-Russian republics, their national elites turned away from Communism and embraced national sovereignty for their subordinate territories.

Neither of these prognoses envisaged that the Soviet Union could regenerate through innovation. Most theories about the development of a socialist system accepted, however, that socialism was capable of a revival. Notable theoreticians of a *third way*, such as Zdeněk Mlynář (1983: 116f.), foresaw an accelerating cycle of crisis in Communist regimes, but collapse was not anticipated. For many observers innovation in socialism was linked to a *clausula rebus non sic stantibus*. The survival of socialism is possible only if innovation takes place. Theoreticians of a third way and market socialism would even have preferred this kind of development as the normal path of development for developed countries.

One of the main problems after the collapse of bureaucratic socialism was that even theories of a third way were discredited, together with social democratic theories in the West. Ota Šik and Zdeněk Mlynář came back to their country and tried to relaunch their liberal socialist ideas of 1968, but hardly anybody would listen. Dubček was highly respected and honoured by a visible but unimportant post as President of Parliament.

The reconstruction of past prognoses demonstrates a complex picture. Table 3.1 presents a matrix relating the attitudes of political stability on the x-axis to assumptions about economic efficiency on the y-axis. Nine different positions are visible. Only two produce the conclusion that Communism is doomed to die because it is structurally inadequate and the system cannot be maintained by force (Ludwig von Mises), or because dictatorship is no longer in control because of internal rivalries within the Communist camp (Amalrik). Most approaches to Communism opted either for the existence of active support, provided that the system innovated (convergence theories, third way theories, von Beyme 1975, 1982), or assumed that Communism could survive, given passive support, on the basis of material benefits. *Totalitarianism* as a model for explanation shrank in importance as interest groups (G. Skilling) and public policy approaches were deployed (L. Holmes et al.).

In the 1980s, when perestroika prompted changes in the assessment of Communism, the *traditional institutionalists* became more optimistic because they were ready to welcome Gorbachev's good intentions. The *structuralists*, on the other hand, who thought rather in terms of social developments than in terms of

**Table 3.1** Assessment of political stability and economic efficiency in former social science approaches to Communism

Political Stability	Force and control (social, totalitarian)	Active support (ideology, mobilization)	Passive support (material benefits)
Economic Efficiency		Legitimized if innovated	
Efficient because of system's achievement	Leninists/Stalinists, Olson 1992 for early Communism	Literature on Cuba, Convergence theories (Dumont, Fagen, Zeitlin Third way theories et al.); Sinophiles, Perestroika literature, Glaessner 1989 (GDR)	Mainstream positivism in the 1960s and 1970s, Maoist and Trotskyist criticism of the Soviet Union
Minimal efficiency for survival	Models of Totalitarianism, Huntington 1984	von Beyme 1975/1982	Mainstream positivism of the 1980s
Structurally inefficient	von Mises 1922, Amalrik 1970, Brzezinski 1971, Autopoietic systems theories		Mlynař 1983

great leaders and individual institutions, fell into a kind of autopoietic pessimism according to which “everything could be different, but we can hardly change anything” (Luhmann). In 1989 all of the approaches were unprepared for the collapse of Communism. Earlier disputes in the theoretical and metatheoretical schools suddenly lost their importance. Researchers had to tackle the problem of developing new theories in order to explain transition from dictatorship to democracy.

### 3.3 Totalitarianism, an Outdated Type of Rule?

The disputes about who failed to make the right predictions will soon be forgotten. But even if totalitarianism as a model failed even more than other approaches, this does not mean that it had no historical relevance. The subsequent reception of Friedrich’s seminal work is a rather sorry tale, even though in most versions of the Social Sciences Citation Index after his death he was mentioned 30 times, a good result for a scholar who died a decade ago. Friedrich, however, would have been disappointed with the details that we find there. Here was a scholar who wrote on subjects from Aristotle to the contemporary growth in corruption (a topical theme even today), and some three-quarters of the citations relate to his writing on totalitarianism, the most dated part of his work. Is it that a pioneer of comparative politics is remembered only because of his mistakes?

The political philosophy school, as has been mentioned, has the advantage of not bothering whether certain criteria fit certain countries. Nor did the exponents of it feel a need to develop a hypothesis when former totalitarian systems decayed and turned into a form of authoritarian rule. An ahistorical approach to comparative politics can dismiss totalitarianism as a concept. Contemporary dictatorship could be analysed without resorting to Friedrich’s concept, even in the GDR (Küchenhoff 1968).

Carl Friedrich (1963: 188f.) in his general work on *Man and his Government* went right back to pre-state societies, starting with anarchy, fragmented rule. He ended up with a typology of 13 types of rule in history. The variants of ‘tyranny’ in the twentieth century were ‘totalitarian dictatorship’ and ‘military dictatorship’. I think the second concept is too narrow. I would rather call it ‘authoritarian dictatorship’. The extensive debate prompted by the breakdown of dictatorship in southern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s did not need the concept of totalitarianism.

But among the eight types of dictatorship there were civilian dictatorships or regimes that began as military coups and later handed power over to civilians (Stepan 1986: 64ff.). There is a competing conception of a typology of power. Scholars will continue to debate whether Nazi Germany lacked some elements of totalitarianism. Oddly enough, work on the GDR archives has led to conclusions which run counter to common sense. “The GDR was by far more totalitarian than Hitler’s Germany” (Mitter/Wolle 1993: 545). This statement makes sense only when one measures totalitarianism by the number of security agents per capita, and

states that Hitler had a higher proportion of the population behind the movement than Honecker's SED.

Other scholars will continue to debate whether the Soviet Union or China should be subsumed under Stepan's concept of "revolutionary regimes". Even if this concept were used to differentiate between Nazi and Communist rule, the controversies are by no means at an end. There will certainly be scholars who have no objection to including under the rubric of "revolutionary regimes" two dictators who legally assumed power (disregarding Mussolini's *coup de théâtre* during the march on Rome) and who have been ridiculed by the Syndicalist Left in their respective movements as 'Adolphe' or 'Benito légalité'.

When revolution is measured not only according to the amount of bloodshed incurred in the seizure of power, but rather by the depth of social change it causes, such a procedure might even be justified. We know that in the history of democratic rule much the same has happened. Palmer's well-argued case that the American democratic revolution was crueler in terms of shedding the blood of the old elites stands in stark contrast to the commonsense understanding of history (Palmer 1959, vol. 1: 188).

We can today abandon the abuses that result from applying typologies in accordance with ideological preference. We can return to strictly analytical considerations when deciding on the usefulness of the concept of totalitarianism. We should not abandon the concept on the grounds that totalitarian regimes are now defunct. Feudalism has been dead for many centuries, but nevertheless the concept still describes a whole era (Sartori 1987: 196). I agree with Sartori that we should not dismiss a concept unless we have a better one. That the concept remains vague and diffuse is the claim of those who favour its elimination from scholarly discourse (Schmalz-Bruns 1995). I concur with this. The conclusion that I draw is, however, different. Since we use totalitarianism only for a past type of rule from a historical perspective, we can more safely afford to improve the concept, as happened with feudalism in the historical sciences (though even in this case, from time to time scholars propose abandoning the concept of feudalism). Sartori's least convincing argument runs: totalitarianism is useful because it encompasses a syndrome of a whole society. Maybe syndrome is not the right word, but totalitarianism as a syndrome played a major role in political philosophy and therefore should be avoided in empirical research.

There is some consolation for those who have cited my work as evidence that 'totalitarianism should be abandoned altogether'. My acceptance of the concept of totalitarian rule is pragmatic. As a nominalist and agnostic I would not fight to the last ditch in the battle against this established concept. If I were to do so, any victory might well be pyrrhic. If we stick to more generalized concepts, such as dictatorship or authoritarianism, we still have to construct many new subtypes. One of them will certainly be what is commonly called totalitarianism.

This marks no change of mind on my part, as some colleagues might suspect. I refused to work with the model of totalitarianism in the post-Stalin era. In accepting the term I create the problem of defining when socialist systems stopped being totalitarian. It is relatively easy to say what happened in Russia: it petered out after Stalin.

China is a more complicated case: when Mao was deprived of his power, totalitarian rule under the ‘Gang of Four’ even intensified in some respects. The truism that transitions are fluid will not give comfort to rigorists. But I have pleaded for pragmatic solutions. We do not hesitate to call Britain a democracy in 1914 even before universal suffrage was finally granted (1919, 1928). The more distant the regimes, the more vague are the classifications in many respects, and we have learned to live with this. Hopefully totalitarianism is really a type of rule that belongs to the past.

The ideological dangers of accepting the concept, for the moment at least, have been removed. The rule of terror will appear in new forms. But we should bear in mind that not all of them justify a revival of the concept of totalitarianism. Idi Amin’s system applied more direct violence to a higher proportion of the native population than Hitler’s Germany. Nevertheless, we would not subsume it under totalitarian rule because it lacked the technocratic machinery for repression which is an element of totalitarianism. True totalitarianism we expected rather from the science fiction versions of Orwell’s visions.

The torchbearers of the velvet revolution needed the concept of totalitarianism to denounce the enemy. With the consolidation of democracy in the Western sense, or the deviation to *anocracy* (a mixture of anarchy and autocracy), this concept is no longer used as an instrument of self-assertion and propaganda. We do not need totalitarianism as a counter-type of government in order to demonstrate the virtues of democracy. But the fact that the welcome for democracy after 1989 was much more universal than after the first breakdown of totalitarian regimes also heralds further individualization and fragmentation. Self-destructive debates on the value of postmodern democracy (Beck 1995: 171ff.) are more likely than continuing controversies over the concept of totalitarian rule.

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## Chapter 4

# Political Culture: A Concept from Ideological Refutation to Acceptance in the Communist Social Sciences

Cold war and political culture, as in so many titles that oppose two ideas and connect them with ‘and’, are logically not closely interrelated. The cold war was a certain period in the relationship of the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the USA, dating from the end of the Second World War in 1945 until the end of the Communist systems in 1989/1991, or (if the era of perestroika is no longer counted as the cold war) until 1985.

*Political culture* is a concept developed by the behaviouralist approach in political science since Almonds and Verbas’ seminal study on *Civic Culture* in 1963. Political culture is defined as the perceptions and convictions towards political systems, institutions and elites by the citizens. It was meant to complement the one-sided institutionalist approach that prevailed until the 1960s. Before the war Sidney and Beatrice Webb (1935, 1944: 736ff.) had already employed the expression.

Was Communism part of modernity? By extrapolating criteria in works from Habermas to Giddens the following criteria were found (Holmes 2003: 310):

- teleologism;
- dynamism;
- a belief in the possibility and desirability of constructing grand theories or meta- narratives;
- humanism;
- an ideology of rationality and rational discourse.

Communism met the first three criteria, but fell short of the last three core beliefs which were essential for a lasting system that would be accepted by the citizens in spite of its many shortcomings. Communist systems in the cold war were frequently no longer classified as totalitarian in the sense of Carl Joachim Friedrich. Stalinism and totalitarianism were sometimes taken as synonyms. The expression ‘post-Stalinism’ was coined, but when it began to be accepted the brutal suppression of revolts in 1953 and 1956 caused a reaction in the direction of the use of ‘Stalinism’. We know this from art history, where titles are published such as ‘from

Post to Neo'. Neo-totalitarianism remained a permanent danger. György Conrad and others used 'post-Stalinism' for a system where the state dominated society. Totalitarianism was a system where a society did not even exist.

*Consultative authoritarianism* (Alfred Meyer) was used for the Soviet Union when Khrushchev announced "Forced labour is uneconomic" and the camps of the Gulag were emptied. The camps were not yet declared 'immoral'. The minimal criteria for the new authoritarian systems, according to Hobsbawm (1995: 489), were that Soviet leaders died in their beds and were not executed. Benevolent interpreters in America even calculated that there were more people imprisoned in the USA (426 per 100,000 population) than in the Soviet Union (268 per 100,000) (Hobsbawm 1995: 489; Walker 1991: 11). The citizens under Hungarian 'Gulash Communism' or 'Polski-Fiat Communism' exchanged an improvement in well-being for the tolerance of a smoother authoritarianism. Stalinism was described by Khrushchev as a kind of "oriental despotism". Its overturn was half-hearted: the old victims such as Trotsky and even Bukharin were not rehabilitated. In his memoirs, he recognized this as a mistake (Chruschtschow 1971: 359). The new more liberal system needed its scapegoats, such as Beria and the Stalinist old gang. Thus the old Russian custom of seeking a scapegoat, ever since Chernyshevsky's and Lenin's "*Kto vinovat?*" (who should be blamed?), was still an invitation for occasional witch-hunting. Nevertheless, whatever the name of the system in Western countries, it became clear that a political culture no longer completely dependent on the state was able to develop. This was due to two main factors:

- *internal development*, and
- *external development* towards a system of coexistence in order to avoid nuclear war.

#### 4.1 Political Culture: A Concept from Denial to Acceptance

Almond/Verba (1963: 402ff.) compared five nations:

- The alienated political culture: *Italy*, low in national pride and trust in the system, with a highly alienated citizenry;
- *Mexico* was even more alienated, particularly poor in democratic participation, and prone to violence;
- *Germany* had a subject political culture and demonstrated high participation and subject competence, but also political detachment and exaggerated trust in administration and authority;
- *Great Britain* demonstrated a deferential civic culture with a high level of respect for the ruling elites;
- the *USA* incorporated the required "participant civil culture", with a high degree of participation at many levels.

This study was heavily criticized by many western scholars for a number of shortcomings (cf. von Beyme 2000): in particular, conclusions from micro-data



about the development of macro-units such as political systems. Criticism was directed against an Anglo-Saxon bias, including an aversion to too high a degree of participation as in the Weimar Republic, a static bias as a consequence of systems theory, and a preoccupation with elite behaviour.

In Communist countries the political culture approach was originally denounced as a 'subjectivist bourgeois approach' and as hidden propaganda for 'American imperialist values'—though Lenin (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 41, p. 404) once used this expression in a more normative way. I participated in the mid-seventies in the first round table on 'political culture' in a Communist country—in Poland, in Cracow. Archie Brown and Jack Gray edited the papers in 1977 under the title "Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States". None of the authors was East European. Archie Brown and Gordon Wightman wrote a contribution on Czechoslovakia. The authors at that time were still not sure that it was possible to establish the causal efficacy of political culture in relation to political behaviour in Communist countries because political behaviour was streamlined by ideologies, party organization and coercion.

Initially, even Western scholars used the concept rather in the way it was used in cultural anthropology, as a signpost to the cultural foundations of the Moscow-oriented and streamlined Communist societies and their 'goal cultures'—which differed slightly, in spite of the unifying Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. Scholars in Eastern Europe soon began to accept the idea of political culture in two ways. The versatile writer Fedor Burlatsky (1970: 327) used it as it was used in Western aesthetics, but applied to the political styles of leaders. Communist economists sometimes used the term *political culture* to explain why similar planning institutions did not cause similar economic outputs. In comparisons between Poland and the GDR the 'political culture' (authoritarian of course) and the better working morale of the GDR were used to explain differences in output (von Beyme 1982: 240). In philosophy, writers such as Gendin (1970) discovered in Communist planning ideology the so-called *Oedipus syndrome*, a kind of self-deception of the Communist elites who took the fulfilment of 5-year plans as proof that their goals were historically correct, without recognizing that the plan became a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

The withering away of the cold war over two decades had certain impacts on the political culture of the elites in socialist systems. By taking over Western empirical philosophy and thinking, Soviet elites were 'social-democratized' step by step. This is one of the reasons why in 1989/1991 they accepted the collapse of the Soviet Union and Comecon without resorting to violence, as did the Chinese leadership. In spite of continuing Communist rhetoric, the Communist future was delayed. New periods such as the 'third stage of the construction of the fundamentals of Communism' were invented. The result had a trickle-down effect on the political culture of the masses. Increasingly, nobody believed any more in paying lip service to the ideology. A political culture based on planning and authoritarian enforcement was no longer working. Plans were no longer fulfilled and if they were implemented this was due to the inbuilt elements of capitalism.

Four instruments were used by Communist elites to steer mass behaviour:

- *ideology* and indoctrination;
- *planning* and steering all the processes of political and social life;
- especially in the early stages, *force* was employed to impose obedience;
- in the last phase of coexistence, *material gratification* was used.

In most Communist countries market elements were not only permitted in order to emphasize the material gratification of the citizens, but a market was also tolerated for the fulfilment of the plan. In Russia figures such as the '*choditel*' were common—people who walked around and looked for scarcities in industrial plants, and organized 'exchanges, such as screws for wheels', thus undermining the Communist attitudes and belief in planning. After Khrushchev, the old device *dogonat' i peregonat' SSA* ('to match and to overtake the United States') was obsolete. An inferior level of economic wealth was accepted after an economic crisis in 1973, and the leadership looked for an equivalent of 'capitalist political culture'. It was called *sotsialisticheskij obraz zhizni* (the socialist way of life). It included:

- The search for a new *collective well-being* instead of relentless hunting for economic growth.
- The primacy of the production sphere was not challenged, but the allegedly social-democratic primacy of the *distribution sphere* was more and more practised.
- Purely economic determinist thinking was now denounced as 'undialectical vulgar Marxism'.
- The discovery of the *ecological crisis*, since Sholokhov had announced the death of Lake Baikal. *Infrastructure* as a capitalist idea was accepted as the missing link needed to overcome the gap between production and distribution (Koncerg 1982: 8). It was increasingly recognized that individual gratification was more welcomed by the citizens than collective goods. The real wishes of the population were researched by interview studies, formerly denounced as 'capitalist subjectivism'.
- Social homogeneity (*odnorodnost'*) was still the basic goal, but increasingly *social differentiation* was accepted in this new 'political culture'. Subjective well-being was no longer so deprecated. Research into *kultura* and *byt* became a part of empirical studies of a 'socialist way of life'. The sphere of leisure and consummation was all of a sudden relevant to sociologists, even though this word had been anathema for decades (Bestuzhev-Lada 1980: 10).

The social indicators movement that sprang up in the 1970s was adopted in the socialist countries. In the era of coexistence, it helped that the OECD, as an international organization, published a "List of Social Concerns Common to Most OECD Countries" (1973), which listed 22 fundamental social problems. Coexistence and political culture were again linked to 'terminological warfare'. 'Indicators' were bourgeois, but *Pokazeteli* (the Russian word) were a progressive instrument of socialist planning (Pokazately 1985: 37). Demography was the first social science that was no longer suspect when it adopted Western terminology to measure political culture and life condition or *byt*.

Once socialist countries recognized Western insights as useful, they were adopted under a new name, and built into an instrument of revolutionary change under the guidance of the party. The Russians again proved highly talented in mathematics, and they soon developed excessive models with 126 indicators of regional social development (Timchuk 1980: 46–48). This progress was, however, impeded by the impact of authoritarian structures on political culture and by the behaviour of the scientists. Even Western scholars no longer thought that the flood of Comecon statistics was being falsified by the centre. But they were partly invalid because the actors in regions and enterprises systematically reported data in their own favour, in order to produce good forecasts for the next planning period and to obtain rewards for past periods.

Coexistence during the cold war made Soviet leaders increasingly aware that they should pay more attention to their systems of federalism and regionalism. Under Khrushchev, the 105 economic regions were still just an instrument for creating more industrial efficiency. Under Gorbachev, during the 27 party meeting individual enterprises and regions were no longer neglected, but subsumed under the usual figures for improvements in Soviet political culture, such as *sblizhenie* ('equalization', 'rapprochement'):

- between city and countryside;
- between intellectual workers and manual workers;
- between men and women;
- between regions and national minorities.

The successes of equalization in Communism have been tested in two ways:

- international comparisons with the West;
- intra-Soviet comparisons among the Republics of the Union.

(1) In spite of the ideological talk about *sblizhenie* and equalization, even the differences in income were increasing. Pryor (1985: 305) found that income distribution was surprisingly similar in most of the socialist systems. From Pryor to Wilensky and Dye (Dye/Zeigler 1988: 54f.), in Western literature the hypothesis was popular that the development was an artefact of modernization. This meant that political science became marginal and had only to explain the tiny remnant of comparative differences. The well-known economist Abram Bergson (1984: 1092) calculated one year before perestroika that the upper fifth received 38.5 % of income distribution in the Soviet Union and the lowest fifth only 8.7 %. Thus income distribution in the Communist countries was slightly more equal than in the USA and France, but clearly less egalitarian than in Sweden and Great Britain. As Peter Wiles (1974: 53ff.) has shown as early as the mid-seventies, this result was the more remarkable since Britain and most West European countries had the particular drawback of an enormous population of poor migrants, a problem which did not exist under socialism. The GDR, which boasted of being the tenth most important industrial nation in the world, had only 50,000 Vietnamese as migrant workers.

After reunification, we discovered that their situation was even more isolated than the social situation of Turks in West Germany. We have, however, to consider the Soviet problems of internal migration. As Brezhnev once admitted in a party conference, migration should be from the West to the East and from the North to the South, but it developed rather in the opposite way because Soviet migrants aimed at the centres of good income and quality of life in the north-west of the Union.

- (2) *Intra-Soviet comparisons* in the Soviet Union, in spite of the loose talk of an egalitarian political and social culture (*byt*), demonstrated enormous differences. Estonia was at the top, Turkmenistan at the bottom. Perestroika had even increased the tendency of wage drift. There was some success in equalization because of a kind of welfare imperialism (von Beyme 1988: 94f.). But in the long run, Central Asia and Transcaucasia fell behind, in spite of the heroic efforts of Soviet equalization policies. Though in the Soviet Union there was no discussion on poverty as in the West, the perestroika literature finally admitted that wages below a certain minimum were insufficient for survival (Gordon 1987: 12). In the 1960s, two-fifths of the population lived near the 'poverty line' as constructed by Western scholars; in the 1970s only one-fifth of the people were in this category—there had evidently been some improvement. In the USA, the figure was about 13 %, but in America there were still many more goods available to the poor than in the Soviet Union, so that dissatisfaction was lower (Matthews 1986: 26).

According to the indicators, equalization between cities and countryside was considerable between the workers and the intelligentsia. These data showed that a poor Islamic area like Azerbaijan was close to the average among the workers, while the intelligentsia was less well paid, and in fact frequently unemployed, while the *kolkhozniki* (collective farmers) in the whole Union lagged behind in material goods yet were nevertheless more satisfied with their living conditions, especially housing, leisure time activities and social contacts. The farmers were no longer in so miserable a condition as under Stalin (Table 4.1).

It was obvious that the objective indicators did not transform into satisfaction in a mechanistic way, as in Diamat's theories. The Communist countries claimed they had no inflation. But with the perestroika literature of the mid-1980s, scholars admitted to a certain amount of inflation pressure, so that comparisons of money income were not the only relevant indicators. From 1970 to 1985 overall inflation was 8 %, and even reached 12 % for food (Narodnoe khozaistvo 1985: 478).

**Table 4.1** Income distribution in roubles per family member

Area	Workers	Kolkhozniki	Intelligentsia
Union	100.43	72.23	96.70
Azerbaijan	94.40	51.80	80.35
Satisfaction with living conditions	0.68 %	0.72 %	0.68 %
Material goods			

Source Bigulov (1984: 90)

Western scholars thought that the reality was even worse. One reason for this was inflationary pressure from the budding market. The free markets of the *kolkhozniki* offered more goods, but at increasingly higher prices. Regional differences were considerable, especially in the Far East. This was one of the reasons why workers disliked working in the Far East in spite of higher wages, since living conditions were worse and most of the additional money was consumed by the higher prices of many goods which had to be shipped in from far away. The consequence was a migration in the wrong direction—from the East to the West and not in the opposite direction, as planners complained. Even the urban population increasingly developed a system of “*dacha with garden*” in order to compensate for shortcomings in the possibilities of purchasing food.

The shortage of goods led to a higher proportion of savings—also not wanted by the planners. More consumption stimulates the economy, but the planners never managed to offer the necessary goods in order to create this effect. Part of the money was used for a black market—also undesired by the leaders. (As a student in Moscow in 1959/1960 I benefited from the black market. Russian books in Western editions such as YMCA Press in Paris were exchanged for anti-quarian books which were not available on the normal market.) The easiest way to absorb financial overcapacities and savings would have been the production of expensive, highly desirable goods such as cars. But the planners did not dare to use this strategy because of the lack of an infrastructure to absorb additional traffic.

Rents in public and collectively owned houses were too low. They did not cover the necessary maintenance and development, as one can see from comparisons in Prague between the 1970s and now. As in the West, satisfaction with housing was lowest in big cities: in Leningrad there was 26 % dissatisfaction, which is not surprising given that in 1980 thirty percent and in 1987 twenty-six percent of apartments had no bathroom (Blagoustroystvo 1988: 129).

Ligachev, an opponent of *perestroika*, denounced the shortcomings of equipment even in public buildings such as schools. Twenty-one percent of schools had no central heating, 30 % no water, and 40 % no inside toilets (A Top Soviet 1988: 1, 4). This nourishes the suspicion that the deficiencies in private apartments were even higher than publicly admitted. Private construction of houses was no longer discriminated against as in the time of Stalinism, but the results were too little and too late. Sufficient material for construction was not legally available to a comparative extent. Frequently materials and parts of machines were stolen in the industrial plants. A famous joke went: A lady asks her husband—supposedly employed in a factory that made baby carriages—to bring some spare parts home every night, because she was not able to buy a baby carriage. After a week the husband confessed, “Whenever I try to put together the spare parts to build a baby carriage, the result is a machine gun”.

These examples demonstrate a general dilemma of the planned society: it was not able to anticipate future needs. This was most striking in housing: the need for small units because of the growing number of divorces and early deaths in families was not anticipated, or because of youth unrest, with children increasingly leaving

their parents. They did not anticipate the needs for studies in different fields: engineering (Stalin declared we are the ‘engineers of our life’), agronomics, cybernetics, foreign languages, chemistry and microbiology, as well as other fashions, were successively favoured. When the students graduated they were no longer needed, just as in the so-called ‘anarchy of production’ in the West. Again a hidden connection between political culture and cold war—or rather coexistence—was revealed: the Communist countries followed the fashions of the West after a certain delay. This was most striking in the GDR: every night the class enemy entered the living rooms of GDR citizens via TV. The times were past when watching West German TV was punishable. General Secretary Honecker once himself admitted that his favourite series was on Western TV.

In Communist countries the term ‘welfare state’ was accepted only late. Comparisons of the proportion of expenditure social policy published by the ILO (1985) showed considerable differences: the USSR, at 14.1 %, was still above the USA at 12.2 %, but far below other Communist countries such as Czechoslovakia (18.9 %, GDR 17 %; cf. the Federal Republic at 23.8 %). This meant that the superpowers lagged behind because the costs of armaments in the Cold War were too high. This shows probably the most intimate connection between political culture and cold war.

The Communist countries became societies of aged people—as in the West, precisely because of successes in welfare policies. Early retirement was a strain on the social budget. This development illustrated a big problem with the health of workers: in Moscow 54 % and in Dnepropetrovsk as many as 62 % took early retirement for health reasons (Shapiro 1983: 61). On the other hand, there was much self-exploitation of pensioners, who continued to work because pensions were too low.

Qualitative research increased in the 1980s in most Communist countries. Since Almond it has been a truism in Western literature that political culture in Communist countries always follows the political institutions and the commands of the elites. This was increasingly no longer true. Qualitative comparisons made it possible to rebut earlier Western arrogance concerning the ‘underdeveloped consumption behaviour’ in Communist countries where supposedly Russians eat less meat and drink more vodka (Consumption 1981: 21). Comparisons of political cultures can no longer compare raw data on income and consumption without considering differences in culture and lifestyle. Gorbachev (Materialy 1987: 22) was the first to highlight this dilemma at the 27 party meeting: “With astounding accuracy our spacecraft find Halley’s Comet or fly to Venus... but most implements in Soviet households are of miserable quality”. Value change was discovered and statistics concerning the basic values of different age groups showed that active participation was favoured only by a minority (11–15 %), whereas personal independence, leisure, good life, were increasing, especially among the younger generation (Arutyunyan 1985: 180, 183).

Socialist scientists discovered *deviant behaviour*, especially in criminology. Surveys were published in the 1980s where violations of the socialist way of life were described by many respondents. Increasingly, the answers criticized

behaviour in the political culture which deviated from the official self-image of society. Some of the most frequent problems described by respondents were (Batygin 1983: 81):

- poor working morale 25.0 %
- poor education of children 21.2 %
- alcoholic excess 16.2 %
- corruption (*blat*) 15.0 %

In other interview studies the proportions of *alcoholism* were even higher. 22 % of young people and more than 30 % of people over fifty admitted to frequent drinking (Gorshkov/Seregi 1986: 46). Several campaigns against alcoholism had only partial success. When Gorbachev made it much more difficult to buy vodka this caused enormous dissatisfaction in the population and losses through home brewing (*samogon*), as well as losses to the state budget which were detrimental to Gorbachev's plans for reform. When Gorbachev welcomed scholars to his Foundation in 1993 with a glass of vodka, he admitted this when I joked that I was glad that he himself was not the 'mineral secretary', as he was nicknamed by the people in the streets. Only in his last book did he admit his error in public.

Perestroika literature (Nazimov 1987: 80), classified 22 % of Soviet youth as 'undisciplined'. A 'without me attitude' developed, something that in Germany was called '*Null-Bock-Gesinnung*'. Coexistence in the cold war increasingly had terminological consequences. English terms such as '*hooliganism*' were more frequently adopted. Sometimes the sociological analysis reminded one of tautological phrases such as the German poet Fritz Reuter's "Poverty is the result of poverté". The Russian version was 'poverty is the result of hooliganism', without sufficiently explaining the growth of hooliganism other than through alcoholism. But it proved to be difficult to explain alcoholism without violating the positive image of a body of youth with an allegedly deeply-rooted desire to create a Communist society. Westernization penetrated the elites and the masses. Young people admitted their preference for Western values in art and music most frankly. According to one survey (Meinert 1987: 98), only a minority was strongly in favour of the classical music (11 %) and folk song (6 %) promoted by official cultural policy. Rock scored well: very pleasant 31 %, pleasant 48 %. Pop was evaluated as very pleasant by 29 % and as pleasant by 49 %. The officially approved folk song and classical music were favoured only by a minority of about 10 %. The growing anomie was countered by new waves of propaganda, with little result. Even perestroika faced the dilemma that it did not go far enough for the unsatisfied minority and that it went too far for the traditional-minded majority.

## 4.2 Cold War and Peaceful Coexistence

The cold war period was mitigated by the doctrine of 'peaceful coexistence', which had been the self-description of the relationship with the capitalist West since the twentieth party convention of the CPSU in 1956. This doctrine was a

movement away from the Leninist idea of the ‘inevitability of war’ between the systems. This ideological change was not the fruit of the Communist leadership’s abstract insight, but rather the consequence of the fact that the two camps were able to annihilate each other in a nuclear war. The victory of Communism was still on the agenda, but it was to be implemented by peaceful means. Violence instead of cooperation was limited to two occasions:

- support for revolutionary movements in the Third World, and
- the protection of socialist systems against so-called ‘counter-revolutionary violence’.

The elitist character of the concept of political culture was heavily criticized by the elites in socialist systems, but they were nevertheless affected. The first steps towards cooperation during the cold war followed the Cuba crisis of 1962 when the Soviet Union was forced to withdraw its missiles from Cuban territory, a first step to the toppling of Khrushchev. Further steps were:

- the nuclear test ban, 1963;
- the treaty concerning cosmic space outside our planet, 1967;
- the red telephone link between the Kremlin and the White House;
- the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Salt I, 1972, and II, 1979;
- the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty restricting intercontinental missiles, 1971;
- the Conference on Safety and Cooperation, Helsinki Agreement 1973, a diplomatic forum for talks on cooperation without the binding force of international law—a first step towards an international regime.

This development was interrupted by Reagan’s era of unilateral self-help, 1979–1985. But Reagan, who thought that Carter had gone too far in his appeasement policy with the Helsinki policy, had to soften his tough position in his second administration. This cooperation was difficult because there was no consensus between the USA and the Communist countries about which kind of weapons were more risky: Soviet missiles on the ground or American cruise missiles from stations in the sea. Cooperation was largely limited to the first two worlds. For the Third World the doctrine of class war was maintained. This applied particularly to the so-called *countries of Socialist orientation* in the Third World. But the Socialist camp was disappointed in its policies. Most countries which had cooperated closely with Moscow and described themselves as having a “Socialist orientation” were no longer ‘Socialist’ after a couple of years; examples are Egypt after Nasser, Peru, and Mozambique. Only Cuba remained faithful and gave up its own revolutionary policies in the style of Che Guevara, but internationally followed its own Castrist path. It did so even when Gorbachev reduced financial aid during perestroika.

Coexistence in the cold war was a vague concept between conflict and cooperation. It meant that in the long run capitalism—or imperialism—was doomed to annihilation. For the time being, limited cooperation was inevitable. In the long run this meant social-democratization of the Communist elites. (As a former president of the International Political Science Association, I was a witness to this process. My



vice-president Georgy Shakhnazarov became chief advisor to Gorbachev. The *new politics* which had been promulgated since 1985 was mainly formulated by Shakhnazarov and by other colleagues—lawyers who turned to political science in the 1980s. Many of them worked in important think tanks such as IMEMO and the Institute of State and Law (*Gosudarstvo i pravo*) in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. In 1984 this even affected Czechoslovakia, when the Czech Academy organized a conference in Liblice. The Czech and GDR elites, however, resisted most stubbornly.)

### 4.3 Political Culture and the Decline of Communism

Growing anomie in some parts of society began with unrest among the ethnic minorities and insults against Jews and natives of the Caucasus. The productive force of public opinion was discovered, but too late. Sections of the elites discovered that true reforms needed a guaranteed ‘legal state’ (*Rechtsstaat*). The Procurator increasingly abandoned his repressive functions and grew step by step into an ombudsman for citizens’ rights against the administration. Some reformers in Communist countries began to discover the advantages of judicial review, which costs little and has a great impact on political culture in the long run. But even under perestroika, only small steps were taken.

The conservative Communist elites were handicapped by tolerating too many old and sick leaders, who were no longer open to new ideas. Clandestine jokes judged the last three leaders before Gorbachev as sclerotic: Brezhnev needed an artificial heart, Andropov needed artificial kidneys, and finally Chernenko needed an artificial brain. This was combined with a decline in scholarly creativity. Gorbachev in 1987 offered the criticism that most Soviet scholars offered ‘toasts to good health’ instead of solid ‘analysis and prognosis’. Since de Tocqueville, research into revolutions has discovered that revolutions do not happen when life is most miserable. In this, Lenin’s slogan *Tem chuzhe, tem luchshe* (the worse the better) was wrong in many cases.

Revolutions happen after a period of the steady growth of well-being, when a movement suddenly breaks down. This was the fate of the Communist camp. It was not just ‘Gulash Communism’ in Hungary that had offered better living conditions. Particularly in the GDR under Honecker, life seemed to improve. But by the end of the 1980s the GDR was virtually bankrupt and had to accept billions of Deutsche Marks from the class enemy, Kohl’s West German government, and it did not even resent the fact that the most reactionary Christian Democratic politician, Franz Josef Strauss, had promised this help. This decline was accompanied by several processes:

- erosion of the old teleological system of legitimacy and a move towards legal rationality in Max Weber’s sense, erosion of the steering capacity of the elites, and a trend towards limited tenure;
- erosion of economic productivity of the system in a complex world of high technology;

- increasing corruption, which could not be countered by campaigns such as that launched by Andropov (Holmes 2003: 269ff.);
- erosion of the citizen's belief in the system, rapprochements with the West in foreign policy.

All these processes had consequences in the long run for the internal power structure of the Communist regimes.

After the collapse, most commentators claimed always to have known that the system could not survive. But only a few writers had offered such a prognosis. The Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises, as early as the 1920s, claimed that a Communist economy would not work. He was rediscovered in the late 1980s, but from 1945 to 1985 the system functioned fairly well and created considerable improvement. Amalrik (1970) assumed that the Soviet Union could not survive 1984. But he gave the wrong reason: he suspected that a war between the Soviet Union and China would ruin the system. H  l  ne Carr  re d'Encausse (1979) expected a collapse because of national upheavals. This proved to be wishful thinking. The Baltic States had already *de facto* disappeared under Gorbachev, but nationalism was not the reason for the collapse. Most nationalities aimed for independence only when the Soviet Union was no longer able to guarantee their standard of living. All of a sudden regional Communist leaders—sometimes not even fluent in the regional language, as in Bashkorstan—claimed sovereignty rather than simply more autonomy. Only in the case of Chechnya did this lead to a war. Most other national groups were so surrounded by Russians that they could not consider independence. The Confederation of Independent States (CIS), in spite of imaginative constructs such as 'states of close foreign countries', was not able to keep all the former Union republics close to the Russian Federation.

Oddly enough the Soviet Union suffered from its own over-steering, something that Etzioni had already discovered to be an evil of systems of modernization. To some extent, Communist systems suffered from their successes. Very early on, three aims had been fulfilled:

- universal literacy,
- industrialization,
- urbanization.

But these goals for 'accelerated modernization' in some respects were reached too early. The people reacted with increased expectations, but without achieving a fully modern civic culture.

This gap was widest in those countries in the socialist camp which were most highly modernized, the GDR and Czechoslovakia. For a long time Soviet systems made a deal—a kind of tacit social contract—with their leadership: more social security and a better standard of living, in exchange for renunciation of participation other than manipulated participation and acceptance of the official ideological political culture.

Transnational cooperation in the era of the cold war was the reason why the Communist camp could collapse in 1989–1991 without following the Chinese example of Tiananmen Square, the Square of Heavenly Peace, when hundreds of demonstrating dissenters were shot. The most important impact on the political culture

in the Soviet Union was glasnost, which undermined perestroika under Gorbachev. Gorbachev had no intention of undermining the system, but his measures were half-hearted. He failed to take the steps which might have saved the system:

- true federalism, amounting to more than the promotion of local folklore. Probably the new system would have been a kind of ‘asymmetric federalism’, as in Spain, where flexible autonomy rights are granted according to the intensity of ethnic strife. Only the Baltic States were not prepared to remain in a new federation;
- a two-party system, which even Atatürk had introduced for a while during his dictatorship, in order to placate the opposition;
- withdrawal of the Party from the everyday business of administration;
- introduction of ‘judicial review’ in order to guarantee a Soviet *Rechtsstaat*.

Gorbachev fought against apathy—in Russian this was called by the not very Russian name *inertnost*. In his famous speech at the 27 party convention (Materialy 1987: 38), he compared the Soviet citizen in his political culture to one of Gogol’s heroes: they plan fantastic futures but they don’t do anything. Stalin had already used his own literary knowledge to call this passivism *Oblomovshchina*, from Goncharov’s famous novel *Oblomov*. This line of argument against traditional political culture revealed an enduring tendency in the history of ‘real socialism’: the traditional passive and authority-minded political culture came through while the activist rational and future-oriented culture diminished. In some respects cooperation was easier under Communism than under post-Communism. Communist political culture had become reliable and rational, at least at the elite level and in international relations. The post-Communist systems, especially under Yeltsin, were torn between autocracy and anarchy. Soviet nostalgia for the old empire showed up very soon. Putin called the decline of the Soviet Union the greatest political catastrophe of the twentieth century.

Most of the states of the CIS have no clear ethnographic borders, with three exceptions. Seventeen million Russians live in Ukraine. The Russian duma has declared that the Crimean peninsula is Russian territory because 70 % of the inhabitants are Russians. It is a miracle that no Russian Garibaldi has yet landed on the Crimean peninsula. But unrest is growing and the conflict with Georgia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia is certainly the beginning of an attempt to regather the former Russian territories. Western ideas of protecting Georgia and Ukraine by allowing them to join NATO and later the European Union are extremely dangerous.

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Max Beyme, "Trust your TV", December 2001. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

# Chapter 5

## Institutions and Political Culture in Post-Soviet Russia

### 5.1 Introduction

The Soviet Union after the death of Stalin moved from totalitarianism to authoritarian rule. Even under Brezhnev the system was fairly stable, though it suffered from the immobile Soviet elites who liked to denounce the ‘social-democratization’ of other socialist countries, especially Hungary and Poland, but proved to be themselves ‘social-democratized’ (cf. Brown 2009) and did not dare to react with force against the new movements, as did China in the Square of Heavenly Peace in Beijing. Under Gorbachev the liberalization movement was impressive, but sometimes already excessive; too much *glasnost* tended to kill an orderly *perestroika*. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union two historical questions were raised from the titles of famous books which had played a major role in Russian intellectual history:

- *Kto vinovat?* (who is to be blamed?) Alexander Herzen (1845), and
- *Shto delat'?* (what is to be done?) Nikolay Chernyshevsky (1863).

Even Gorbachev, who enjoys tremendous prestige in Western Europe, is to be blamed for not having envisaged the important structural reforms which might have saved the system, abandonment of the one-party system and the admission of new forces to the elections. Gorbachev was, however, under enormous pressure. His speeches in the party conventions were only partly welcomed. The protocol noted *burnye applodismenty* (stormy applause) only when he ended a reformist idea with a quotation from Lenin. A reform of Soviet federalism which amounted to more than a streamlined federal system, that promoted something more than popular ethnic dance groups—such a reform might have prevented a development in which the conflict between the Russian leader Yeltsin and the Soviet leader Gorbachev ended with the exit of Russia which caused the end of the Soviet Union, as might the acceptance of a market society in small steps. Russian as well as Western scholars mostly believed in the stability of the system and rarely forecast its possible dissolution.

Western scholars at the time of the early Soviet Union were frequently ready to believe the dictum of the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises (1922: 22) that communism succeeds only as long as the majority of the people accepts it, but that normally it is not a promising and workable economic system. Considerable economic growth was said to be impossible, but it happened after World War II. Scholars such as the Czech exponent of the Dubček reforms in Czechoslovakia, Zdenek Mlynar (1983: 166), predicted growing crises because innovations failed and economic growth withered away. But he only anticipated less aggressive Soviet foreign politics, not the collapse of the system.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, *retrospective prophecy* flourished among Western scholars. Many analyses of the reasons for the collapse could be summed up in one major factor, such as *corruption* in the work of Leslie Holmes (1993). Corruption certainly contributed to the decline because it delegitimized the Soviet elites, but it was not a sufficient explanation for the collapse. Most authoritarian systems are corrupt and nevertheless survive for a long time, especially in Latin America. In the Soviet period a joke said that “America has a military-industrial complex—the Soviet Union as a whole is a military complex”. This bon mot was adopted for post-Communist Russia with a slight change: “America has a Mafia—Russia is a mafia”.

In searching for the reasons for the decline, an analysis of the current seven ‘challenges’ for the post-Soviet order may be helpful:

- (1) differences in political culture;
- (2) differences in the concept of democracy and the legal state;
- (3) hierarchization of the institutional system;
- (4) streamlining the new nomenklatura elites;
- (5) streamlining Russian federalism;
- (6) streamlining the party system;
- (7) controlling the media.

## 5.2 Differences in Political Culture

Political culture was recognized only very late by Soviet scholars. The first conference in the Communist bloc took place in Cracow and its results were published by Archie Brown/J. Gray (1977). The Soviet Union vehemently criticized the ‘bourgeois concept’ and only late, using the substitute of a socialist *obraz zhizni* (way of life), did it approach investigation about what the citizens—beyond propaganda—were really thinking (cf. statistical figures from Soviet sociological studies in: von Beyme 1988: 146ff.).

The challenges from Russia are mainly emotional, as many scholars who frequently visit the country are familiar with (cf. Mommsen/Nussberger 2007: 12): *eulogies* in the toasts during the evening dinners with a glass of vodka in the hand, and *disappointing toughness in the negotiations* next day. These challenges from

Russia are deeply rooted in different political cultures. Russia tried to stabilize a new idea of her identity in a new mandatory subject for students of all faculties: *kul'turologia*—‘culturology’ sounds very clumsy in English (though the American scholar White seems to have used this concept first), whereas the German language has no difficulty with the term ‘Kulturologie’. The old economy-centrism in *Marxism-Leninism* has been replaced by *culture-centrism*. Both ideologies share a kind of ‘wholism’ or ‘totalism’ in outlook, one of the reasons why it was vulgarized and used in an inflationary way. *Kul'turologia* was developed into a kind of citizen training. Even Putin made use of these new possibilities to strengthen Russian feelings of identity. Analysts such as Jutta Scherrer (2003: 8f., 29, 141, 158) found it astonishing that the *Eurasian way of thinking* was scarcely built into the new ideology.

A challenge could be seen in this new way of Russian thinking, in that it tends to think in binary oppositions such as ‘popular culture’ in Russia vs. Western mass culture. It thus remains in the tradition of the feelings of superiority in the *Slavophile and neo-Slavophile movements* in Russia. Germany has a special experience with the differences of mentality which create ‘challenges from Russia’. Since 2003, a *Petersburg dialogue* has been organized annually between political and economic leaders and experts from Russia and Germany. This experiment, which frequently addresses *grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*, civil society, is highly elitist. One analyst even dubbed it a *mésalliance par excellence* because the two teams never meet at the same intellectual and emotional level (Weiss 2010: 83). Another Russian expert compared the ‘Dialogue’ to an old married couple in their daily routine with no new ideas. Some critics demanded a Europeanization of the institution, while others were sceptical because the agenda might develop in an even more chaotic way (Pörzgen 2010: 81). Russians negotiate in a *strategic rationalistic way*, always aware of possible advantages. The Germans—contrary to what people abroad normally think of Germany—start with a highly *idealistic impetus* to promote civil society, something to which Russian negotiators mostly pay only lip service.

The differences in cultural traditions are sometimes minimized by agreeable quotations from the poet Tyutchev, namely that one cannot understand Russia but one can only believe in it. The differences in civil perceptions have been evaluated less poetically by the philosopher Ivan Ilyin, who became a kind of favourite ideologue of Putin, and who criticized the naivety of the idea that Russia could be governed as democratically as Switzerland (Ilyin 2007; Kalinin 2010: 40ff.).

The national anthem revived the melody of the Soviet anthem *Soyuz nerushimi respublik svobodnykh* with a new text which only a minority of the citizens knows by heart. ‘Constitution Day’—demonstrating for a while ‘constitutional patriotism’—was quickly replaced by a ‘Day of National Unity’ on 4 November, commemorating an event in 1612 when the Russians liberated themselves from Polish occupation. A modern constitutional patriotism was replaced by a traditional nationalism. Since the ‘Day of the Icon of the Holy Mother of God of Kasan’ coincides with this day, a *symbolic union of church and state* was achieved. Putin acquired support from Solzhenitsyn and from leading figures of the Orthodox Church. Religion was built into the image-making of Putin’s administration.



In 2003 an exhibition in the Sakharov Museum under the title ‘Take care: Religion!’ was opened, and after four days it was destroyed by Orthodox activists. Police arrested five people who were charged with *Khuliganstvo*, but in the end it was not the khuligans but the organizers of the exhibition who were sentenced under article 282 of the Russian penal code. The attorney-general made accusations of ‘satanism’ and the attempt to raise religious hostilities. The opposition writer Mikhail Rykin wrote against this strange type of defence of the Orthodox Church, initiated by deputies of the Communist Party (Nussberger in: Mommsen/Nussberger 2007: 161).

### 5.3 Differences in the Perception of Legalism and the Rechtsstaat

Max Weber in his article on “Russian Sham-Constitutionalism” had already seen a certain ‘legal nihilism’ in the Russian tradition, and the second President of the Russian Constitutional Court, Tumanov, joined him in his criticism (*Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, 1989, No. 10: 20–27). Russia developed two variations of legal nihilism:

- *Radical legal nihilism*, as found by some writers in the work of Tolstoy, opposed all legal restrictions.
- Others concentrated on a *moderate legal nihilism* which saw a gap between the ideal of justice and its realization in political reality.
- In a moderate form we experienced this type of disappointment with Western democracy and the legal state in many opposition movements in post-Communist countries. A famous opponent of the GDR government, Bärbel Bohley, a leader of the democratic forces after the reunification, was deeply disappointed with the new democracy: “We longed for justice, but we only got a Rechtsstaat” (legal state). We had to tell her that with the Rechtsstaat she acquired the only possible approach to increasing justice in society.

Russia loves the German word *Rechtsstaat* and the term ‘democracy’, but connotes different concepts with these terms. The philosopher Dmitri Furman stated with resignation “We proclaimed democracy, but we were unable to install it” (*Nezavissimaya gazeta*, 27 November 2006). Democracy and the market society were originally seen together. Under Putin the two notions were separated. Putin is mostly interested in the economy as an instrument for re-establishing Russia as the second superpower in the world. In Putin’s messages to the Duma in 2005, democracy was mentioned 23 times, in 2006 only twice, which illustrates the declining importance of that concept (Mommsen/Nussberger 2007: 27). Putin’s self-image is not that of a democratic leader. He calls himself the “employed manager of the great enterprise Russia”. Putin’s basic aim seems to be to liberate Russia from the image of mere producer of natural resources without industrial refinement. Putin has frequently belittled democracy in terms such as “democracy Russian style”

or “sovereign democracy”, which tolerates no external interference into Russian internal affairs. Sometimes he mocked the United States, saying that it was overdoing propaganda for human rights. Occasionally the style of self-representation came close to the style prevailing during the Cold War. When Putin (2000: 175), was asked for his models abroad he mentioned Korea, without indicating which part—but probably South Korea’s market society with a certain amount of authoritarian leadership. Asked for his models for statesmanship he mentioned Napoleon and de Gaulle, and even Erhard. He always opted for a market society, but increasingly allowed certain exceptions, especially in the industry sectors relevant to military strength (Putin 2000: 161). All his answers to questions revealed a fairly *functionalistic approach to the constitution*, national symbols and political culture (von Beyme 2001: 144).

The *Russian constitution* was no document of legal nihilism and came close to Western standards. It showed that Russia was on an acceptable road. It was an *octroi* without a popular plebiscite, but the same was true of the German Basic Law which, following the French constitution, was a source of inspiration for Russia’s founding mothers and fathers. Radical critics such as Lilya Shevzova (2005: 397ff.) saw in the Constitution the basis of authoritarian developments. To my mind this is an exaggeration. It is less the constitution which reminds one of authoritarianism than the way it was influenced in its genesis and abused after its promulgation by Yeltsin and ignored by Putin. The French *semi-presidential system* has fascinated Gorbachev’s advisors such as Shakhnazarov, and its possibilities have been extended much further than any French president could dare. The main drawbacks are not so much in the text of the constitution, though it does reveal inconsistencies. This starts with the use of concepts such as *Russian federation* and *Russia*, clearly differentiated at the beginning and used almost as synonyms later. The main deficiencies of constitutional life are in the underdeveloped legal culture in Russia and the informal bypasses in the system.

The most promising step towards a Rechtsstaat was the introduction of a *Constitutional Court*. Tumanov in the criticism cited above did not mention that he himself was originally part of this moderate legal nihilism. When I organized an international conference on judicial review, he wanted to participate:

- In 1986 he sent a paper on “Why does Russia not need judicial review?”.
- When he came to the conference in 1987 he reformulated his topic as “The equivalents of judicial review in the Soviet Union”.
- The final printed version read “Guarantees for Constitutionality of Legislation in the USSR” (in: Landfried 1988: 213–217).

These rapid changes in the period of perestroika were remarkable, because Tumanov became the second president of the Constitutional Court. From its foundation in 1991 to autumn 1993, the Constitutional Court took 27 decisions and issued two judicial reviews (*zaklyucheniya*). The most frequent petitioners and plaintiffs were the deputies (17 cases), the regions (three cases) and individuals with constitutional complaints (seven cases). In nine cases, presidential decrees were challenged; in seven of these the Court held that the acts of the President

were partly or completely in accordance with the Constitution. In two cases the President had acted in an unconstitutional way. Four laws of the Russian Federation, and nine cases of complaints against the deputies or their speaker, were contested in the Court. In only one case was the constitutionality of a parliamentary act endorsed. In five cases the subjects of the Federation were involved, and in six cases individual citizens complained (the sum exceeds the 27 decisions because in some cases several plaintiffs joined forces).

Chairman Zor'kin was undoubtedly the judge who excessively acted politically in these days of crisis. Zor'kin as a politician rarely got good marks because he tried to reconcile the President and the Chairman of Parliament, Chasbulatov. Zor'kin commented on TV, met politicians, the patriarch and even foreign diplomats at will. When Yeltsin dissolved the Supreme Soviet of Russia, contrary to the outdated RSFSR constitution, Zor'kin disputed this decision. Soon it became clear that the Court could not survive so much *judicial activism*. Yeltsin saw the Court as a competitor in the political arena. In late September 1993 the liberal judges Ametistov and Vitruk began a boycott of the sessions, arguing that the Court had turned into a political force. Both judges later joined the sessions again. On 5 October 1993, the Court decided that in a time of aggravating worsening legal situation it could no longer review legal norms and would restrict its work to constitutional complaints. Both camps in the Court started to blackmail each other by challenging the quorum. In January 1994 it became evident that Zor'kin still had followers in the Court. This became clear when Zor'kin was re-elected as President of the Court in 2003.

The Court in its present form is the result of the revolutionary events of 1993. Yeltsin had called a Court to his help against the Soviet Union. In 1993 he tried to get rid of the spirits he had invoked. One judge, Evzeev, called it quite frankly a 'coup d'état'. The ill-famed decree no. 1400 (22 October 1993) concerning a 'special regime' violated the constitution. Yeltsin's administration did not deny this but argued that the President in this crisis was unable to carry out the necessary reforms in the framework of the old 'Brezhnev Constitution'. Yeltsin could not even rely completely on 'his group' in the Court. A critical statement was accepted on a 9:4 majority (Ametistov, Vitruk, Morshchakova, Kononov dissenting). The Court did not accept the President's recommendation to suspend itself, but continued its work (von Beyme 2002).

From 1995 the Court was normalized. On 13 February 1995, Vladimir Tumanov was elected with eleven votes as President of the Constitutional Court. Tamara Morshchakova won against Vitruk and Baglaj as a vice-chairperson. Tumanov stood for a return to the legal duties of the Court against a political role and in a press conference in July 1996 he was already able to report that the new momentum of the Court had been accepted by most institutions of the system and that there was no threat of the Court becoming 'unemployed'. Criticisms on the part of conservative deputies were opposed by the hint that many propositions and complaints from Parliament did not contain legal but rather political questions. Tumanov also denied that the decisions of the Court were more in favour of the President than of the Duma.

The workload was increased by 200 requests for an opinion (*obrashchenie*) by institutions and citizens of the Russian Federation. The judges in 1995 produced 17 decisions with dissenting votes, most of them concerning the President's decrees and the *Chechnya case*. In the case of many federalist quarrels, the Court decided in favour of the federal subjects and regions. Sometimes the traditional forces in the districts and republics were still stronger than in Moscow. In some cases the regions used a pure parliamentary system which deviated from the semi-presidential scheme of the central institutions. Unlike the central government, the Court was more tolerant towards these institutional deviations. The Court argued in some cases that deviations from the scheme of powers in the Federation were acceptable as long as no special federal law had regulated the matter.

A non-consolidated democracy always initially faces *the problem of the enforcement of legal sanctions*. Legally the Court's decisions are binding, but who secures this? It was important that Yeltsin accepted the first decision against his policy when the Court prohibited the merger of the secret service with the Ministry of Domestic Affairs. It was said that Shakhrai had the merit of having convinced the President that this decision could not be ignored. But the federal subjects did not follow this good example. *Tatarstan* held its referendum in spite of a negative decision from the Constitutional Court. The problem of centre-periphery relations was that the old Soviet system had never developed a mechanism for legal sanctions (Moskovskie Novosti, 17 May 1992: 7). The principle of 'Bundestreue' in German constitutional law was unknown to Russia. The Soviet Union had even inserted a 'right to secession' into the Constitution, but whoever might have used it was persecuted by the penal law—that outlawed proclamations of secession—and by the secret service. This *double bind* had consequences for budding democracy. Chechnya wanted to use the right to secession, but this option was no longer recognized by the democrats in Russia. In the case of Tatarstan, Zor'kin tried to invent his own sanctions by mobilizing the media and the federal authorities. An escalation could have been an impeachment of the civil servants and politicians of that Republic which disobeyed court decisions. But 'contempt of court' sanctions also have to be accepted. In Russia there has always been a saying 'Russia is large and the Czar is far away'. Even Zor'kin's campaigns against the Tatar Region could not ignore public criticisms without major consequences.

Where Putin's ideas about a 'guided democracy' and a democracy of the strong hand respect the Constitutional Court, this institution is likely to help the new President to overcome the centrifugal tendencies in the Federation. But this tends to become increasingly a challenge for the democratic regime. After all, under Yeltsin federal issues already took second place to human rights issues, but only because less important citizens' complaints count in numbers, but not in the political weight of the issue. Chechnya has shown that this problem may well be the major challenge for the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation in the future (von Beyme 2002). There are sufficient measures for the enforcement of legal decisions, but there is hardly enough will to use them, unless the guiding institutions combine a personal interest with legal decisions which increasingly seem to be guided by consultations with the executive.

## 5.4 Hierarchization of the Political Institutions

Conservative analysts and ex-leftists, dubbed ‘rational choice Marxists’, such as Adam Przeworski (1991), Jon Elster (1988) and Claus Offe, sometimes came to similar conclusions as far as the choice of a rational mix of institutions in the former Communist countries was concerned. In a political culture with floating party systems and scarcely organized interest groups the outstanding role of a president in a semi-presidential structure was unavoidable. Whereas rational choice neo-institutionalists such as Jon Elster, inspired by communitarian ideas of justice, analysed the distribution of chances and the ideas of social justice behind the constitution, traditional palaeo-institutionalists, such as Giovanni Sartori (1994), only inquired into the immediate results of certain institutions. According to their perception, the search for justice could even be dangerous. They followed the traditional constitutionalists who did not hanker after Rousseau’s ‘good citizens’ but rather relied on ‘good institutions’. Under late Communism, models of ‘corporatism’ were discussed in the literature. Under post-Communism, however, the sectoral governance function of interest groups was not able to penetrate an anarchic and oligarchic market society. The trade unions in particular remained extremely weak. Horizontal social forces hardly developed, vertical structures received their chance.

During the transformation regime Yeltsin did nothing to develop intermediary institutions. He committed several fundamental errors in institution-building:

- Yeltsin renounced ‘founding elections’. Thus he left the legislature to the opposition and governed without his parliament. He did not recognize that even a functioning semi-presidential system needs a minimum of a functioning legislature.
- Yeltsin governed by ‘divide and rule’. He set one institution against another and thus prevented the development of internalized rules of the division of power.
- Yeltsin accepted a very *anarchic system of federalism* and thus strengthened the local elites and the centrifugal tendencies in the system.
- Yeltsin tried to reduce the competences of the Constitutional Court and thus prevented the development of a *pouvoir neuter*.

The courts were not able to develop the role of the guardian of a division of powers during the *anomic privatization*—with a leading role for the nomenklatura managers. Protection services, private detectives and even criminals used a parallel ‘black court system’.

The main concept for analysing institutions was the *Verticale*, the vertical streamlining of the institutions. This began in 1996 when Yeltsin tried to mobilize the ‘political technocrats’ in order to prevent a victory of the Communists under Syuganov. *Bureaucracy and the secret service* were strengthened again under Putin. The number of civil servants increased dramatically. Yeltsin created a *presidential cabinet* because he lacked a governing party for his support. When he obtained a majority, he retained the system considered as the hereditary institution derived from the secretariat of the Central Committee (Kryschtanowskaja 2005).

Only for a short time under Primakov, from September 1998 till May 1999, was the presidential administration not dominant. Primakov had wide support in the Duma and tried to build up a durable coalition. By the middle of the 1990 s, the semi-presidential system was stabilizing. The number of normative decrees had declined from 202 (1994) to 144 (1999) (Remington 2000: 508). Under Putin, vertical power was strengthened again. Putin proclaimed a *presidential Republic* and did not admit 'parliamentary Republic' as a description of Russia.

Even the legal system was affected by the changes. The office of *Attorney-General*, which had been compromised by incumbents such as Andrei Vyshinsky under Stalin, was held by Juri Skuratov, the last attorney-general under Yeltsin, who was able to keep himself in office for five years. He investigated corruption among Yeltsin's daughters and the president tried three times to depose him using the Federal Council. The courageous attorney-general was finally toppled by a dubious video which showed him with a prostitute in a hotel. Putin developed fewer conflicts with the attorneys, using them rather as his own actors. Vladimir Ustinov organized the trials of the oligarchs Gussinsky, Berezovsky and Chodorkovsky.

## 5.5 Streamlining the Nomenklatura Elites

Co-optation of the elite prevailed in Russia instead of democratic rules of recruitment. Only eleven % of the Russian *nomenklatura* lost power under post-Communism, whereas in the other former socialist systems, like Poland and Hungary, it was more than one-third (Lapina 1996: 19). There was hardly any mobilization of the citizens by the new elites. The non-elites were paralyzed by the double strain of reconstruction of the economy and the political system. The old elites had no guilty conscience: they had not lost a war, just the competition between two systems in the world. The *nomenklatura* was too cynical to defend the old system. Large numbers of them immediately saw their chance for the future in the appropriation of state property. There was no pressure for a completely new start. The Russian elites therefore could afford to fight over scenarios of development in a personalized way: Gorbachev against Yanaev and Lukyanov and Yeltsin against Chazbulatov or Rutskoy.

The leading groups under Yeltsin came mostly (63.6 %) from the Soviets and only 21.2 % via the party. Economic leaders were strongly represented in the government elite (42.3 %). The business elites had a chance via the Komsomol (37.7 %). Whereas in other former socialist countries there was a rule of thumb that the revolution was a 'coup of the deputy leaders', this was true only for the economic elite in Russia (Kryschtanovskaja 1999: 227, 242).

The Soviet form of co-optation had fixed rules as long as the formal *nomenklatura* was functioning. The post-Soviet system of co-optation developed no real fixed points of reference. The absence of a clear power structure under Yeltsin has made the struggle for influence and position very fluid and also central to

maintaining power. Theories of rent sharing and rent management were able to explain how power was exercised in the absence of a transparently structured political system.

Large enterprises became a substitute for political parties and interest groups. Even Medvedev mentioned how difficult it was to implement a new policy of recruitment. *Enterprise bureaucrats* frequently came from the background of *secret service activities*. The dollar millionaires have doubled in the era of Putin. *Kinship relations* played a certain role. Some authors spoke of a *patrimonial sultanate*.

The weakening of the *oligarchs* in the first years of Putin's presidency was considered as inevitable even by many Western scholars. Continuous conflicts between the oligarchs provoked action on Putin's part. In the Yeltsin era the oligarchs still operated predominantly in an area between economic and political actors that was insufficiently regulated legally. A *new class of leaders of monopolistic sectors* was growing. The normal way of fighting an oligarch started with accusing them of *tax evasion*, as in the case of Vladimir Gussinsky. Putin (2000: 169) denied that he had close relations with Berezovsky and claimed that the oligarch had tried to get closer to him—but what is the difference in the case of more or less close cooperation? Interestingly enough, Gussinsky's competitor Boris Berezovsky, who possessed the majority of shares in the TV channel ORT, declared solidarity with his colleague. In the first years when Putin was in power, oligarchs like Gussinsky and Berezovsky were still able to emigrate. Michail Khodorkovsky was the last independent oligarch. In October 2003 he was arrested. Khodorkovsky's second trial and his sentencing to eight more years of prison in 2010 were scarcely accepted by the Russian adherents of the *Rechtsstaat* and the Western press. A very unusual interference in the legal system was Putin's announcement in advance that Khodorkovsky deserved a second condemnation.

New structures created *consultative councils of experts* in cooperation with the ministries. One new mechanism was the yearly *meeting between Putin and the economic representatives*. The new system demonstrated that there were more leading administrators with economic functions than ever before. A kind of *network capitalism* organized power between various clans such as the 'Petersburg clan' versus the 'Yeltsin family', which originally brought Putin into power.

## 5.6 The Streamling of Federalism

As Putin tried to streamline the institutions, he also streamlined the federal system. Again, after the anarchy in the federal system under Yeltsin, when some governors ignored the decrees from Moscow and sometimes did not even pay the appropriate portion of taxes to the centre, some reshufflings of power in the federal system were inevitable. In 2003, Putin *abolished the direct election of governors* who had served as a kind of regional oligarch. The pretext for this measure was the *terrorist attack in Beslan*. Putin operated quite skilfully: new governors were nominated

only in those areas where the local elites (as in Saratov, Irkutsk, Nizhny Novgorod and Kaliningrad) were in conflict with the central administration. In 1995, the law concerning the general principles of self-administration in the Communes had been passed. This measure combined more control and more autonomy of action for the Communes, as a possible way of reducing the power of the governors. The streamlining of federalism was accompanied by several measures:

- In 2007 city managers replaced the old mayors. A new reform was projected in 2009. It increased the dependence of the lower echelons of administration because the Communes became more dependent on transfers from the federal budget and had more possibilities of action for which they did have the necessary resources.
- Seven plenipotentiaries of the President were nominated in seven districts which had similar boundaries to the military districts, in order to create a unified legal space. Five of the seven incumbents were generals in the military.
- The Federation Council lost its power of veto. Formerly the heads of 88 provinces (it sounds authoritarian when they are called ‘subjects’ in Russian) used to meet. Since 1 January 2002 there have been only permanent delegates bound to prescriptions from the regional executives.
- The governors were limited to two periods in office instead of four.
- A consultative State Council was installed in which provincial governments negotiate with the president. Some critics denounced it as “pompous staging” in order to weaken the Federal Council.
- A Societal Chamber received consultative functions.

## 5.7 Streamlining the Party System

In 1906, Max Weber described “sham constitutionalism”. Today we have to describe a ‘sham party system’. At the end of the Yeltsin era the party system was still chaotic and fluid. Only three groups demonstrated a certain continuity:

- the *Communists*,
- the social liberal group *Yabloko*, which failed to enter the Duma in 2007, and
- the *Liberal Democratic Party* of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

Sometimes a ‘red-brown coalition’ was formed between leftist Communists and right-wing nationalists against the centre. The Liberal Democrats grew into a partnership with the executive from 2003. In the third Duma they approved 85 % of all government proposals. Since 2003 there has hardly been a powerful opposition left in the Duma because access to the media was limited for opposition groups in 2003.

Most of Putin’s measures secured the predominance of the *United Russia* party. In 2006 this group had 1.15 million members, in 2008 2 million, ten times as many as the Communists. In autumn 2006 a group *Righteous Russia* was created out of the remnants of three small parties and became the smallest parliamentary



group in the Duma. In 2003–2004 about 80 independent candidates migrated to the government party *Unified Russia*.

The president created a body of coordination before important votes in parliament took place. Thousands of ‘cooperation councils’ directed into society undermined the traditional party structure. Parties increasingly underwent regulation and directed patronage. The party law was amended in 2001 and 2004 and the electoral law in 2005. The *new electoral law*—proportional representation according to party lists—went into operation from the Duma elections of 2007. Putin succeeded in streamlining the political parties: in 2005 there were still 42 registered parties, by 2007 only 15 were left. Yeltsin failed to get his intended electoral law through. Putin was aware that the party landscape had to be simplified first. Yeltsin did not make recommendations for electoral behaviour, whereas Putin did so.

The *Duma* was increasingly under presidential control and the presidential administration deeply influenced the *behaviour of the parliamentary groups*. Within the Duma the changes in parliamentary groups were permanent. The concentration movement led to the fact that the ‘presidential party’ *United Russia* commanded 304 of the 450 seats in the Duma. Moreover the president had two satellite parties, *Rodina* and Zhirinovskiy’s notably misnamed *Liberal Democratic Party*. There is a striking anomaly in the Russian system: members of the cabinet are induced to accept membership of *United Russia*. Normally in parliamentary and semi-presidential systems it works the other way round: politicians are first party leaders and then are included into the cabinet.

## 5.8 Control of the Media

*Glasnost* in the declining Soviet system contributed to the weakening of the established political structures. Under Yeltsin control of the mass media was still incomplete. This changed step by step under Putin. Today the main criticisms of Putin’s ‘guided democracy’ are not so much directed against the formal organizations and the elections but rather against the way the system deals with the media.

The critical media such as *Kommersant* or *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were streamlined step by step in line with Putin’s ideas. *Izvestiya* again came close to the old joke under the Communist regime: ‘*Izvestiya*’ (‘News’) contained hardly any truth and ‘*Pravda*’ (‘Truth’) contained hardly any news. Media policies were regulated from above. Talk shows increasingly are monitored and controlled before transmission (Mommsen 2007: 50). Putin was able to create his image as a successful leader with the help of what was called in English Russian the *imadzchmekery*, contributing in 2004 to the fabulous result of 64 % in favour of Putin on a turn-out of 71.31 %.

It was a skilful ‘manoeuvre’ to announce that he would not run for re-election and that he would take the office of prime minister, in an attempt to make President Medvedev his loyal puppet. New methods of image-making include a

kind of populist conference between Putin and the citizens. Today the internet and new media present a serious challenge that may cause a revision of positions of influence. But so far it has not created a balance of power between Medvedev and Putin in the system, even though Medvedev is more skilful in using the new media.

## 5.9 Conclusion

If we try to measure Russia's achievements in the light of the Bertelsmann Index of Transformation (BTI 2010: 4ff.), Russia belongs among 128 states on the road of transformation to the group of "strongly deficient democracies". Challenges for Russia on the road to democracy should, however, not be seen in isolation without comparing recent developments in Europe. There is already discussion of a movement for 'retirement of democracy'. The subjective side of this development in Russia is, however, less negative.

As a consequence of growing economic outputs and improvement of the image of government:

- 70–80 % of the population declared itself to be in favour of its political leadership, but
- 25 % were in opposition,
- 45 % had doubts whether the system was moving in the right direction, and
- 50 % believed that Russia was living in a state of high tension (Mommssen 2010: 42).

Dmitri Trenin called this system "authoritarianism with the consent of the citizens". Since Juan Linz in 1975, a type of 'apathy and traditionalism which favours authoritarianism' has been discussed in transition studies. Every year new concepts have been created for the challenges for Russia: *simulated, imitated or directed democracy* are still the most flattering epithets for the Russian system. *Russia became a deficient democracy*—but so far this challenge has not been a danger for the European Union in any field.

The development of the 'Challenges for Russia' will depend not only on the evolution of the seven challenges mentioned above. There remain some challenges for foreign policy, such as those expressed in the declarations of the Duma in January 2011, together with the newest version of a SALT agreement with the United States, particularly because the members of the European Union do not agree on policies of disarmament with Russia. President Medvedev has demanded in addition guarantees from the West that NATO does not erect a system of defence which could capture Russian missiles. Russia insists on participation in a northern sector of the common defence system which would include the Baltic States, and this appears unacceptable to the United States. Recent rumours from Moscow indicate that there is no longer a belief in a common defence system against rockets. Thus challenges for Russia are likely to remain.

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Max Beyme, "Trench" [Schützen und Graben (Abteilung 99)], 2012. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

# Chapter 6

## Political and Economic Consolidation in Eastern Europe. Evidence from Empirical Data

### 6.1 Concepts of Transitology and the Area-Specific Conditions in Eastern Europe

‘Democratic consolidation’—in the theoretical framework of *transitology*—was a successful concept for almost two decades. Research funds are concentrated around a catchword—it used to be ‘totalitarianism’ and in the future will be most likely ‘terrorism’. As soon as consolidation was successful, the paradigm needed new concepts. ‘Defective democracy’ is such a concept, and links transformation studies with traditional comparative politics in the light of quantitative studies on democracy and dictatorship. The rush for special grants under one catchword is stopped. Transitology withers away and its concepts are reintegrated into ‘business as usual’ and ‘normal science’.

Political science, under the impact of new methods such as ‘rational choice’ which have conquered half the American Political Science departments, is developing away from historical and institutional studies and entering quantitative research after the model of economic departments. In contrast to previous modernization theories, the emphasis is no longer predominantly on economic variables. Philippe Schmitter (1997: 243) has adopted the term “embedded democracy” from economics.

Recent economic studies have also discovered that the other subsystems of society have to be analysed in order to come to fair conclusions about transformation economies. Democracy has to be embedded in a functioning economy and a culture and religion which are not hostile to democratic values. Eastern Europe is unique in the comparison of areas worldwide. It may be unpopular, but we have to consider certain positive aspects of the heritage of Communism, which sometimes developed against the intentions of the former *nomenklatura*. Under Communism, the system practised formal democracy and a number of modes of participation, especially at the level of work institutions. These countries were able to meet the *participatory standards* of democracy after the collapse of Communism. There were free—though not always fair—elections. Deficiencies were, however,

discovered on the other side of the coin: the *Rechtsstaat* (the German word includes more holistic connotations than the rather technical ‘legal state’). The virtue of East European studies within transitology was to universalize this attention to legal aspects.

- Communism created a *high level of education*. There was virtually no illiteracy remaining. Communism created a fairly *egalitarian society*. The neo-liberal wave in the transition countries has shaken up this social balance. But there is still more sense for equality than in the Third World transition countries.
- Communism pushed *secularization*. The drawback was that not even in Catholic countries did Christian Democracy prosper as in many countries in Western Europe after 1945.
- Communism *tamed the military*. There was hardly a Jaruzelski who had a chance to lead the party. After transition the military did not create *enclave democracies*. Even Russia, which by now has acquired all the criteria for defect democracies, so far has no problem with the army, though the army was underpaid and under-equipped. Lebedev in the Dniestr region of Moldavia went back to the “barracks” and no coup d’état took place.
- Research on corruption in the former Soviet Union has, however, considered the *Mafia structures of the oligarchs* as a kind of functional equivalent of the “enclaves” (Holmes 1993). Under Yeltsin, this was not wrong. In the meantime, Putin’s method of getting rid of his oligarchs makes it likely that the enclaves will wither away—which does not necessarily increase democracy and avoid corruption, but concentrates authoritarian elements more visibly in political hands.
- Communism did away away with the *farming class*. In terms of party systems the result is striking: the Hungarian Party of Small Landholders between the wars had more than 60 % of the vote. After 1989 it was marginalized. The only Communism which failed to promote the big *Bauernlegen*—abolishing small farms and forcing the farmers into collective units—was in Poland. What used to be considered as a virtue of the old system became detrimental after the transition. The small landholders are still a problem in Poland, where they constitute about 20 % of the workforce and poison the political party system through various groups of farmers who are mostly right-wing and against the European Union.

The legacies of former systems have been discovered as being important. Transition studies got rid of the *tabula rasa* view of post-Communist democracy (Kitschelt et al. 1999: 391, 39). The types of ‘bureaucratic-authoritarian communism’, ‘national-accommodative communism’ and ‘patrimonial communism’ (all of the former CIS states, plus Romania and Albania) made a difference for the development of the system. Mixes of two systems as in the Baltic Republics and in Slovakia apparently were successful in meeting democratic standards. Only ‘national-accommodative’ communism did better. The Czech Republic is a deviant case. The bureaucratic-authoritarian type collapsed to such an extent that it turned more quickly to sustainable democracy than patrimonial communism. Therefore,

the types of former regimes have to be combined with the options former elites have chosen, including studies of to what extent the old elites have tried to co-opt the new elites (von Beyme 1996: 66).

In the meantime, even these factors of transition have only a remote impact on the development of the systems. As for prospects for the future, the anchoring function of the EU for Central-East European countries became more important than legacies of the past.

## 6.2 Quantitative Studies of Transition to Democracy

Various sets of indicators for the legal and constitutional state have been put forward. *Transparency International* included even variables which seemed to be far away from political questions, such as ‘the development of the reform of penal law’ or the ‘impact of corruption’ in the economy.

The Democracy score for Nations in Transition 2004 included variables such as

- electoral process,
- civil society,
- independent media,
- governance,
- constitutional, legislative and judicial framework,
- corruption.

The most recent ranking for *Nations in Transition* listed eight consolidated democracies. Poland was at the top, followed by Slovenia and Estonia. This is in tune with other surveys, especially concerning the Czech Republic. That the only country with democratic experience before 1945 in Eastern Europe should rank below Latvia casts, however, some doubt on the measuring instruments. Maybe, criticism of Prague for its treatment of the Gypsies spoils the positive results for Czech democratic performance, whereas Estonia and Latvia successfully claim to have improved the situation of the Russian minorities.

The distorting impact of different indicators is visible when we compare several studies. The Bertelsmann Index (2006: 63, Table 6.4) for Democracies and Autocracies is less telling. Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary were now at the top. Latvia came further down than Botswana and ranked between Bulgaria and Romania. The defective democracies in Eastern Europe which remained were Albania, Ukraine and Mongolia. Russia and Moldavia ranked as ‘strongly defective democracies’, below Sri Lanka and Columbia. Belarus was not even given the status of a moderate autocracy. It ranked in a category with Cuba, China and North Korea as an ‘autocracy’. This has obviously changed in later transformation indices.

Both indices for democratic and economic performance testify that the European Union selected the right group for membership—only the second index casts some doubt on Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania as consolidated democracies.

**Table 6.1** Nations in transition (New democracy score ranking 2012)

Country	New democracy score
<i>Consolidated democracies</i>	(10–9)
Czech Republic	9.65
Slovenia	9.65
Estonia	9.55
Lithuania	9.35
Poland	9.20
Slovakia	9.00
Latvia	8.80
Hungary	8.35
Romania	8.55
Croatia	8.40
Bulgaria	8.65
<i>Defective democracies</i>	(8–6)
Macedonia	7.60
Montenegro	7.60
Albania	7.25
Moldova	7.05
Kosovo	6.70
Bosnia	6.40
Georgia	6.15
Ukraine	6.10
<i>Highly defective democracies</i>	(6–4)
<i>Moderate autocracies</i>	4
Armenia	5.25
Azerbaijan	4.02
Kazakhstan	4.00
<i>Hardline autocracies</i>	(3–1)
Belarus	3.93
Uzbekistan	2.85
Turkmenistan	2.83

Source Bertelsmann Foundation (ed.): *Transformation Index BTI* 2012: 29

Good to see endorsed what even a superficial traveller in these countries knows anyway: the Czech Republic no longer ranks below Latvia. On the other hand, there is more evidence for the top group of Poland, Slovenia, Estonia and Hungary—pushing Lithuania lower down—in the *Democracy score*. The *Freedom House democracy score* of 2004 has still another virtue: the idea of consolidation is applied to authoritarian systems as well. Whereas the rankings in Wolfgang Merkel's (2003) books and his school still suggest that there is some hope for improvement, the *Freedom House* index puts it bluntly: *lasciate ogni speranza voi qu'entrate* (Dante's inscription over the entrance of hell: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!"). Some Central Asian former Soviet Republics and Belarus are *consolidated authoritarian democracies*, while there was still a chance for Russia (Table 6.1).



These striking differences in the rankings which were published in the same year (2004) warn us against taking the artificial hierarchy for granted. It reminds me of the two universities where I have taught. In each ranking one of the institutions, Heidelberg or Tübingen, boasts of being on top—and is downgraded the next year. The reasons for such sudden changes remain obscure. This is the normal experience with survey data. Small samples distort the results. But quantitative indicator studies have the advantage of relying mostly on ‘objective’ data. In the light of sudden changes in ranking this author (von Beyme 1996: 167), obtains some relief for his former ‘miscalculations’ by seeing the enormous differences in evaluation within one year, though the statistics have greatly improved as consolidation and cooperation with the EU have progressed. In 1996 (data from 1994), the author listed Russia under *anocracy*—a mixture of anarchy and autocracy with no clear direction of development—in one group with the Baltic States. Poland at that time seemed to rank far below Hungary and the Czech Republic. But it was the time when Walesa was increasingly interfering in the political process in a somewhat authoritarian way. Minor reforms in the mid-1990s on the road to a final constitution, such as the restriction of the president’s competences and improvements in the electoral law, have changed the system. President Kwasniewski is a good example of a president elected by the people who restricted his ambitions almost to the extent of an Austrian president. He made it possible for the semi-presidential system in Poland to function like a normal parliamentary system with fairly moderate conflicts of *cohabitation*. These examples warn us not to take sets of indicators for granted. It is increasingly embarrassing to see how short-lived the data of political science are—it is a field which has always suffered from its ‘topical topics’—with decreasing validity over time. The category of ‘hybrid systems’, under which Russia was initially listed, sounds more neutral than *anocracy*. At the same time it is very formal. Anocracy includes a qualifying hint to the fact that anarchy and authoritarianism are complementary in such a huge country. Under conditions of transition the old slogan ‘Russia is large and the Czar is far away’ is renewed, and anarchy frequently prevails in the subsystems. In such a system more authoritarianism was needed in order to consolidate the regime with its many centrifugal movements in the 1990s. After all, the Bertelsmann Index of Consolidation also required ‘statehood’, ‘institutional stability’ and ‘effective transformation management’ as prerequisites for budding democracies.

The comparison of various indices demonstrates a certain development. In BTI 2012 (Table 6.1) some regimes in south-east Europe, such as Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania, were upgraded. Hungary showed a relative decline in the era of Orbán and Russia was listed among ‘highly defective democracies’ and will probably next time be placed under ‘moderate autocracies’. Most East-Central and South-east European states saw a decline in their democracy, along with corresponding setbacks in market economic institutions and political management performance. The *quality of elections* deteriorated most significantly in South-east Europe, with the exception of Serbia (BTI 2006: 22ff.). There was a decline in *freedom of association and assembly* as well as in *freedom of expression and the press*. Hungary

was drastically downgraded due to the Orbán government's restrictive new media legislation. In the Ukraine, industrialists close to the government owned major media holdings, and two opposition television broadcasters were stripped of their frequencies. The multitude of restrictions on freedom of expression have caused a continuous fall from 9.27 in 2006 to 7.82 in 2012. Authoritarian regression is frequently promoted *under the guise of populism*. Orbán in Hungary tried to bring independent institutions under the control of his party. Gains and losses in the rule of law from 2008–2012 are considerable in fields such as *separation of powers* (Ukraine -2), *independent judiciary* (Ukraine -2), *civil rights* (Georgia and Kygistan -1), whereas Turkey showed an improvement (+1) (BTI 2006: 27).

The rankings after 2010 became much more sophisticated than they were originally. In BTI 2012 on *Economic transformation* (Table 6.2) and on *Transformation Management* (Table 6.3), the Czech Republic was at the top, above Taiwan, followed by Slovenia and two of the Baltic Republics. Russia and the Ukraine—below China—were listed among ‘market economies with functional flaws’, and Belarus remained a ‘poorly functioning market economy’. The positive message was that no Eastern European country was only a *rudimentary market economy*, such as Afghanistan or North Korea. Increasing deficiencies developed, however, in the relations between state and economy, especially in the fields of *fiscal and debt policies*. Only in inflation policy did Eastern European countries recover slightly. In *socio-economic development* the Czech Republic and Slovenia (10 points) were at the top, followed by Hungary and Slovakia with 9 points and

**Table 6.2** Economic transformation, BTI 2012

Developed market economies	Functioning market economies	Market economies with functional flaws	Poorly functioning market economies	Rudimentary market economies
Czech Republic 9.57	Bulgaria 7.93	Serbia 6.96	Belarus 4.79	Afghanistan 2.89
Slovenia 9.25	Latvia 7.82	Albania 6.79	Turkmenistan 4.25	North Korea 1.39
Estonia 9.00	Romania 7.79	China 6.57	Tajikistan 3.50	
Poland 8.89	Macedonia 7.71	Russia 6.11	Uzbekistan 3.18	
Slovakia 8.75		Ukraine 5.82		
Lithuania 8.71		Moldova 5.43		
Hungary 8.61				
Croatia 8.11				

Source Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.): *Transformation Index BTI 2012*: 41

**Table 6.3** Transformation management (BTI 2012: 55)

Estonia 7.4	Latvia 6.8	Hungary 5.4	Bosnia 4.0	Belarus 2.7
Lithuania 7.1	Slovakia 6.9	China 5.0	Russia 3.9	Uzbekistan 1.9
	Poland 6.7	Ukraine 4.6		
	Czech Rep. 6.5			

*Legend* Very good (10–7); good (7–5.6); moderate (5.5–4.3); weak (4–3); failed or non-existent (below 3)

**Table 6.4** Developmental level of democracy

10–9	9–8	8–7	7–
Slovenia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia	Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania	Macedonia, Albania, Serbia-Montenegro	Bosnia-Herzegovina

Source Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006: 109

Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland with 8 points. At the bottom were Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania (7 points) (BTI 2006: 35).

One of the virtues of the Bertelsmann indices (2004a, b, 2006, 2012) is that they do not restrict themselves to ‘objective indicators’ in politics and economics as did older modernization theories and even Sartori’s reinvention of ‘constitutional engineering’. The ‘policy revolution’ of an ‘enlightened neo-institutionalism’ bears intellectual fruit: the so-called *management index* was added to the *status index of democracy* (which included ‘statehood’, freedom of participation, legal statehood, institutional stability, integration by institutions of civil society). This management index dug into questions such as whether governments pursue consistent goals of reform, make use of the economic and human resources of the country, steer reforms against resistance, and try to build consensus with the social actors in society.

Top management efforts in 2004 have been found in Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. But Chile, Mali, Botswana and Uruguay were between the two Baltic States and the two Central European countries and spoil the European success story. In 2006 Slovenia and Slovakia were at the top and above the two Baltic States (Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2004a, b: 22, 17; 2006: 126, 150). Croatia and Slovakia seem to be placed in 2004 in a fairly flattering position because of ‘extraordinary efforts in raising the level of democracy’—in a group with Turkey and Taiwan. The chief editor Werner Weidenfeld did not fail to present the data to the EU. We can only hope that further accessions to the EU will not be decided on the basis of the Bertelsmann index, since we need further evidence for the readiness of a country to meet EU standards. The next accession planned is Croatia, a country that does well even in the Bertelsmann indices.

The *management index* became the core of the new paradigm in transition studies. At the same time it invited most of the criticism, because to measure efficiency over several years a host of value judgements is necessarily endorsed by country specialists who do not always share the same preferences, though they are bound to accept the basic concepts. The example of ‘old new democracies’ caused caveats for the data: only recently the EU discovered that Greece was systematically embellishing its data sent to Brussels. So the reliability of data seems to correlate with the *corruption index* (cf. Table 6.9).

Caution in cross-national comparisons is appropriate, otherwise we would have to conclude that China was originally more successful than Hungary, because it is making rapid progress, whereas Hungary has recently been stagnating

**Table 6.5** Status index 2012 and management index 2012 (Ranking among 128 countries in the world)

	Political transformation	Economic transformation	Management index
(1) Czech Republic	2	1	(1) Estonia
(2) Slovenia	2	3	(5) Lithuania
(3) Estonia	5	5	(12) Slovakia
(6) Poland	8	6	(13) Poland
(7) Lithuania	7	9	(18) Slovenia
(8) Slovakia	10	7	(18) Czech Republic
(12) Hungary	17	11	(20) Bulgaria
(13) Latvia	11	18	(21) Macedonia
(14) Bulgaria	13	17	(22) Croatia
(15) Croatia	14	14	(23) Romania
(16) Romania	14	19	(48) Hungary
(21) Serbia	23	31	(50) Albania
(25) Macedonia	29	28	(53) Georgia
(31) Albania	34	37	(64) China
(39) Bosnia-Herz	49	42	(74) Armenia
(43) Moldova	43	67	(76) Ukraine
(55) Ukraine	60	60	(95) Bosnia-Herzegovina
(58) Georgia	57	64	(98) Azerbaijan
(60) Russia	71	52	(99) Russia
(66) Armenia	73	55	(116) Belarus
(84) China	113	82	(123) Uzbekistan

Sources <[http://www.bti-project.org/index/status\\_index](http://www.bti-project.org/index/status_index)> ; <[http://www.bti-project.org/index/management\\_index](http://www.bti-project.org/index/management_index)>

(Bertelsmann Index 2004a, b: 30). About many developing countries it has been said: ‘much movement—little progress’. This is certainly not the case in Eastern Europe. We know the dilemma from comparative studies on Communism. At a time when Albania owned one big factory and (with Chinese help) built another one, it used to pretend in its official propaganda that its growth rate was 100 % and that it ranked top in growth performance in the production sphere of all socialist countries. Recognition of the different starting conditions has to be correlated with the quantitative results (cf. von Beyme 1982: 194ff.). If we compare the figures in Table 6.5 we see several differences in the degree of development. The rule seems to be: the less developed certain countries (with the exception of the Ukraine), the more political and economic transformation differ. In Latvia and some Balkan countries, economic performance is better than the indicators of political transition. Especially telling is the management index. The Czech Republic is top of the status index, but far behind in the management index which shows the capacity of countries to handle transformation appropriately. In Poland the data are close to each other. In Estonia and Lithuania management data are better than the status indicators.

### 6.3 Civil Society and Justice as Normative Concepts and the Indicator for Failures in Consolidation

Consolidation studies normally enumerate a host of variables influencing development. But what is the independent variable? We rarely find one convincing variable to explain success. It is more easily found for failure. Closest to an independent variable was *civil society* and the question of whether it had an impact on the process of transition. It is a truism that there is no democracy without democrats. Even if only half of the population accepts the system, the Weimar Republic proved that the system may perish under attack by extremist movements.

Civil society was rediscovered by exponents of the velvet revolutions, like Havel and Konrad. The breakdown of dictatorship which happened most rapidly in the type of ‘bureaucratic communism’ (GDR, Czechoslovakia) which seemed to be best equipped to suppress the rebellion by following the Chinese example of Tiananmen Square was explained by the power of the idea of civil society. Even the ideologues of civil society in the West (Cohen/Arato 1995) were inclined to keep the peaceful social movements clean of ‘economic interests’. But even the early Marx (MEW vol. 4: 125ff.) knew that “the *idea*” has little chance against “the *interest*”. Most civil society elites, with the exception of Havel, withdrew very quickly as soon as it came to the ‘dirty job’ of everyday politics. Habermas (1992: 449) had already seen that civil society is never secure. He identified three dangers:

- Ethnic and populist groups try to usurp the notion of *Lebenswelt* and oppose changes in the direction of modernization.
- Civil society groups grow into *new power positions*. The Forum parties could be used as a case to prove this hypothesis. Most of them disintegrated or changed into a normal conservative party.
- Civil society is *abused by powerful associations*. Civil society has to remain *autopoietic*. In the words of Habermas, civil society can transform itself, but has to renounce global changes for the whole of society.

In the light of these insights civil society became a concept which had two main purposes:

- to *explain the failure of consolidation* of democracies in some countries, mostly the CIS states, Albania and Serbia-Montenegro, and
- as a *normative idea for minimizing the defects of democracies* in both regimes: new democracies on the road to final consolidation, and old democracies which discover that there is no neat division between defective and non-defective democracies. Increasingly we recognize only various degrees of deficiency, since Wolfgang Merkel (2003: 69) stressed that the opposite of ‘defective democracy’ is hardly ‘perfect democracy’.

*Justice* played a certain role in the debates concerning a civil society. Justice became a kind of counter-concept against the Communist ideological invocation

**Table 6.6** Matrix: Debate on justice

	Distributive	Redistributive
Liberalism	Hayek, Neo-liberalism	Wolfgang Kersting
Communitarianism	Rawls, Sen	Michael Walzer

of *equality*. Social democratic parties in particular in Western and Eastern Europe normally include *three basic values* in their programmes: *liberty, justice, and solidarity*. Since Kant, who became the patron saint of the recent debate on justice following John Rawls, justice has had the disadvantage that it is an absolute value. It cannot be relativized. Thus it applies mostly to the *legal state*. Justice is a value for everybody in a Rechtsstaat. Equality is only limited by national citizenship. There is the anomaly that a criminal citizen in some respects has more rights than an impeccable foreigner in the country.

In the social sphere, solidarity is the only notion which applies to the social context and has a human dimension. The Indian economist Sen has emphasized the necessity of participation and of motivating citizens to participate. Justice has been understood as being redistributive. The postmodern debate, however, also sees positions which oppose redistribution as a consequence of justice (Table 6.6).

Neo-liberals want only legal equality and freedom of contract on the market. They oppose any social state intervention. The market did not develop as a rational design and therefore cannot be planned and steered. Rawls on the other hand does not think that a market can create social justice. Access to the market is unequal, inequalities for which a market is 'blind'. Therefore the principle of *justice and fairness* has to work in favour of two devices:

- everybody should have the resources for his basic needs (food stamps are not sufficient),
- the change of rules has to respect the rule that the poorest in society should not be affected by cuts (consumer taxes highly problematic—already in Communist times, value added tax from sixteen to 19 % in Germany).

Michael Walzer (1983) did not think that there was a general logic of distribution. Every life sphere has its own rules of distribution. No rule should overrule other spheres. The basic values of health and education should not be dependent on money and market rules. The Community as a concept is closer to the social democratic concept of solidarity than to the Kantian universalism of liberalism à la Rawls.

Amartya Sen (2000: 30) demands activation of men. There are two concepts:

- *instrumental liberties* of self-realization for all societies,
- *constitutive liberties* for developing countries (freedom from disease, malnourishment and hunger).

These liberties can be measured by life expectancy, infant mortality rates, education and social expenses per capita, and gender equality.

The better developed the democracy, the more developed social justice is in the system. All the East European countries fared better than other developing areas.

Africa comes last, Latin America has no reliable values of democracy. Even functioning democracies do not create more social justice. In East Asia it is different. The more social justice, the more authoritarian the regime, though the authoritarian four little tigers have been contested in their social performance. The problem in former Communist countries is that citizens want both

- liberty, and
- social equality which they attribute (incorrectly) to Western socialism in Sweden.

A new combination of libertarianism and communitarianism, as in Wolfgang Kersting (2000: 403), opposed the social democratic monetaristic concept. *Compensationism* creates passive citizens. Kersting's 'liberalism sans' prescription was

- a good quality of education,
- aggressive employment policies,
- sufficiency is the basis of solidarity, basic needs have to be guaranteed.

On the other hand, Kersting

- opposed large-scale wage agreements,
- wanted there to be little difference between the social minimum and low wages,
- proposed as a goal for the future capital-driven systems of social security instead of financing them through contributions,
- demanded the end of the exploitation of the younger generation by the old (high pensions = no money for study).

## 6.4 Economic Development, Orientation Towards the EU, and Corruption in East-Central Europe

Increasingly the group of new democracies which entered the EU in 2004 are screened more carefully than the rest of countries, remaining at best in the category of defective democracies or hybrid regimes. The *anchoring function* of the EU for prospective members was certainly the most important variable for explaining successful consolidation. Slovakia and Estonia have learned the lessons from the European Council's criticism of their treatment of the minorities in their countries. Economists are less enthusiastic about the performance in Eastern Europe and resent the *deficiencies in political culture*.

Surveys show that even in the EU member states, the expectations of large parts of the population are inappropriate: they overlook the fact that the EU is still a huge market and not yet a state which can intervene in favour of their social security, in order to guarantee them 'Swedish socialism', which most of them prefer, though they have no real idea whether it exists or not (von Beyme 1996: 151ff.). The attitudes found in the political culture are probably the most striking part of the inertia in the new democracies.

Survey data (Table 6.4) show that support for Europe was initially high and fell drastically around 1997. In 2002, the figures recovered and the votes in the referendum (thanks to the propaganda by the political parties, with the exception of some post-Communists, right-wing populists, and regional and agrarian groups) exceeded the previous surveys in all eight cases, but only among those citizens who voted. Lithuania and Slovenia were the only countries where a majority of those entitled to vote were also mobilized for the referendum. If we look for patterns, we can find the highest approval rate for entering the EU in the most Catholic countries: Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the lowest approval rate in two countries with a Lutheran Protestant majority (Estonia and Latvia). Enthusiasm was also weak in the two countries which ‘enlightened neo-institutionalists’ would normally—without a Bertelsmann index—classify as the most solidly working democracies: Hungary and the Czech Republic. Two maps illustrate the regional variance of the positive vote. Support for the EU was strongest in western Lithuania and Slovakia and oddly enough in eastern Hungary—unlike other new democracies, far from the border of an EU country. In Poland the majority in favour of the EU was in the west, with the exception of the former south-east Prussia. Though after the war Poland, in the apportionment of territories and districts (*województwo*), did everything it could to blur the former borders of the German empire, the distribution of votes in favour of the EU reproduces them in a striking way, though there are hardly any German-speaking Poles left in Lower Silesia and in Pomerania. Strong minority areas such as Wałbrzych/Waldenburg in Lower Silesia and Opole/Oppehn in Upper Silesia could be expected to figure near the top of those areas favouring access to the EU.

The management index suggests that success on the road to a market society was a result of good policies. Economists cannot see this link. It has been doubted that economic performance correlated with political decisions in various countries (Dauderstädt 2004: 20). Slovakia, compared to the Czech Republic with its backlashes, had economic success even under Mečiar, who notoriously opposed negotiations with the EU. On the other hand, the example of Poland contradicts this statement. Early neo-liberal decisions created favourable conditions for economic development. Low wages offered attractions for investors in both countries. Educational standards were high; productivity nevertheless remained low. Infrastructure and capital are scarce. The EU supported these countries even before negotiations for integration started. Poland and Hungary were the first countries to receive “Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy”, later extended to all the candidates for Europe. This assistance rose from 475 million ECU to 1.6 billion ECU (Table 6.7).

The economic situation in Eastern Europe has been compared with the accession of Spain and Portugal. The Southern European wave of integration was not always a success story: Ireland in the North created an economic miracle, Portugal developed favourably, in Spain entering the Common Market made no big difference and in Greece the European impact was even negative. Hungary seems to be following the Irish model: multinational corporations work successfully at the expense of low wages for the masses (Dauderstädt 2004: 24).



**Table 6.7** Support for entering the European Union

Country	1993	1996	1997	1998	2001	2002	2003 (referendum)	
							% votes	% of those en-titled to vote
Slovakia	84	88	46	62	59	69	92	48
Lithuania	88	86	35	40	41	53	91	58
Slovenia	92	79	47	57	41	62	90	54
Hungary	83	80	47	56	60	77	84	39
Poland	80	93	70	63	51	61	77	46
Czech Republic	84	79	43	49	46	50	77	43
Latvia	78	80	34	40	33	54	67	49
Estonia	79	76	29	35	33	39	67	43

Source Eurobarometer, Referendum <<http://www.mdr.de/eu/aktuell/938582.html>>

The figure show the enormous breakdown of development (Table 6.8), especially in the Baltic States and in other new countries after the dissolution of a former federation (Slovenia, Slovakia). The Czech Republic was the only country whose economy deteriorated in 1998. In all the countries economic development slowed down after 2000, except in Latvia and Estonia. The acceptance of the *acquis communautaire* of the EU entailed costs for the Central-East European economies, and the *Schengen regulations* which forced some countries, such as Poland, to defend the eastern borders of the economic system, also caused losses to their foreign economies. Social justice is a good slogan, but cannot achieve results if corruption continues to create high inequality.

If we include data on *corruption* as a further indicator of measuring defect democracy, *Transparency International* offered a complicated picture. The first column assesses corruption in the public sector such as the abuse of public office. The second column asks for the institutions respondents have in mind if they had to eliminate corruption. The new democracies which have made an effort on the road to democracy, such as Slovakia, ranked by no means as high as in the Bertelsmann index.

The corruption data (Table 6.9) show that increasingly the borderlines between new and old consolidated democracies are blurred. Two countries among the old systems in the EU (Italy, below Brazil, and Greece at the level of Thailand and Columbia) rank below the high-scorers of East European countries on the index of countries relatively clean of corruption, e.g. Estonia, Slovenia, Poland and Hungary. Belarus and Russia are the low-scorers on this list, in tune with the overall impression given by their respective economies and supporting those social scientists who do not embellish the data for the new members of the Community.

In older indices there was a second data set which measured subjective data on what citizens think about their institutions. These tables with respect to corruption are incomplete and hardly comparable. The *political parties*, *the courts* and *the police* were identified as the three areas most in need of reform. There was a serious lack of confidence in these institutions worldwide. Even in the 'cleanest

**Table 6.8** Increase in gross domestic product in percent

Years	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<i>Country</i>							
Poland	-11.6	2.6	5.2	6.0	4.8	4.0	1.0
Hungary	-3.5	-3.1	2.9	1.3	4.9	5.2	4.0
Czech Republic	-1.2	-0.5	2.2	4.3	-1.0	3.3	2.5
Slovakia	-2.5	-6.5	4.9	6.2	4.1	2.2	3.5
Slovenia	-4.7	-5.5	5.3	3.5	3.8	4.6	2.7
Latvia	2.9	-34.9	2.2	3.7	4.8	6.8	4.0
Lithuania	-5.0	-21.3	-9.8	4.7	5.1	3.8	5.2
Estonia	-6.5	-14.2	-2.0	3.9	4.6	7.1	4.0

Source EBRD transition report, London (2002)

**Table 6.9** Corruption index

	2012	2009
Finland	1	6
Sweden	4	3
Germany	13	14
Great Britain	17	17
USA	19	19
France	22	24
Spain	30	32
Italy	72	63
Greece	94	71
<i>Eastern Democracies</i>		
Estonia	32	27
Slovenia	37	27
Poland	41	49
Hungary	46	46
Lithuania	48	52
Czech Republic	54	52
Latvia	54	56
Croatia	62	66
Slovenia	62	56
Romania	66	71
Bulgaria	75	71
China	80	79
Serbia	80	83
Belarus	123	139
Russia	133	146
Kirghizstan	154	162

Source Transparency international: CPI 2012

country', Finland, 38 % of the citizens tend to believe that the political parties need further efforts to eliminate corruption. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Russia received better marks from their citizens—a result which is hardly believable in terms of the objective data which we have for some countries

on the relationship between economic and political elites. Maybe these results are rather a proof that the political parties are not yet considered as a major vehicle of decision, so that corruption is concentrated in other institutions. The police scored highly in Russia, the courts in Poland.

## 6.5 Summary

- 1) *The concepts of transitology in the light of Eastern Europe need area-specific adaptations.* The ‘tabula rasa approach’ for 1989 has been abandoned. The impact of precedents as a heritage of the former Communist countries was recognized. What the Soviets once dubbed *nak nazyvaemye ostforshery*—the old area specialists—played only a minor role. Concept formation was mainly carried out in the United States by scholars who worked for a long time in quantitative research on the development of democracy. The result was, however, that special country studies diverge still more from the theory-guided typologies of transitology than in the old days, when ‘totalitarianism’ was a kind of consensus concept for generalists as well as for country specialists. ‘Democratic consolidation’ was a useful concept. By the advances of comparative studies into ‘defective democracy’ the original transition studies peter out into ‘business as usual’ in comparative studies of democracies. Contrary to former modernization theories the ‘embedded democracies’ are studied in a wider range, linking politics, economics and culture.
- 2) *Quantitative transition studies developed new typologies and hierarchies of achievement.* Sometimes they contradict each other, especially in the case of those eight central European countries which entered the European Union. ‘Enlightened neo-institutionalism’ in combination with the ‘policy revolution’ developed sets of indicators not only in the former perspective of ‘systems theory’ but also as a ‘theory of action’, measuring the achievements in a ‘management index’.
- 3) *Civil society as an important concept of ideology in the period of transition has been transformed into concept of operational codes among the modernizing elites.* Moreover ‘civil society’ remains a normative concept for all democracies. The notion of “defect democracy” does not imply that there is already ‘perfect democracy’ in the Western world.
- 4) *Economic indicator studies doubt certain links between economic indicators and the intentions of political actors developed by political scientists.* Economists, under the rediscovery of institutions, included the subjective side of attitudes towards the European Union in the new member states. They achieved a broader analysis of the causes of failures on the road to market economy or at least the reasons for temporary setbacks in economic growth.

The functioning of politics in relation to economics is analysed in terms of corruption indices. Corruption only occasionally figured in the status and management

indices and shed some light—and some doubts—on the established ranking hierarchy of countries in Eastern Europe.

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Max Beyme, "Blondies home" [Blondies Heim], 2008. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

## Part II Cultural Policies



Max Beyme, "Dreaming of a warm Christmas", 2007. *Source* Reproduced with the permission of the artist

## Chapter 7

# Why is there No Political Science of the Arts?

Why is there no political science of the arts? The simplest answer to this question is

- *Political scientists have no competence in most periods of history* in which the arts and politics were even more intimately connected than today. The competence of political scientists is normally seen as commencing with the period since 1945.
- *The sociology of art* is recognized and is much better suited to analysing the causes of a great variety of mutual influences between art, society and politics.

By a silent agreement with historians, political science is centred on studies of democracies after World War II. More precisely, we should say that historians enter into competition with political scientists even in the period since 1945, as soon as the official documents are open to research after thirty years. A new branch of study, ‘contemporary history’ (or *Zeitgeschichte*), has been developed and works in competition with political science. Political science has changed as well: for contemporary art, there could be a sub-discipline *art policy*, dealing with the activities of government authorities in the field of art. This is mostly included in the field of *cultural policy*, also generally neglected by political scientists. But this field could only apply to contemporary policies. Historical patronage is left, with good reason, to historians of art.

In cases where political scientists have participated in studies of the history of art, their competence was derived not from the main subject but from studies of history and history of art. Most successful were the historians of the history of ideas, which is, however, with the increasing quantification and economization of political science, a subject which hardly plays a major role in the social sciences. Famous political scientists such as Carl J. Friedrich have occasionally written books such as *Baroque* (1954), in which the history of art and the history of political ideas were dealt with in close relationship. For a while historians were divided into

- one school which started from *events*, and
- another which developed a *structuralist history of society*.

Both lines of thinking have recently been united in a new paradigm which has made *culture* its central concept. With the *cultural turn* in historiography a *cultural history of the social* was demanded. Its application to the arts was called *collective representation* and embraced a study of the *genesis of social groups* which are what nourish divergent perspectives of reality,

- *cultural practices* to symbolize their status and value in society,
- and to manifest it continuously in the political arena (Chartier 1989).

Recently the representation of collective demands has turned to collective fashions such as

- the *historicist search for a classicist Greek idea in German landscapes* and the construction of classicist buildings of collective memory such as the Valhalla in Bavaria (Traeger 1987), and
- *the romantic identification with the symbols of German history* in the Rhineland (Werquet 2010).

The political dimension of these collective movements was invoked by the special interests of rulers like Ludwig I of Bavaria and Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia. Both kings had wide interests in the arts. Friedrich Wilhelm IV left thousands of sketches for his architectural ideas. Both rulers were, however, also interested in their rule, and used these public moods and the interest of bourgeois cultural elites for the stabilization of their political role, shaken by the threat or the reality (as in 1830) of revolutions.

Historians of political theory have hardly ever worked on treaties of art and architecture, even when a theoretician of art like Alberti (1969), for example, wrote a work on the society of his time. On the other hand art historians, before more recent figures such as Hans Belting, Carlo Ginzburg, Martin Warnke and Horst Bredekamp, did not address politics, though metaphors taken from art were important in works from Machiavelli to Hobbes. Only when historians of art such as Franz Matsche (1981), began to focus on the symbols of rule were allegorical art thinkers such as Justus Lipsius discovered as the founders of a Habsburg ideology of rule. More frequently, it was thinkers such as Diderot, Rousseau, Burke, Kant, Hegel, Marx and Proudhon who were studied, those who wrote on aesthetics as well as politics. These contacts with the history of political theory remained, however, mostly *art history without the pictures*. Political science normally used pictures in an unsystematic way for the purpose of illustration, as did Philipp Manow in his work on representation (2008). Even Murry Edelman (1995), who was famous for his analysis of the symbolic use of politics, just sketched certain parallels between art and politics. Thus the subtitle 'From Art to Politics' was scarcely demonstrated, in spite of a number of hints, from Käthe Kollwitz down to Pop Art. The political implications of iconology were rarely studied; most frequently this happened in the lower echelons of graphic arts for everyday use with the production of symbols, emblems and events, from the illustrations for Hobbes's *Leviathan* to revolutionary pictures since 1789. But there was one field in which political connotations predominated from the outset: in the analysis of the relationship between *patrons and artists*. Long before iconology was established,



a kind of *political iconology avant la lettre* was applied, and it sometimes even exaggerated the non-existence of an independent art in works such as “The Myth of the Artist” (Kris/Kurz 1979).

Political science developed increasingly from the decisional system (*politics*) to the material results of politics in *policies*. This led to a split into subfields such as economic, social and construction policies, a development which the neighbouring discipline of sociology had already achieved. Nobody doubts that there had been a sociology of art since Arnold Hauser and others, mostly featuring leftist scholars. Whereas the sociology of art is a subfield frequently addressed by students of sociology, a treatment of the “politics of art” was rarely required. Only *culture policy* has recently played a marginal role in the curricula of political science departments.

## 7.1 Political Iconology

In art history the subfield of ‘art and politics’ is generally represented by two approaches: iconology, and the social history of art. Both approaches started from the idea of a system that combined an enormous number of details. Both were *deductive* and started from the idea of this structural system which postulated (occasionally using tautological reasoning, as in Niklas Luhmann) the unity of society, which was to be proven by empirical research. The *quod erat demonstrandum* was already present in the formulation of hypotheses. Iconology was sometimes considered as the ‘bourgeois’ equivalent of a Marxist-minded social history of art in the style of Arnold Hauser. Iconology allowed a social interpretation of art without the revolutionary connotations of teleological dialectical theories of historical development. Iconology took up certain influences from the social sciences. It was ready to accept that scientific disciplines are temporary schemes of a functional organization of knowledge about certain areas, but not ontological entities like stars fixed in the sky. Since Kant, there have been attempts to create a *hierarchy of disciplines*. In these conflicts, scholars of the history of art were inclined to forget how difficult it had been to establish the history of art as a recognized discipline between philosophical aesthetics and historical studies of culture. It had to be accepted that each discipline could serve as an auxiliary discipline for another subject. There is no disparagement, but only mutual acknowledgment of the relevance of neighbouring disciplines. Modern art historians like Hans Belting (1990: 13) took it for granted that each discipline has only “a short overcoat of competence”. Nevertheless, ‘not every discipline is equally close to God’, to adapt a slogan of the historian Leopold von Ranke. In dealing with pictures, the history of art gained priority by developing systematic methods like iconology. Political art history is inclined to exhaust the meaning of pictures by hinting at their political connotations. Iconology, on the other hand, is inclined to underemphasize the political links of pictures. In a similar way to the Bauhaus, the Warburg school in Hamburg became a kind of ‘international style’ of art interpretation, especially

since it was led by scholars with no links to nationalism or national socialism; Warburg was its founding father and Panofsky a kind of prophet. In the periods of classical modernity of the avant-garde and of postmodernism, art and culture considerably increased in importance. ‘The end of the history of art’ was sometimes announced, but it did not happen—just like the ‘end of history debates’ initiated by Foucault (Belting 1995: 25). The growing interest in the arts was increasingly due to ‘extrinsic motivations’.

This development has been caused by the *growing interest in exotic areas in the time of globalization* just as much as the growing interconnections between a capitalist international market and an art industry has been the result of the activities of the “creative class” (Florida 2004).

The growing interest in the interconnections between art and politics is no longer the hobby of a few art-loving social scientists, nor of a few professional historians of art. Both attitudes would hardly be beneficial for the establishment of a sub-discipline of ‘art and politics’. Since 1968, radicalized students of the history of art have frequently stressed the necessity to include ‘sociology of art’ as a generalist view of the arts in their curriculum. There was never a parallel movement with radical students asking for ‘politics of art’ in their studies, maybe because political science per se was never so radical as sociology during the students’ rebellion. Even famous historians of art like Ernst Gombrich (1991: 212), who advocated a *history without yawning*, warned against the social enlargement of a concept of art as an objective view of the history of art. Every period will confront the alleged social facts with proofs that only subjective views of developments in art prevailed in this allegedly fresh view of the arts.

Moreover, the views of the self-appointed political-minded generalists who turned to art and politics because they were tired of a professional interpretation of forms were hardly shared by the mass of the public. With the growing ‘eventization’ of art and museums, the interest of the public is directed rather towards finding answers to their problems in individual life than towards the connections between art and politics. In postmodern times, no dogmatic Marxist sociology of art antagonizes the normal business of art historians. There is a growing impact through the use of natural sciences and technical instruments to analyse well-known works of art in a new way and to challenge the traditional ascriptions of works to artists. This makes traditional iconology much more complicated than it was in Warburg’s time.

Political interest in the interpretation of works of art was frequently one-sided. *The art of power* was at the centre of iconological interests. The *counter-power of the arts* was generally overemphasized in Marxist history of art and was therefore scarcely integrated into conventional art history. The work of art most frequently adopted, even by political scientists, was certainly Lorenzetti’s frescoes on ‘buon governo’ and ‘mal governo’ in the ‘Room of the Nine’ in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. Conventional history of art frequently considered these attempts as *trivializations*. This monumental allegory was interpreted by research not so much as a ‘narrative’ but as a pictorial variation of an abstract system of mind. Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas were used to depict the aspects of distributive and commutative justice (Rubinstein 1958, Smart 1978, Borsook 1980: 36). One of the most fertile

historians of political ideas intervened, Quentin Skinner (1989: 85–103). He shifted the interpretation to another source of ideas. Not Thomas Aquinas but rather ‘pre-humanistic rhetorical culture’ was discovered as a source, developed much earlier than the Latin version of the Nicomachean Ethics around 1250. Historians generally are fond of tracing events back to older sources. Rubinstein as a historian of art even mentioned the *postglossatores* as a source of the Siena iconology.

The more esoteric interpretations became, the stronger was the temptation for political-minded scholars to turn to less distant political sources. The frescoes were reduced to a visual variation of the Sienese constitution and the law books of the city. The *pictor doctus*, the erudite painter Lorenzetti, no longer needed an iconological director of the programme. The sources discovered were open to the understanding of even moderately erudite artisans. This proved that in a quarrel between art historians and political scientists, the former (Kempers 1989) were closer to the politics of that time than the political scientist Skinner.

This shows, however, that a fruitful dialogue between the disciplines is possible. In post-war architecture, the first volume on reconstructed cities in both German states was published by representatives of seven different disciplines (von Beyme, Durth et al. 1992). In this latter case, the absence of a hierarchy of disciplines responsible for the field of ‘reconstruction’ facilitated cooperation. Art and architectural history are nowhere worse than other disciplines. In our field of political ideas, the debate on the sources of Machiavelli’s thought was revitalized by an outsider who relativized certain passages as the “rhetoric of Petrarchism”. Speculation on the metaphors of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* has been traced back to the bible interpretations of certain sectarians at the time of Hobbes. All of a sudden, distant historical analogies were discarded from the agenda by an outsider. Distant fictions became obsolete through hints comparing them to close political or social facts.

The political sources of great works of art have frequently been more explicitly emphasized by art historians than by social scientists. Piero’s fresco cycle in Arezzo was interpreted from Warburg to Carlo Ginsburg (1981: 43ff.) as a political allusion to the idea of the crusades and the decline of Greece, combined with hopes for a reunification of the Eastern and Western Christian churches. Only later was this kind of interpretation challenged as too simple (Aronberg Lavin 1990: 180; Büttner 1992: 15ff.). Political iconology was easier to develop in studies of a ruler’s residences than in studies of churches. But even in the residences of princes, the political connotations of the painting by Gozzoli in the Palazzo Medici or the work of a team of painters in Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara were not easily deciphered. Even in churches there was occasionally ‘an easy form of political iconology’ to discover. In the Theolinda chapel in Monza, the hints at the history of Lombardy and the analysis of the Visconti and Sforza families demonstrated a rather obvious relationship to the dynasties involved.

Comparative political iconology which does not dig into the details of individual works and follows the specialists into distant niches of originality will concentrate on an *easy iconology* in order to remain on safe ground. The danger is that only second-class art which might hardly interest the professional art historians is chosen for analysis, unless it be that highlights of art for political use are found in

artists such as Goya, Hogarth and Daumier. Autopoietic systems theory postulates that only after the French Revolution were the religious fundamentals of a *societas civilis* destroyed. This development led to the existence of special dyadic codes for each subsystem of society. According to this view, politics was governed by the code ‘power/non-power’. Iconology for the nineteenth century showed that political interpretations proved difficult. Caspar David Friedrich’s altar of Teċin was difficult to decipher because originally it was not even destined for Count Thun (Chapeaurouge 1996: 42ff.). Friedrich’s ‘ice sea’ also encountered somewhat controversial perceptions: the shipwreck might stand for ‘disappointed political hopes’, corresponding to the artist’s political leanings; but other interpreters took the same picture for a symbol rather of individual disappointment (Rautmann 1991).

Sometimes a political motive entered the schoolbooks, as in the case of Delacroix’s ‘Liberty leading the people’. Delacroix himself remained silent. A poem by Auguste Barbier (*La Curée*) was used as a proof of the painter’s revolutionary engagement. Detailed analysis showed, however, that the man with the hat was hardly a ‘citoyen’ or a ‘student’. Similarities with the politician Laffitte have been postulated. But contemporary spectators did not perceive this (Hadjinicolaou 1991: 9). The woman with the flag was seen as a kind of ‘lewd provocation’ by contemporaries. Iconological interpretation by specialists therefore tended towards quite apolitical interpretations. Contemporaries saw rather a symbol of a ‘great mother’ or of a fighting holy woman. The naked breast of the indecent and revolutionary woman frequently disgusted bourgeois society, until the French state sanctioned civilized interpretations by printing the lady on a hundred-franc note (1979). Only then could it enter into the schoolbooks. This example showed that *sociology of art* had to complete the efforts of a *political science of art*. Many political interpretations were not seen by contemporaries and therefore many sharp-minded political interpretations remained *ex post facto* ideas and went astray from the way in which such a painting was perceived by the public. Who is right: the *social historian* who knows contemporary symbols and opinions, or the sharp-minded *intellectual connoisseur* who *ex post facto* creates an intelligent iconological interpretation? Only politicized artists like Steinlen, Léger, Guttuso, Kollwitz, Grosz, Hartfield, Meidner and Dix do not offer iconological secrets. But even modern avant-gardists who were close to politics, like Picasso, Dali, Max Ernst, Magritte or Beckmann, are not open in their complicated visions to a self-evident political interpretation. That is why there is a modern trend towards concentrating on the *history of the reception* of works of art. On the other hand, every historical discipline has to analyse events which they see differently from the actors of a historical time. Otherwise history would be reduced to the compilations and commentaries of memoirs of contemporaries. This demonstrates a dilemma between two approaches:

- *social and political historians* stick to the superficial meaning of pictures, whereas
- *iconologists* dive into the depth of ‘meaning’ of pictures. Religious paintings were never simply interpreted in terms of the unsophisticated piety of the masses.

## **7.2 Limits of Competence for Social Scientists in the Field of the Arts**

### ***7.2.1 Political Iconography Suspecting an Ideology or Weltbild Behind Parallel Appearance in Art and Politics***

There is a danger that paintings get downgraded to applications of aesthetic and/or political doctrines. Most fresco cycles of the early Renaissance in Italy have been interpreted in a way which finds some hidden theoretical message behind the pictures—Aristotelism, Thomism or early humanism. Only rarely have such intellectual speculations been supported by a specific similarity between figures, such as those in Benozzo Gozzoli's 'Adoration of the Magi' in the Medici chapel (Roettgen 1996: 21, 331; Ahl 1996: 88ff.). The personality of the artist in search of his autonomy was sometimes downgraded to an 'auxiliary agent of prosaic political interests', as in Carlo Ginzburg's (1981: 21, 8), book on Piero della Francesca. Circular chains of interpretation, which had sometimes been criticized as belonging to the iconological orthodoxy of the Hamburg school, were thus tamed by 'obvious' political messages.

In later periods of absolutist rule, art was more obviously put into the service of political power. Emblems, symbols and metaphors were canonized, as in Cesare Ripa's "Iconologia" (1971), and were almost mandatory for artists as well as for spectators. Even in late absolutism, when iconological obligation declined, forms of government were still fixed in the representation of physiognomies. According to Diderot (1968, vol. 1: 66), republicans had to be 'proud and severe'. Monarchs had to represent mercy, honour and gallantry. Not all the artists stuck to the theoretical prescriptions. New republics like the USA no longer took inspiration from the systems of constitutional monarchies. Since they hardly had a traditional iconography of their own, they borrowed heavily from ancient Rome. American liberty made it easier to do away with historical costumes, as in the 'Death of General Wolfe' (1796), hailed as the first historical picture in modern costume. American paintings of presidents were inspired by various sources: European (Houdon in France), Europeanized American such as Benjamin West, or exclusively American such as Gilbert Stuart (Abrams 1968: 170ff.).

### ***7.2.2 Continuity and Discontinuity of Artists' Work for Rulers After Changes of the Regime***

In oligarchic republics and absolutist monarchies a change of ruler frequently had a deep impact on the position of artists at the 'Court'. There were hardly ideological implications in this change but rather changes in the personal taste of the rulers. Only after the French Revolution did different tastes also have

different political connotations. ‘Quality of art’ and specialization made it possible, however, for artists of a former regime to survive, precisely because there was an emphasis on the ‘art of power’. Napoleon accepted back Louis XVI’s court painter, Antoine-François Callet, because of his abilities in painting battles (The Surrender of Ulm, The Battle of Austerlitz) (Schoch 1975: 85). Many revolutionary painters, including David, had worked for the *ancien régime*. Even the Restoration regime, extremely intolerant in political matters, accepted certain artists of the former regime. François Gérard was nominated as the ‘first painter’ in 1817, Robert Lefèvre remained painter to the court, and even Gros, the most demonstrative adherent of the toppled emperor, was ennobled and received important commissions. Even Jean-Louis David could have returned from his Belgian exile if he had been ready to apologise for his alliance with the ‘King’s murderers’. Louis XVIII bought two of David’s paintings for the Luxembourg Palace—more than Napoleon ever did for the painter in one go (Brooker 1980: 179).

Napoleon III even negotiated with a notorious enemy of the regime, Courbet. Courbet painted a picture of his studio during a visit by the Emperor, an honour which not even Ingres, in high regard at the Court, was able to experience. Later dictatorships such as the Bolsheviks (with Constructivism) and fascists (with Futurism) initially tried to win over the avant-garde. Only Hitler’s Nazi regime was so narrow-minded as not to accept the vanguard which might have collaborated with it—at least in architecture with Mies van der Rohe, who in 1937 signed a letter with ‘Heil Hitler’. Goebbels tried to save sections of the Expressionist movement as a ‘German style’. This failed, as did rare attempts to collaborate as in the case of Emil Nolde. Democracies after 1945 were mostly reluctant to accept the artist of the dictator. Arno Breker caused a scandal every time he received a commission, even from private individuals. A comparative analysis over time might come to the conclusion that it was not the political conviction of artists but rather the changes of styles and topics that led to a neglect of the artists who had been fashionable in the former political system.

### ***7.2.3 Changing Political Symbols and Fashions within the Same Regime***

This may have political connotations, as did the change from romanticism to realism in the nineteenth century. Rarely did a revolution bring a clear break, like the revolution of 1848 in France, where realism was promoted for political reasons. But the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 cannot be used to deduce artists’ political attitudes as reflected in their artist work. The revolution of 1848, which did not have a permanent impact, cannot be held responsible for Menzel’s switch to realism. His painting of the citizens killed by Prussian troops in March 1848 did not gain the importance of some of Courbet’s revolutionary paintings. That it remained unfinished was interpreted as a ‘shame about the artist’s liberal illusions’ and as preparation for a switch to political escapism in Prussian history (Hermand 1986: 51).

### 7.2.4 *Interest of Research into Art and Politics in their Contemporary and Later Impact on the Public*

Even iconology in the tradition of Warburg was interested in the survival of certain iconological traditions. The *receptionist aesthetics* approach to the history of art was taken over from the study of literature. A work of art was no longer separated neatly from the spectator (Kemp 1988: 240). Architecture and the decoration of churches were open to the public and played a major role in religious propaganda. Art programmes in palaces, however, were accessible only to the higher estates who were occasionally invited to Court. Princes increasingly opened their treasures to the public in order to strengthen an element of iconological propaganda. Paintings left their autopoietic environment, in which they served only the pleasure of the prince (Warnke 1993: 8). Curators of art at the court sometimes tried to fix the attention of the prince on a particular programme of hanging. Their reinforcement was a kind of help to decision-making in that it did leave the organization of a programme of hanging to the artists themselves.

The less safe a rule was, the bigger the iconographic input for pictorial propaganda, from the Emperor Augustus to the *usurpers and condottieri* in Italian Renaissance. The Roman senate tried to do away with private buildings of luxury though it had no means of sponsoring public buildings of importance. In this vacuum, the self-representation of Augustus became attractive to all layers of society (Zanker 1987: 25, 329). In many respects, from Augustus to baroque princes, *religious reifications* were used as an instrument of political propaganda. The painting had an almost sacral function. The claim for identity of the estates was that they not only represented the country, they *were* the country. This is why the revolutionary counter-movements were so eager to physically destroy the monuments and paintings of a toppled ruler or dynasty. This was the *negative side of the idea of identity* (Brückner 1966; Steinmann 1917: 337). *Aggression against icons* and the *cult of pictures* occurred in waves in European history (Belting 1990: 18ff.). The pictorial cult during the Counter-Reformation was a kind of atonement for the sin of destroying religious and political pictures. Even towards the end of absolutist monarchy, the ruler's image was sometimes used in a literal reified sense. The citizen's council of Munich had to kneel before Prince Karl Theodor because it had offended the dignity of the ruler. The Bavarian penal law recognized 'offences against majesty in the second degree', including *mockery*, which could easily be found in certain paintings (Schoch 1975: 12). Power and religion strengthen each other in the pictorial cult of monarchy. Sometimes the impact of pictorial propaganda was even tested. Benvenuto Cellini (1962 II, 90: 503) reported that Grand Duke Cosimo I found his Perseus 'molto bella' but insisted on testing the people's opinion before erecting the monument on the Piazza della Signoria. Even Napoleon made his peace with the church, though a latent anticlerical trend remained. Religious art was no longer sponsored and was replaced by a political cult of icons. The more insecure the legitimacy of a ruler, the more the reception of paintings by the public was controlled. In 1808 Gros's 'Napoleon on the Field of

Eylau', celebrating a not very convincing victory over the Russian army, was hung next to David's painting of Napoleon's coronation. The ironic commentary of the president of the Roman Republic was "*sacre et massacre!*" (Lindsay 1960: 122). The secret service knew about the ambivalent impact of the painting, suspected that it might encourage the people's opposition to the war, and wanted to remove it. Minutes in the archives show that the secret police also tested the success of pictorial propaganda in other cases (Lelièvre 1993: 117ff.).

When the subsystems of society became differentiated and more autonomous, the autonomy of the arts also increased. On the one hand, most artists welcomed this; on the other, the political system no longer needed artists for its self-representation. Photography and mass media became a much cheaper instrument of state propaganda. Since the artists no longer received many commissions from state agencies, they were *thrown into the market*. The anti-capitalist writings of many artists show that originally they repudiated the capitalist market. From 1830 to 1930, in a mixture of complaint and pride, the avant-garde often wrote of the *loneliness of the artist in society*. This pessimistic individualism of artists had various consequences: some artists joined political movements, others escaped into apolitical esoteric circles (Egbert 1970; Lindey 1990: 103; Schilling 1978: 32ff., 194ff.). *Syndicalist experiments for self-organization of the artist's market*, from Albert Gleizes (von Beyme 2005: 181) to Günter Grass, failed. Only after 1945 did artists fight for the market, as in the case of Ad Reinhardt (1975: 179) with his article on 'Government and the Arts'. But even so this was a very un-American idea: a *government art cabinet* which would control the market and broker equal chances for all artists, as well as combating the illegal practices of an oligarchic art market.

### 7.3 The Dilemma of Democratic Iconology

After the war, conservative art historians like Hans Sedlmayr resented the 'loss of the centre'. But this had ambivalent advantages. It led to a postmodern total liberty. Where everything is possible at the same time the 'legitimacy' of political art withers away. Aesthetic experience is *profaned*. Art is promoted by events. The museum shop and specially arranged 'museum nights' with the help of the mass media attract more public attention than the art collections themselves (Zweite 2009: 131).

*Anything goes* was the device when Paul Feyerabend turned from rigid neopositivism to postmodern anti-ideology. This created two tendencies which coexist:

*Democracy lives on pre-democratic myths* and iconological symbols and thus tries to be popular, knowing that most citizens do not accept modern art.

*The rise of a new elitism* which harks back to pre-democratic symbols and moods but uses the language of modern art.

Only after the Second World War was democracy sufficiently consolidated to be able to reduce democratic symbolism to abstract signs. Eagles were still associated



with the symbolism of older regimes. The Swedish ‘Ikea look’ of a woven landscape in the Stockholm parliament is still traditional and not yet in tune with the abstract symbols of ‘constitutional patriotism’. There was a dilemma: survey methods allowed the mood of the people to be tested very exactly—but there was little which could be tested. The rare examples of democratic iconology were not accepted by the majority of the people. When the public was asked whether in the Charlottenburg Palace they would prefer the restoration of the paintings of Antoine Pesne or a modern work by Hann Trier, it was always in favour of the least innovative solution. In its pictorial programmes, democracy thus remained—against its will—elitist. Political art was aimed at connoisseurs, not at the mass of the public. This was even recognized by the number one satirical artist in Germany, Klaus Staeck. The vanguard of classical modernity was inclined to push the recipients of art into a defensive role. The arts almost usurped the position of former rulers and demanded submission. Adorno (1970: 410) took part in this kind of sacralization of the arts when he wrote in his ‘Aesthetic Theory’ that the recipient “has to submit to the discipline of the work and should not demand that the work of art offers him something”.

The representation of the ruling class used to employ the most eminent artists. In the era of photography it became more and more marginal (von Beyme 1998: 120ff., 144), and was left to the individual taste of a ruler. There is hardly anything like a *Staatsportrait* any more. Clemenceau detested his portrait by Manet (1879, 1880) and Churchill (himself a closet painter) never used his portrait by Graham Sutherland which seems to have eventually been destroyed (von Beyme 2005: 417). Queen Elizabeth II by Pietro Annigoni or the Spanish king in the vestibule of the modern art museum are examples of such old-fashioned representations.

Democracies also preserved a good deal of myth and neo-metaphysical thought. Even the semicircular seating arrangements in modern parliaments are not the result of functional ideas about good political discourse, but rather a survival of the theological elements of representing the “body politic” (Manow 2008: 19).

Even dictators had to check the impact of their pictorial propaganda. The cultural people’s commissar Lunacharsky had many sympathies with the art of Cubo-Futurism in Russia. But he knew that neither Lenin nor the people appreciated this kind of art and so he did not dare promote it in public (Palmier 1975: I, 477). Only concrete symbols could be promoted, such as Tatlin’s tower for the ‘International’. But even in this case Lenin resented its oblique appearance. Dictatorships were able to perpetrate their vandalism of the ‘modern art’ of their time because they knew that the petty bourgeois taste of the majority would approve this kind of art policy. Art which was obviously political was scarcely ever accepted by most theoreticians of aesthetics. Only the writers of some leftist treatises, such as Proudhon in France or Černyševskij in Russia, welcomed a certain political realism in the arts. Art historians frequently thought that the openly political phases of great artists led to the worst of their pictures. David’s portrait of Napoleon was criticized as ‘clumsy’ and ‘inelegant’. Only a moderate Marxist like Arnold Hauser (1953, vol. 2: 158) could think that Jacques Louis David was best when he openly represented political events. In some cases the debate was ambivalent. The aristocrat Delacroix—certainly not a revolutionary—did more by his paintings to undermine the plutocratic

kingdom of Louis Philippe in the Monarchy of July 1830 than many leftist realists who were hailed as the forerunners of ‘socialist realism’. But even conservative art historians have to admit that Georges Grosz or Dix were at their best when criticizing the Weimar System rather than later when painting pleasant landscapes of Lake Constance or the coast of New England. The debate among art historians was controversial: was the decline of originality in the later part of their lives the consequence of an apolitical turn in their art, or was it just the normal decline of painters in their old age? (Friedlaender 1952: 64). Even critics of political engagement in the arts recognize that in some cases, such as David, Delacroix, Courbet, Picasso and Léger, the political messages did not ruin the quality of their work.

- *Conservative ethnocentric historians of art* came up with the idea that government art policy cannot lead to original art—unless it is founded in collective national or regional movements (Malkowsky 1912: 19). The papal court and the Prussian court, which was hardly rooted in a Brandenburg regional culture, would contradict this hypothesis.
- *Radical and progressive historians of art* on the other hand developed the thesis that political engagement improved the quality of art. Marxists even claimed that the exuberant temperament of a writer like Bert Brecht needed a certain disciplining by party doctrine in order to develop his talent (Egbert 1970: 736; Lindey 1990: 103; Schilling 1978: 32ff., 194ff.).

At the same time the *elitist emphasis on modern art*, scarcely understood by those who vote for democratic leaders, was spreading in the democracies. According to a quantitative study by the periodical *Capital* (11, 1998: 111), contemporary holders of positions of power in politics and economics—seventy per cent of the managers and as much as eight-five per cent of top politicians—increasingly like to show themselves in the surroundings of modern art. Some representatives of power or money preferred works in blue, in order to produce the feeling of distance and power. Mannerist works were used as symbols of the capacity to decide and revealed a *decisionist understanding of politics* (Ullrich 2004: 49, 32).

The collection of portraits of German federal chancellors in the Chancellor’s office in Berlin is almost a horror show. From Willy Brandt to Gerhard Schröder, only a few chancellors have chosen interesting painters. Schröder has compromised himself and a former revolutionary like Jörg Immendorff by a painting in the style of absolutist coins in gold. Schröder was not particularly knowledgeable in the field of art. But it is not by chance that he liked to pose with Immendorff, a painter who in 1968 proclaimed political action in the painting ‘Stop painting,’ and who later remarked that he now regretted the Maoist nonsense he formerly supported. He claimed as early as the early 1990s that he would no longer use art as ‘a tool of propaganda’ for any political opinion (Immendorff 1993: 58). Schröder might have been attracted by a former Maoist because he himself was proud of his leftist past in the SPD youth movement. Schröder now posed as a ‘hero’. *Neo-aristocratic attitudes* developed and unorthodox politicians showed themselves as *risky alpha animals* on the one hand and via symbols such as apes and eagles as a kind of *artifex honoris causa* (Ullrich 2010: 17, 19).

Political art has always had two aspects:

- *the art of power*, mostly portraits of rulers and historical events which were taken as the legitimization of contemporaneous power;
- *the art of counter-power*. In classical art this changed little and was exercised only in hidden forms, as in the stupid faces in Goya’s portrait of the Spanish royal family. It increased, however, in modern art. Picasso in his caricatures of the dictator Franco used his type of pictorial counter-power in the Spanish Civil War and developed the *anti-ruler portrait*. The intermezzo of abstract art was hardly open to direct political messages and portraits. But with the end of classical modernity between 1955 and 1960 and the rise of pop art, portraits were used to destroy the *aura of rulers*. Frequently it was open to debate whether Andy Warhol’s paintings of American presidents aimed at a caricature or in some cases, such as his portrait of Mao Tse-tung, at a form of creating new heroes. The 1968 movement widely used this type of portrait, even from Immendorff to Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke in Germany, who later were hardly hailed as ‘political artists’ (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1** Government measures for the support and regulation of the arts

Regulatory level	Restrictive (reducing liberties)	Regulative (mediation in ties)	Extensive (extending liberties conflicts)
Welfare level	Protection (of groups such as women or ethnic minorities)	Distributive (distribution of finan- cial resources)	Redistributive (of financial resources between groups)
<i>Governments intervene in various ways:</i>			
Acquisition	Construction of cities, architecture self-representation of the system by artists buying works of art for museums and governmental institutions sponsoring political art museum policies exhibition policies state ceremonies with the help of artists		
Restriction	Measures against political art measures against opposition by artists, measures against pornography or anti-religious art		
Protection	Protection of monuments preservation of art restoration of buildings and cities		
Distribution	Founding of academies, art schools granting scholarships welfare state measures for artists		
Regulation	Regulation of conflicts between artists, groups in the economy or the churches tax policies for sponsors guidelines for the aesthetic world in buildings and cities (Kunst am Bau, art in public buildings).		

## 7.4 Conclusion

A systematic political science of the arts would probably dig into the foundations of the legitimation of political systems and the traditions of art policies in the individual political system. It makes a difference whether political systems do not intervene in the organization of the arts (as in the United States) or try to organize a kind of ‘welfare state for the artists’ (as in Norway and the Netherlands). For art policy these two models are disappointing. America, where there has been little state help for artists since Roosevelt’s experiment during the New Deal, has become the leading art centre since abstract expressionism, whereas the enormous assistance given to artists in the Netherlands and Norway has not led to a leading role for these countries in modern art. The political system is nevertheless involved in regulations in countries without a welfare tradition as the following typology shows.

Not all of these government instruments in the arts are of equal importance. The protection of monuments was created only under the impact of historicism in the nineteenth century, and welfare measures grew selectively in the twentieth. Repression of artists became rare: Grosz’s Christ in a gas mask was fined heavily by a decision of the court. Andres Serrano’s ‘Piss Christ’, showing Jesus in a bath of urine, aroused antipathy but did not lead to a trial. Political provocation became difficult because the former bourgeois puritanism and prudishness withered away. As Karl Krauss once put it, “true Bohemians no longer make the concession of annoying the bourgeois” (cited in Schlussbericht 2007: 230, col. 2). In Germany the *Enquete Committee* on Culture which submitted its report in late 2007 has in the meantime developed a fabulous programme of the arts. It proved to be more detailed and refined than any attempt to sketch a political science of the arts.

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## Chapter 8

# Historical Memory and the Arts in the Era of the Avant-Garde: Archaism and Neo-Primitivism as a ‘Passéisme for the Future’

### 8.1 Introduction

‘Historical memory’ is the term which this author prefers, because it does not obscure the *subjective nature* of this treatment of the past. ‘Historical knowledge’ suggests that there is a kind of *objective knowledge*—which has been doubted even by professional historians. Historical representations of the past were basically promoted by philosophical and political thought, by literature and by the arts. All three forms were interlinked and mutually influenced each other. But the so-called “régimes d’historicité” (Hartog 2003: 26ff.), unlike the “grandes chronosophies” from Cordorcet to Hegel, Marx and Comte, were meant to be a construct of empirical historians. The term ‘regime’ sounds much too stable. ‘Mode of historicity’ might be more appropriate, as awkward as it sounds in English translation. There are not only various regimes in the perception of history in different periods and nations. There were various ‘modes of historical perception’ at the same time and in the same society.

Under the impact of revolutionary modernization movements in the twentieth century political ideology frequently used the arts for propaganda purposes. Artists were tuned to the predominance of the future, a kind of *futurism*. Marinetti (1968: 260) declared “The past is always less valuable compared to the future!” What he called *passatismo* was one of his major targets of attack in the Political Programme of Futurism (Marinetti 1968: 293). Only in postmodern times, when the eschatological impact of classical modernity withered away around 1955–1960 with the rise of pop art, did *presentism* become the predominant feeling.

Ideological identity politics needed physical evidence in order to convince the masses, and turned for help to the artists. But the avant-garde artists of modernity were no longer available for simple ideological reproduction of a constructed past to commemorate the achievements of a republic or a dynasty. In a revolution against the classical hierarchy of genres of artistic expression, the traditional ‘historical painting’—predominantly wall-painting—was considered obsolete. Only in highly distorted variations such as Picasso’s *Guernica* was the equivalent of the

traditional history painting feasible. New forms of representation of memories of the past—modern, and combined with technological innovations in the arts and crafts—were developed by the avant-gardes of various countries.

The perception of temporal structures in history has at least three dimensions: past, present and future. Conservative writers have frequently accused the avant-garde of being ‘futuristic’. But only a small minority of avant-garde artists was ready to subscribe to the dictum of the impresario of Italian futurism, Marinetti (1968: 10), that a modern car is more beautiful than the Nike of Samothrace. This was doctrinaire *futurism* and was opposed to what Marinetti called *passéisme*. In this kind of ideology, *presentism* was hardly able to develop, because the present was completely subordinated to the goals of transition from past to future. The avant-garde, contrary to their intention, shortened the time span of the present because of their complete contempt for the past, not anticipating that their innovations had an increasingly shorter life because of the futurist pressure for new innovations (Lübbe 2003: 91ff.).

Attitudes towards temporal structures among the avant-garde were much more complicated than the radical futurists and constructivists anticipated. A paradox of past and present developed. Archaism and neo-primitivism were important means of avoiding the repetition of the contemptible figurative arts of the past. Modern artists no longer shared Piranesi’s or Chateaubriand’s pleasure in ambling through ancient ruins and thus could not be ‘passéistes’. Their perception of archaic culture did not always differ from the political theories and ideologies, but in some respects they were unique because they overcame a certain autonomy towards other more dominant subsystems with the leading ‘régime d’historicité’.

The European avant-gardes are a special case for the study of historical memory. We have the experience that revolutionaries contest the traditional memory of the past. They never build their future from ‘point zero’, however, but rather shift to another set of memories of the past. The avant-garde artists of classical modernity were in a similar position. They challenged the traditional values of art and the representation of an alleged historical reality. But for this they looked for help to different representations of the past and combined these with their visions of the future. Because of the emphasis on a completely new future—meant to realize the unity of life and art—their vision of temporal structures was different from that of traditional artists. In order to make their future materialize, they needed a new representation of the past. In the theory of history Reinhart Koselleck (1989: 374), was right to stress that “The smaller the historical experience, the greater was the expectation”. This was especially true when the traditional view of history as the ‘history of God’s plan for salvation’ was no longer believed. The avant-garde could not have any deep historical memory of the recently discovered archaic cultures and therefore a fortiori emphasized expectations for the future of a new art. They developed a kind of modernist paradox: a ‘passéisme for the future’.

This revolutionary break was not completely new. In the eighteenth century poets and artists had already waged a *querelle des anciens et des modernes*. Those artists who considered themselves as ‘modern’ wanted to get rid of the imitation of classical antiquity. The French artist Albert Gleizes (1980: 10), more famous



as a propagandist of academic cubism than as an artist, wrote about the deliberate decisions of many cubists to turn to the historical memory of primitivism in order to liberate the avant-garde from the suffocating memory of classical antiquity. Since the time of the Renaissance philosopher Francis Bacon there had been one branch of modernists, intellectually distanced enough from the revivalism of their time, which thought it represented ‘true antiquity’ and promoted a modernist way of thinking in terms of “functional equivalents” rather than of ‘ontological similarities’. A ‘project of modernity’ has been invented (Habermas), but it never developed in a one-way direction. It was full of representations from the past in two different modes:

- *survival* of a past that could be revitalized;
- *revival* of a past which had withered away, but was to be saved by the rational decisions of the artists who were to reconstruct its ‘useful parts’ for the creation of genuinely modern art.

What was considered as ‘useful’? There was little agreement among modern artists. For the radical avant-garde there was an inclination to make use of archaic cultures for their way to abstract art. Seminal books by art historians like the Swiss Heinrich Wölfflin, who found a general development from haptic abstract primitivism to optic colourful stages (in modern times called ‘baroque’), were applied to the avant-garde by one of his students, Worringer; his works suggested the revival of archaic forms. Worringer (1911, 1964: 42), pleaded for a history of modern art not from the point of view of what artists ‘can do’, but what they ‘want to do’, thus applying the theory of *Kunstwollen*, developed by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl. The technical shortcomings of primitive art were not explained in terms of the incapacity to do better, but as a proof that capable artists had something else in mind. Worringer’s theories were a revelation for the ‘Blauer Reiter’ group, and Franz Marc planned to invite the author to contribute to further editions of the group’s ‘Yearbook’ (Kandinsky/Marc 1965: 277), which because of the war in 1914 became a ‘One-year book’. Chagall (1959: 113), who after his emigration from Soviet Russia lived for a while in Germany, accepted these views. He doubted even that primitivism was an appropriate term. He recognized “high standards of technical performance in the art of the primitives”.

Archaism in modern art was dubbed ‘primitivism’, a term which was accepted into a dictionary for the first time in the *Larousse illustré* in 1897. It was misleadingly defined as ‘imitation of the primitives’. In Russia, Aleksandr Shevchenko (1882–1948), wrote a seminal book under the title *Neo-Primitivism* (Moscow 1913, selections in: Harrison/Wood 1998 I: 135). Primitive art can hardly be an ‘ism’, developing as it did in a kind of spontaneous way. Revivalist ‘isms’ are always intellectual constructions ex post facto. But adding ‘neo’ to ‘primitivism’ made it still clearer that it was a contemporary movement the Russian avant-garde had in mind. Neo-primitivism sounded quite futuristic when Shevchenko compared the beauty of primitive icons to the beauty of modern machines.

Primitivism in the arts was most widespread in countries which had colonies in the Third World. But it even had some influence in other countries where there

was not even a market for primitive art, such as Italy. Carrà and other Italian artists mostly discovered primitivism in Paris. ‘Exoticism’ in the arts was not new, but the avant-gardes of modernism were disappointed by the refined formalism of bourgeois culture—including exotic fashions. Unlike certain tendencies in pre-modern art which had discovered exotic countries, such as the chinoiseries of the eighteenth century or the ‘Japonism’ of the late nineteenth, primitivism was deliberately oriented towards scarcely-developed countries, whereas in nineteenth-century aesthetic theories such as Ruskin’s writings these primitive societies possessed artefacts but no art.

The typical merge of archaism in combination with the most recent science led to a wide reception for the books of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl: *Les fonction mentales dans le sociétés inférieures* (Paris 1910) and *La mentalité primitive* (Paris 1922). Lévy-Bruhl (1949: 165f.), was frequently misunderstood, so that with increasing age he defended himself against the charge that he considered the primitives as ‘irrational’ in their way of thinking. Even the primitives share important traits with the way of thinking of modern men and are as rational as modern men, though in a different way. Freud’s work *Totem/taboo* (1913), was also important for many artists, a book in which the founder of psychoanalysis draws parallels between totemistic remainders and the early childhood of men. Paul Klee went furthest in combining archaic elements and discovering ‘infantilism’ in modern art, and not only in the works of his little son. He even started to sign his own products that dated from his childhood.

The avant-garde artists had, however, no scientific concept of totemism, which was combined with the idea that everything we see is linked to other people and ‘the group’. This kind of scientific interest was only developed by the second generation of avant-gardists in the surrealist movement and in the paintings of Max Ernst: *Monument des oiseaux* (1927), or in the work of Wilfredo Lam and the Swiss artist Kurt Seligmann (1958: 386)—the only artist of note who wrote on archaic primitivism in a systematic scientific way. Since he had more scientifically-based knowledge of primitivism, he dared to contradict the group leader André Breton concerning ideas such as ‘myth’, and was ousted from the group. In 1938, Seligmann went to Canada to explore Indian tribes and to create an “imaginary world on the basis of a surrealist map of the world” (Hauser and Seligmann 1997: 147). Wolfgang Paalen, a German émigré from Austria, who opposed the irrationalism of surrealism and had good relations with the abstract movement in the United States, went voluntarily into his Mexican exile in order to escape from civilization and to study archaic societies. In a discourse with Breton (in: Neufert/Paalen 1999: 266), he also contradicted the intellectual art dictator Breton in his naive hopes that memories of past magic practices could directly stimulate modern art. Even magic was not able to restore the interrupted relationship between man and nature. Magic for Paalen was only a method of creating contemporary ‘signs’ of expression in art. Surrealists and some great individuals of modern art like Klee, Miro, Calder and even Picasso with his Minotaur motifs no longer believed in monsters, but used elements of primitive art no longer meant to be a threat to modern life, but rather as a metaphor for the forces of nature.

The archaism was combined with exoticism only in the early stages of avant-garde art. Neo-primitivism increasingly developed an interest in the early stages of national culture, as when Picasso turned to the prehistoric art of the Iberian peninsula and Gleizes, Moore, Marino Marini and Beckmann to the medieval art of their respective countries. Marini (1961: 84, 92), stated bluntly that neo-primitivism also served as a means of keeping national traditions alive—he complained that in modern art painters in Stockholm painted just like those in Palermo.

The nationalized historical memory of the past among modern artists was not only captured by the monuments of national art in a kind of *revival*. *Survivals* were also discovered. Gauguin had no problem with combining motifs from Tahiti and Brittany. Kandinsky discovered icons as a help on the way to abstraction, though he never emphasized them more than other sources of inspiration, as his compatriots Natalya Goncharova or Larionov did. Kandinsky in Munich, under the influence of Gabriele Muentner in Murnau, discovered Bavarian folk art in glass paintings (*Hinterglasmalerei*) as an alleged revival of the historical memory of the people. Art historians discovered that Franz Marc owned eight, August Macke ten and Kandinsky as many as fifty-two Bavarian popular *Hinterglasbilder* (Hülsewig-Johnen 2003: 18). They contributed to the ethnographic programme of images in the ‘Blauer Reiter’, a seminal publication of the international networks of art from Moscow to Paris.

The German avant-garde was, however, not in agreement about this kind of amalgamation of archaism and modernity. Max Beckmann (1965: 64ff.), also took inspiration from historical memories such as the mannerism of Grünewald and the artists of the late Middle Ages, but he entered into a polemical debate with Franz Marc, who defended primitivism in the review ‘Pan’ in 1912. For Beckmann (1987: 38ff., 41), Matisse was, like Gauguin, only a ‘sad representative of ethnographic art for anthropological museums’. The intellectual head of the avant-garde group ‘Die Brücke’, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1997: 76, 214), saw in his letters certain parallels between primitive art and modern painting, after claiming to have discovered African art in a museum in Dresden as early as 1903. Later he confessed, however, that modern art has to be very different from the primitives and asked whether the much-lauded art of the Africans was not a detriment to our own culture which derives from Egypt and ancient Greece.

The native population in Brittany and Bavaria was rather sceptical when they were exposed to the interest of art dealers in archaic pictures. They were shrewd enough to know that the artists and their dealers—in the search for authentic primitive life—travelled by highly technological trains and steamers. The ‘natives’ posed for the avant-garde painters and served as brokers to the remains of archaic life, so that reed roofs appear on almost all the paintings of the Worpswede school in northern Germany. Romanticism had already distanced itself more from the subject matter in using ‘romantic irony’ than some of the zealots of neo-primitivism.

Though modern avant-gardes wanted to create a new world, there were two factors which turned their enthusiasm back towards the history of their respective countries.

One reason was the *unintended consequence of the lifestyle of artists*. They frequently lived alienated and marginalized in big cities, in a kind of sub-proletarian way. Alienation from the dominant society was even stronger among those artists who migrated to other countries—mostly France—where they did not feel socially accepted. This made intellectual revolutionaries aware of the past of their own countries.

The other reason was *theoretical*. Avant-garde artists looked for a justification for their own way of creating art. They found it by turning to archaism or primitivism and exoticism.

Both of these elements—an *outward directing force* of the circumstances of life and an *inward directing impulse* of theories that mixed past and future—determined the way avant-garde artists were to approach the memory of the past.

## 8.2 Migration and Alienation in a Hostile Society

In the era of the avant-garde there was an unprecedented migration of young artists to certain places in central Europe, mostly Paris but also to a lesser extent Munich. Of the avant-garde artists, 31.5 % migrated to foreign countries to study art, even though there were art schools in all countries from St Petersburg to Madrid and Mexico. But these were considered to be fortresses of academic sterility, hostile to avant-garde art. Of the migrants, 34 % went to France, 16 % to Germany, which had many regional schools and was mostly used to pass through on the way to Paris. East European avant-garde artists were most active in migration. Sixty-nine per cent of them went to the West. Many of them became permanent migrants working in a foreign country. Alienated life in tiny rented rooms transformed the cafes into an extension of the 'atelier'. After Montmartre was spoiled by tourists around 1907 the more serious artists moved to Montparnasse. French, Latin, Anglo-Saxons occupied the 'Café Rotonde', next door to Reid Hall; Germans and central East Europeans faced them in the 'Café du Dome'. The atmosphere was competitive and full of distrust, even among these alienated artists. The Bulgarian Jules Pascin (alias Pincas) was the only person who had good contacts with both groups. The Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg (1982 II: 71), who lived for some time in the artists' subculture in Paris, remembered that the émigré artists of Montparnasse had certain things in common, such as "hostility towards their isolated existence...exaggerated nostalgia for their native country and the inclination to stay among themselves with all the rivalries which such a life entails".

### 8.2.1 Jewish Migration and Alienation

Jewish émigrés, mostly from Eastern Europe and the German-speaking countries, suffered a double alienation: from their mother tongue and from their religious

background, which was not favourable for painting. Almost a fifth of the best-known artists were Jews, and most of these became permanent residents elsewhere. The intolerance of Jewish religion towards human images encouraged many to leave the typical East European country town, the *shtetl*, though historical studies have tried to show that a *Bilderverbot* never existed or was not always respected (Heimann-Jelinek 2003/2004: 53ff.). Most Jewish artists tried to overcome the past of dispersion and to modernize more quickly than the rest of society. Many of them shared the opinion of the eminent Jewish philosopher Martin Buber that there was no such thing as a Jewish art. The Jews in dispersion and diaspora were considered an ‘abstract nation’ and this was used as a justification to turn to ‘abstract’ cosmopolitan art, as Leon Steinberg suspected (Kampf 1987: 19, 197, 175). Chagall (2003: 58), as a figurative painter, was one of the few modernists who frequently used Jewish themes and fought in writing and in pictures for the transformation of the Jews from a ‘book nation’ into a ‘nation of books and pictures’. Representation of the past became possible in a pluralistic way, by leaving the narrow realm of ‘the book of books’. Max Weber in America, born in Bialystock (1881–1961), and Jankel Adler (1985: 24), born in Łódź, came from a milieu of Chassidism and tried to gather together those modern Jewish artists interested in the reconstruction of a Jewish past, like Brauner, Chagall and Arthur Segal. Many Russian Jewish avant-gardists, like Altman, Shterenberg, Lissitzky, Tschaikov, Pevsner, Gabo and for a short time even Chagall, collaborated with the Bolshevik regime and its government agency *NARKOMPROS*. Jewish theatre flourished and was the field of the arts that was even more likely to mobilize the Jewish masses. Marxist internationalism and a Jewish revival in the arts were not considered contradictory, especially by those Jewish propagandists like Aronson who hailed abstraction as the incarnation (Yiddish: *farkerperung* (Apter-Gabriel 1988: 35), of the Jewish nation. In 1922 the last Jewish exhibition of the *Kultur Lege* was held. The organization had by that time already been streamlined by the Communists. Many Jewish and non-Jewish avant-gardists emigrated around 1922, including Chagall, Gabo, Pevsner and Kandinsky. Migrating workers in art were transformed into political emigrants in the age of dictatorship. About one-third of them were pushed into a second emigration by Nazi rule in Germany and France (1940–1944).

### 8.2.2 *Revivalism as a Social Inferiority Complex*

Migration influenced the attitude towards historical memory. Enthusiasm for avant-garde art in Paris was mixed with an inferiority complex. The most famous Mexican artist, Diego Rivera (1966: 61), called it his ‘Mexican–American inferiority complex’, and Chagall (1959: 99), was so shocked that in retrospect he confessed that only the long distance between Paris and Vitebsk had prevented him from returning after a month. He felt a double alienation as a Russian and as a Jew. Nevertheless his complaints about alienation in the capital of modern

arts sounded like the conclusion of a Neo-Slavophile text, “I love Russia”. Those migrants who wanted to overcome the traditional representation of the history of their country compensated for the inferiority complex and nostalgia for their home country by discovering traces of the past in the art of Parisian museums, while Rivera discovered the Aztec art of Mexico, and Russian émigrés like Goncharova in Paris and Kandinsky and Jawlensky in Munich the *lubki*, popular Russian pictures and Bavarian glass painting (*Hinterglasmalerei*). Miró (1992: 226f., 92ff., 72) discovered the beauties of Catalonia: he was shocked by the superficial adaptation to French standards by his compatriots and deliberately spoke the Catalan language rather than Spanish, even with his friend Picasso (Miró 1977: 94). Similarly some of the Italian futurists who started out as ridiculously francophile were seized by nostalgia. Ardengo Soffici (1994: 104, 72) left the futurist movement in 1915 and returned to the ‘toscanità’ of his home town Poggio a Caiano. In a letter to Papini, he expressed the typical ambiguity of many modern foreign artists: “Paris will be our salvation or our death”. The Florentine wing of futurism was never able to join Marinetti’s Milan branch of the movement in its contempt for ‘popular’ art and the tradition of the Tuscan ‘Macchiaioli’. Magnelli (2004: 31), who became the most ‘French’ Italian artist, stayed in France and remained close to his cubist origins, thus becoming alienated from futurism despite his personal admiration for its leader Marinetti. Carlo Carrà (1978: 37), who turned from futurism to ‘pittura metafisica’, even before he defected from the movement wrote an article in the art review ‘Lacerba’ under the title “Arte moderna e arte popolare”, in which he reconciled modernism and popular archaic traditions because both represented ‘anti-intellectual’ art. Italian futurism, consisting of many intellectuals even among the painters, was most outspoken in its contempt for intellectual art, but originally also for archaism in the name of a future not characterized by static order as were the primitive societies but by modern technology.

Alienated life in metropolitan cities favoured a pan-sexualization of life justified by the return to primitive culture. Without precise anthropological knowledge, archaic cultures were identified with a spontaneous and ecstatic life and complete sexual freedom. The first German avant-garde, the painters of the Dresden ‘Brücke’, played with ladies around the lakes of Moritzburg castle and painted the memory of an Arcadian life of sexual freedom. Kirchner and his friends from bourgeois families, who had studied architecture in order to avoid coming into conflict with their fathers by confessing that they had de facto turned to the arts, and thus risking the end of paternal subsidies, were scarcely aware that their models and playmates ‘Fränzi’ and ‘Marzella’ came from depressed sections of the underclass, far from the easy-going life of Arcadia.

### 8.2.3 *Primitivism as Exoticism*

The memory of the past was not bound to a national culture but was searched for in ‘primitive tribal societies’, mainly in Africa and in Polynesia. The cubists

favoured African art, the surrealists thought Polynesian art more ‘authentic’ (Rubin 1984: 66f.). It has been argued that Braque and Picasso—and Vlaminck who was considered the first to have discovered African art, in a Parisian bistro—knew only second-rate African art. This is, however, completely irrelevant because the artists had no anthropological interest in these tribal products but used them to develop parallel modernist worlds of images. The results of adapting exotic works would not have been different if the models used had been of the highest quality.

Most artists interested in archaic memories of the past had no intention of seeing authentic primitive arts in their natural habitat. Some artists—driven by exoticism—like Matisse, Macke and Klee travelled occasionally, but others like Picasso deeply disliked travelling and got their information at home. From Gauguin onwards, those artists who did travel in search of the roots sometimes claimed to have discovered an authentic tribal society. But the Polynesian beauties in the pictures were frequently modernized prostitutes, and many passages in Gauguin’s *Noa Noa* have been found to be plagiarised from a book dating from 1837 (Rhodes 1997: 72, 66). But we have to keep in mind that the painters wanted to find themselves and their styles, not the historical anthropological truth about primitive society. Even the artists’ errors sometimes had positive consequences. The German expressionists Max Pechstein (1963: 67ff.) and Emil Nolde (1965, 2002 vol. III: 88), who travelled to the German colonies on the Polynesian islands, fought for the preservation of archaic societies and demanded their art be transferred from ethnographic museums to the art museums—an achievement not realized by the Louvre until after World War II. Nolde (2002, vol. III: 88) thought the Polynesians were still “real men whereas we show traits of artificial dolls, full of arrogance”. Critics such as the American art historian Brown (1986: 99) have taken some passages from Nolde’s letters to the Imperial Colonial Office, containing phrases about a ‘pure race’, in an unhistorical way, as a proof of proto-fascist terminology, and have not taken into consideration that loose talk about ‘race’ was common even in English and French discourses at that time, with no racist connotation. This kind of interpretation was invited because in 1933 Nolde turned to the Nazi party—an act that was certainly not to his personal advantage, since he became the best-known ‘degenerate artist’ in the eyes of Hitler’s movement. These debates about primitive tribal arts did, however, have some political connotations. In Nolde’s writings, it was British politics that was the main destroyer of archaic life, but the painter also criticized the imperialism of his own country. Oddly enough he did not want to abolish colonialism altogether (Moeller/Nolde 2002: 114, 114).

### 8.3 The Search for the Theoretical Justification for and Endorsement of Modern Art

The search for theoretical justification for and endorsement of their own image of images led many avant-garde artists back to the memory of history. Modernist movements such as the Fauves and cubists in France and the expressionists in

Germany were not aiming for a “revival” of past productions of art. They used the models only as a medium for their own modern creations of the space of the pictures. A revival was unnecessary where the archaic elements seemed still to be alive. Brancusi, the son of a Romanian farmer from the Carpathian mountains, had not need for the example of African wooden sculpture because he had internalized the popular art of his own youth. Some Russians turned to the *lubki* though they overestimated to what extent these popular products of art were still the artistic expression of simple peasants.

No previous generation of artists was so academically trained. Contrary to the myth of self-made men who taught themselves, most avant-garde artists (more than 90 %), had pursued course of study, about one-fifth of them in fields other than the arts. Never did artists dig so much into scientific—and para-scientific—literature as the avant-gardes of classical modernity, concentrated in two generations that were most active from 1905 to about 1955. For no other generation was it possible to write so much: three-quarters (75.1 %), of the 225 most prominent avant-gardists from Moscow to New York wrote books and articles, letters concerning their art (of which 37.0 % have been printed) and literary works (23.1 %), in order to interpret their art to a public which was not able to immediately understand it. Experimentalism was highly developed. Art entered the period of *constructions*, as Duchamp called them; collages, photomontages, installations and assemblages were developed. Aesthetic philosophers like Adorno considered modern art to be an art of the *montage* of heterogeneous elements. The idea of synergy among the various arts was developed beyond Wagner’s idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In music, Paul Klee and Kandinsky had already instigated a revival of the old *polyphony* of baroque times, which had been lost with the development of the ‘general bass’ in the nineteenth century. Schoenberg’s atonal music was highly favoured by Kandinsky. The required heterogeneity could include modern technical and archaic elements at the same time. Archaic memories of the past were combined with elements of popular modern culture, found by the elite of modern art in variety shows, musical theatres and the circuses near Montmartre in Paris (Weiss 1994: 60ff.). At the same time in Munich, Kandinsky was asking his fellow artists in the ‘Blauer Reiter’ (1973: 136, 134), group to procure ethnological material on the primitives; in his theories he fought against “the pernicious division of one art from the other and of the arts from popular art, children’s art and anthropology”, whose “often identical appearance and synthetic relations” stimulated his artistic creativity.

Internationally-minded artists like Kandinsky, who spoke German as well as Russian and very good French, had no nationalist bias when turning to the memories of the past. Cosmopolitan artists in Russia searched for elements of the ‘ur-language’, like Khlebnikov in his epic poem “From the stone age”, into which he mixed many words taken from the Tatar language (Flaker 1989: 129). Painters sought the ‘ur-iconology’ of the fine arts in archaic symbols. Larionov, a member of avant-garde groups such as “Donkey’s Tail”, promoted neo-primitivism. Kandinsky (1977: 18), discovered archaism on a research expedition to Vologda,



where he saw colourful popular art and decorations in the huts of farmhouses. Probably the most original thinker among modern artists, Kandinsky had been suspected of offering nothing but ‘regressive modernism’ in his early work in Munich (Möller 1994: 99ff.). It was overlooked that Kandinsky observed popular art in Siberia from a Western point of view, with the intellectual distance of an anthropologist. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that even popular kitsch intruded into his early painting, at a time when he was seen in his garden at Murnau in Bavarian lederhosen. The Bavarian popular glass paintings which Kandinsky praised proved to be highly artificial products, made not by farmers but by second-rate artists who had already turned to half-industrialized mass production (Glatzel 1975: 99ff.). Nevertheless the combination of glass and unmixed colours created completely new effects—useful for avant-gardists on their way to abstract painting. There was a parallel of schematic constructions of the space in the painting, a strange rhythmic juxtaposition of objects, unrealistic formulation of the topic and a blurring of the spatial construction. The survival of icons demonstrated a much closer link between archaism and modern ways of creating images than the rather artificial revivals in other countries. The connecting link was the ‘internal light’ in Russian art—opposed to ‘external light’ in Western painting.

The fashion for archaic memories of the past was short-lived. The First World War made rebelling against bourgeois society in this bohemian anarchical way an anachronistic enterprise. Picasso, who had been producing portraits in the shape of Iberian and African masks since 1907, had already overcome this search for historical memory when he discovered collage. He distanced himself from the former archaist period: “tout cela c’est du sentiment”, and Delaunay (1983: 133) burst through an open door in distancing himself from archaism and cubism: “We achieved an expressive art of painting, which overtook all the archaic and geometrical styles of the past”.

## 8.4 Archaism as a New Way to Artistic Nationalism?

Archaism and neo-primitivism began as the instruments of progressive art. But even their best intentions were absorbed by the budding “heritage industry” (Hartog 2003: 196). Each new discovery of archaic culture was included in the national heritage. Revolutionary modern art itself was quickly integrated into the dominant historical memory. When the cultural rearguard accepts the avant-garde, the avant-garde ceases to live up to its name.

The avant-gardes of the early twentieth century were mostly cosmopolitan. But the picture of cosmopolitan harmony in international networks was deceptive. The more underdeveloped a society, the more quickly nationalism in styles of art came to the fore—most aggressively in Russia, Spain and Italy. In the process of modernization, collective memories of the past were created by *identity politics*, but even in highly developed countries, with the exception of Britain, it was

unclear which past should be memorized. Countries with a revolutionary past had divided historical memories. Revolutions, *coups d'état* and *pronunciamientos* have changed the subject of memory several times, especially in France and Spain.

The visual arts seemed to be less affected by these latent cultural civil wars, but they were nonetheless affected or even deeply involved. The avant-gardists—even, later, the communists—were mostly anarcho-liberals on the left, and could not accept cultural memories of clericalism and authoritarian rule. But even in France the borderline between the right-wing thought of Barrès and the leftist anarcho-syndicalism of Proudhon or Georges Sorel became increasingly blurred. It was possible for former leftist futurists to end up in the Italian fascist movement!

Artistic movements were deeply influenced by contemporary intellectual and political movements. In the marginal countries of Europe, this led to the revival of a “special path” of history that deviated from the French and British models. Only Italy was happy to cultivate its historical memory of Roman greatness. Russia turned to her Asian roots in the Eurasian movement; Spain, with thinkers like Ganivet and Unamuno, to African or Arab sources in order to prove that its cultural development was different from that of the rest of Europe. All these ideologies were a combination of an inferiority complex before the ‘French’ or ‘British’ norms and a stubborn revival of the country’s own historical memory. Cultural memories of their own were not only meant to compensate for the lack of modernization, but were also used for the purpose of cultural imperialism—from Unamuno’s ‘Hispanization of Europe’ to spreading the deep religious concerns of the orthodox world into laicist European cultures, doomed to decay, and to Russian ideas of ‘orthodox religious and moral supremacy’. The German special ideology of a ‘legal state without democracy and parliamentary system’ was still comparatively civilized, and less far-reaching, at least before it became aggressive in proto-fascist ideologies; it even had some followers in other cultures, from Sweden (Kjellén) down to Italy in the movement *ritorniamo allo Statuto*.

The original momentum of archaism in Paris, the capital of modern art, was cosmopolitan and international. Avant-garde artists were a different matter from the old schools of art, which had frequently been dominated by a single country, for a long time Italy and later France—until the end of impressionism, divisionism and post-impressionism. Movements such as futurism, expressionism, constructivism and surrealism built international networks. There was close communication between different centres of art. Under Kandinsky’s guidance, the “Blauer Reiter” in Munich communicated with foreign cities from Moscow to Paris. Italian futurism tried to conquer the strongholds of British vorticism led by Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound, two North American-born residents of England. But only Christopher Nevinson became a true disciple of Marinetti’s. The futurists tried to conquer Berlin via the circle around Herwarth Walden, then the most influential promoter of modern art in the country, and hoped to find proselytes among the Russian futurists in St Petersburg and Moscow.

The very internationalization of artist elites, however, contributed to undermining its internationalism and pushed artists and intellectuals towards reactionary

revivals of historical memory even in the arts. In the cubist and surrealist movements, the most important figures were no longer French. From 1912, conservative politicians began to denounce modernism as *art boche*, or even ‘Jewish art’ by the ‘*canaques* from Lithuania and Russia’, who imposed exotic reminiscences of their past which had nothing to do with French cultural memory. The *School of Paris* was denounced as being no longer identical with the *French School*. Kandinsky in the ‘Bauhaus’, together with other foreigners like Moholy-Nagy, was denounced as a hidden Bolshevik and/or a Jew—both reproaches went astray—whereas his friend, the composer Arnold Schönberg, suspected Kandinsky of being just another anti-Semite, like so many artists in Germany.

### 8.4.1 Russia

In spite of many Russian declarations against the veneration of the past in the style of Marinetti, most Russian avant-garde artists were rather conservative before 1914 (Krieger 1998: 8). Even later revolutionaries like Tatlin began by venerating the painting of icons. The latent nationalism came to the fore at the moment when the international impresarios of artistic movements tried to ‘invade’ foreign territory. In 1914, when the Italian leader of futurism came to Russia, the Russian poet Khlebnikov declared “Today some natives and the Italian branch at the Neva for personal reasons will lie at the feet of Marinetti and this will be a first step to betraying Russian art on its road to freedom and honour, and will bow the gentle head of Asia under the yoke of Europe” (document in: Asholt/Fähnders 1995: 74). Again, the Euroasian idea distorted Russian cosmopolitanism among the avant-garde.

Christian Neoplatonism, under the influence of Neo-Slavophile thinkers from Solovyov to Berdyaev, was a strong intellectual current in Russian culture. Many avant-gardists were caught by nostalgia for ancient Russia, even before their emigration, as was the case with Larionov/Goncharova (2002: 291), who declared in a manifesto “Long live the national...we are against the West which levels down our Eastern forms.”

It was noteworthy that Western categories of ‘left’ and ‘right’ did not work in these marginal societies. Berdyaev was for a long time a kind of ‘legal Marxist’. In Russia the community-socialist tradition of the Narodniki, close to Proudhonist ideas in the West, had an impact in the nineteenth century on the Russian intelligentsia which did not stop at the doors of university rooms. “Primitivism of action” had been discovered and materialized by “turning to the people” and teaching them in the villages (von Beyme 2001: 86ff., 101ff.). The primitive art of the lubki was still approved under Soviet rule as a means of teaching the illiterate masses the messages of Communism (A. Kurella in: Gassner and Gillen 1979: 432). Sophisticated artists like Filonov in 1923 had some misgivings about ‘falsified lubki’. But nevertheless he was ready to use it for tactical purposes

(Filonov 2000; Mislser/Filonov 1992: 152). This demonstrated the danger of revolutionary adaptations of archaism for merely instrumental purposes. The artists, moreover, tried to expel the ‘devil’ of stylistic uncertainty by using the ‘Beelzebub’ of stylized adaptations, with no authentic acceptance of the virtues of historical memory in archaism and primitivism.

### 8.4.2 Mexico

The most marginal country of its time which played a role in avant-garde art was Mexico; it was not by chance that the Mexican muralists developed archaism into an ideology of Mexican memory of a great past. After the Mexican revolution of 1911, it was clear which past—and it was not the memory of the Spanish conquerors. The minister of culture Vasconcelos (1967), in office until 1924, could develop a whole ideology as a guideline for the iconography of muralists under a kind of ‘programme director’ like Toledano—a unique form of the promotion of avant-garde art in the twentieth century. This leverage went far beyond what the first people’s commissar for cultural affairs, Lunacharsky, was able to do for the Russian avant-gardists, who were highly suspected by Lenin. The great Mexican painters, however, were open to the two traditions of memories of the past. Orozco, in his painting ‘Cortés and Malinche’ (1922–1926; Malinche was the Indian mistress of the conqueror), still felt that Mexico was a merger of two traditions, whereas more radical politicians saw in Malinche nothing but an ‘Aztec traitor’. Orozco, in an early article of 1922/23 (in: Baqué-Spreitz/Orozco 1981: 288f.), on “The two directions of painting”, accepted national feeling in the arts, but each country had to contribute to the ‘universal tradition’; he considered it as a grave mistake if a revolutionary country remained restricted to the localism of petty popular art. But even in Orozco’s work, such as in “La Trinidad”, figures close to Soviet iconography—farmers, workers and soldiers—populated the murals, and the “cosmic race” of the mestizos was hailed as the synthesis of two cultural memories. Some European assistants, such as the French Charlot (1967: 149ff.), were stronger Mexican indigenists than the Mexican artists themselves.

Rivera, the best-known artist of Mexico, who trained in Paris under the impact of cubism, sometimes also recognized the synthesis of two cultural memories. But he divided it into “North America—Latin America” (1932), and the non-Indian North American culture did not simply display negative traits, as one might have expected in the work of a painter who was so anti-capitalist in his iconography in other works. This kind of cultural synthesis served the pan-American ideology and justified the work of anti-capitalist painters like Orozco and Rivera for American capitalists like Rockefeller. The more conservative Rivera grew, the more he became devoted to archaism. He owned 60,000 works of Aztec art and built himself a house in the ancient style. This would have been acceptable if only his art had not shown regressive traits. He developed an ethnographic interest in archaic

Indian societies and embellished the past in idyllic representations of Aztec history. He was even ready to falsify recent history in his famous ‘Alameda’ painting, when he put the slogan *Díos no existe* over the head of Benito Juárez, who was an anti-clericalist liberal but certainly not an atheist. The conflict between the two iconographic memories of Mexico was set in motion. The archbishop of Mexico denounced the godless painting, conservatives wanted to destroy it. Fortunately there was a law against vandalism—which did sometimes occur in the early days against Rivera’s paintings—and it served the protection of public property since the hotel was a public enterprise. Before it got a museum of its own it was hidden from the public’s eyes for many years.

Those artists like Siqueiros (1988: 206) who remained more radically communist than Rivera, who oscillated between a populist type of communism and Trotskyism, had some misgivings about the indigenist philosophy behind Mexican archaism. Siqueiros lamented that all the important painters had been caught by an ‘ethnographic mania’ and he later (Harten/Siqueiros 1995: 112ff.) called the synthesis of art, geography and ethnography ‘infantile’. Archaism was dubbed ‘archaeologism’ and he was right to see the danger of its ending up in folkloric paintings for American snobs.

The three giants of Mexican painting revealed interesting differences in their perception of historical memories in the arts: Orozco tried to represent the past in an adequate unharmonized way, Rivera did not avoid indigenist archaism, and Siqueiros went furthest in the Europeanization of Mexican pictorial history when he represented warriors fighting against Cortés in medieval armour in order to show that their defeat was unavoidable because of the asymmetry in weapons and equipment.

Under the influence of surrealism, Latin American artists such as Wilfredo Lam, Rufino Tamayo and Roberto Matta created a strong semi-abstract art which was more accepted outside Central America than the art of the great muralists. The Cuban Lam, with a mixture of Chinese and Black family roots, created archaic monsters which symbolized the suppression of the African Cubans under the Batista regime and combined this with traits of tropical beauty. His kind of archaism was used by the ‘Tricontinental Movement’, organized by Fidel Castro. But in spite of many advances made to the artist, he never became a mere fellow traveller of Castro’s type of tropical Stalinism.

### 8.4.3 USA

The USA under the New Deal programme was mostly dominated by indigenist memories of the past. Today it is hardly believable that a pioneer of abstract expressionism like Pollock could have painted in the style of ‘Go West’ in order to celebrate the yeomen at the ‘new frontiers’. The question was again asked: memories of which past? Rothko (2005: 204f.), who also had started with figurative

pictures, in around 1940/41 (in a recently discovered theoretical book) mocked American neo-primitivism and the impact of thinking in terms of ancient ‘myths’. He resented the fact that American artists would rather turn to Mexico than to France for inspiration, though Central America is hardly closer to New York than Paris. He dubbed this pan-American attitude in the arts a “transfer of the Monroe doctrine to the sphere of the arts”. The budding abstract expressionists like Barnett Newman (1996: 78), defended their abstract colleagues, like Adolph Gottlieb, who was harshly attacked by the press. Newman criticized the fact that when an American artist tried to be congenial to international art he was persecuted because he tried “to escape genre painting, and [was] fed up with localist pictures, mondaine primitives and airplanes”. ‘Mondaine primitivism’ was a metaphor for the surrealists, who had some impact on American art in their exile from Paris to New York. Nevertheless, Newman and Gottlieb corresponded about their fascination with pre-Columbian American art. They did not accept its symbols literally but rather as ‘eternal symbols’ which expressed basic psychological ideas, and did not just illustrate dreams as the surrealists did (Rothko 1987: 80ff.). Rothko (2005: 75ff., 188), sometimes criticized for his cryptic myths, was no enemy of rational modernity. He held that science, intuition and experience had to be combined in order to create an equivalent of the magic of primitive societies.

In the paintings of Tamayo and Gottlieb, Newman saw the development of a seminal synthesis of Mexican and North American art. But he made it clear that modern art in New York would not be promoted by ‘waving the American flag’, but only when New York—like Paris, which was full of non-Parisians—developed *internationally acceptable archaic symbols*. Nevertheless, American archaism also acquired political connotations in the era of fascism during the Second World War. Just as Gauguin’s neo-primitivism has been interpreted as an answer to vulgar Darwinism, the primitivism of American artists during the war was declared to be the anti-fascist answer to racial determinism in the Nazi doctrine (Varnedoe in: Rubin 1984: 667). Anti-racism as a counter-movement to Nazi racism had a unique chance. Even painters like Gottlieb, Baziotés and others who contributed to the exhibition in the Samuel Kootz Gallery in New York in 1946 “Homage to Jazz” had an additional historical memory of the United States available to them, the music of the black population. Many parallels were drawn between jazz and modern painting. Jackson (according to his wife, Lee Krasner) said “Jazz... was the only other really creative thing happening in this country” (quoted in: Mandeles 1981: 139). Thus archaism could go back to the ‘African memories’ of an American minority, and jazz was hailed as the new form of American cultural identity (Cassidy 1997: 150), combining memories of the past and visions of the lost polyphony in music and art, something already regretted by Kandinsky and Klee in the ‘Blauer Reiter’ in Munich.

A latent conflict with Europe was, however, not avoided: new tendencies such as the “art brut” of Jean Dubuffet, sometimes compared with American abstract expressionism, were discarded as ‘artificial’ and ‘pseudo-archaic’, like the masks in the early work of Picasso. True archaism had to turn to Polynesia—not a

new idea even in Europe. Terms like ‘magic’ and ‘myth’ were widely used, but hardly any more consistently than in surrealist texts. Liberation from Europe was mostly thought of as liberation from nature—but Europe had done this before. In retrospect, the archaism of the American avant-garde has been critically evaluated as an example of “failed narcissism” (Leja 1993: 329). After 1945, when America took the lead not only in world politics but also in art—described by the Frenchman Guilbaut (1983), as “How New York stole the idea of modern art”—self-conscious American artists developed their declarations of independence. But in many respects their justification for American priority via Indian archaism and rural primitivism was hardly less artificial than the borrowings of Picasso from the archaic memories of history.

#### 8.4.4 *European Democracies*

If the distant marginal countries were in danger of being affected by turning to archaism and primitivism in the name of nationalism, this does not mean that European democracies were free of such tendencies. In France the most prolific cubist writer, Albert Gleizes, combined praise of French Gothic art with lauding the Gallo-Celtic character of his country (Farr 1978: 213). Not even the arch-reactionary of French political thought, the monarchist Charles Maurras in his *Action française*, accepted this kind of ‘Gallicism’, but instead promoted the regional values of his homeland in Provence.

England followed the most ‘normal’ development and its political theory was even full of satisfaction about her development since Edmund Burke. Even the radical leader of the Vortex movement, Wyndham Lewis (1969: 31), came to the conclusion that “In England...there is no vulgarity of revolt. Or rather, there is no revolt, it is the normal state”. But though the country and her intellectuals were convinced of the superiority of their political system, there was a traditional inferiority complex towards France in matters of art. Roger Fry (1934: 23f.), one of the first promoters of a moderately modern art in Britain, complained of the absence of ‘grandeur’ in English art. “The Englishness of English Art” was discovered by the German-Jewish émigré Nikolaus Pevsner (1956). Some artists, such as Henry Moore (1992: 31, 35), were inspired by Norman-English art. But they were interested at the same time in the archaic forms of ancient Mexico, so that there was no question of nationalism. A theorist behind the Vortex movement, in some respects close to futurism, T. E. Hulme promoted the study of dissonances and asymmetries in Polynesian art in order to combine it with forms of modern technology. Only during the First World War, when the government mobilized many British painters as ‘war artists’, was there a danger of this leading to nationalism, not so much via ‘archaism’, but rather by representing the future by highly technical war machines. Only Paul Nash (2000: 3, 6), the foremost specialist in the representation of warfare, turned under the influence of surrealism to British roots by adapting symbols

from the excavations at Avebury. But he was critical enough to fight the extension of slogans such as 'Buy British' towards art as the motto 'Paint British'. He even opposed the widespread English inclination to do away with abstract art as a kind of 'continental error'.

The horrors of two world wars contributed to new waves of archaism. In surrealism it was combined with elements of the theories of psychoanalysis. Dubuffet (1991 I: 95), in search of *art brut* (he preferred the term '*art obscure*') asked again whether Europe should not learn from the 'wild people' and after 1927 frequently travelled to Africa. Again, this momentum was combined with a search for archaism in contemporary man, by promoting all art as 'deviant behaviour', from children to the mentally ill. The theories of this painter (who abhorred theories but nevertheless wrote prolifically) were close to what COBRA had in mind, a movement of the late avant-garde in the Benelux countries and Denmark which had suffered under Nazi occupation in World War II (named after the capitals: Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam).

The fascist regimes changed attitudes towards archaism. Increasing fear caused many artists to turn back to apocalyptic archaisms—from Picasso to Max Ernst. Among the rulers there was no clear attitude towards archaism. The most radical fascist modernizers opposed archaism in art—Hitler the Germanic Teutonism of Alfred Rosenberg, or Farinacci the archaism of the most prominent painter in Italian fascism, Sironi. Whereas Nazi propaganda in the campaign against 'degenerate art' in 1937 confronted modernists and archaic paintings with photographs of mentally ill and handicapped people, a new archaism was invented by the artistic resistance movements in Western Europe. Oddly enough the initial positions were reversed. The Nazis gave up the archaist propaganda which Rosenberg had launched before 1935 and turned to modern 'brutalism' in architecture and pre-modern kitsch in painting. Even the collaborationist Vichy regime promoted after 1940 a kind of 'French popular archaism'. The eminent painter André Derain, who had had a leading position in the avant-garde of the Fauves, turned to pictures of an archaic tapestry type. Other painters, like Picabia, chose instead conventional kitsch in order to survive politically and physically. Nevertheless charges of collaboration were brought against him in 1944. Archaism in the occupied countries was able to defend itself and to build up a counterforce in historical memories. Scandinavian archaism was opposed to the attempt by the Nazis to integrate the 'Germanic' peoples of the North into their racist empire. Free archaism thus entered the fight against the regressive archaism of Nazi mythology.

After the war this last avant-gardist opposition wave of archaism survived. The Danish artist Asger Jorn (1990: 159) emphasized the myth-creating force of art as a counterforce against intellectual exhaustion, but at the same time he fought against inspiration by 'dead mythologies'—hardly ever defining this term in a coherent way as to what type of myth was 'dead mythology' or whether he meant the creative adaptation of modernized myths. This time he wanted to make the people participate in the creation of art, an idea which Beuys later was to develop excessively ('everybody is an artist!').



## 8.5 Conclusion

Archaism and neo-primitivism have been the means of promoting modern forms of expression by images and of dealing with new concepts of space. It was certainly co-determined by the decline of Christian mythology in art in most of the works of the avant-gardes. In the cleaned-up world of the ‘new realism’ in the 1920s the ‘mother of god’ was replaced by an undefined archaism of the “purity of the shepherd’s wife” (Roh 1925: 24). A regressive archaism was also a danger to those avant-garde painters who stayed in Germany under the Nazi regime and took refuge in the style of the ‘old masters’ of Dürer’s time, even for someone like Otto Dix.

Only occasionally did most radical avant-garde artists turn back to Christian iconography, not in archaic forms but rather in symbols of modern technology that created angels who flew like aeroplanes. Italian futurism under the fascist regime was not able to rid itself of the religious element of nationalism and jumped on the bandwagon of Mussolini’s reconciliation of state and church in the manifesto “Arte sacra futurista” (Marinetti 1968: 174f.), which claimed that only futurists were able to represent the flight of angels and saints in an adequate manner and without recourse to archaism.

Archaism as a representation of the historical past undoubtedly had a progressive function in the development of art. But, as in other fields, the role of the avant-garde was politically ambiguous. Archaism could easily be converted into regressive forms of memory of the national past and lose its original cosmopolitan impetus. Archaism and the neo-primitive were more than a transitory fashion. They were employed in several waves from cubism to surrealism and by various post-avant-garde movements as a pictorial revolution, to express human and political anxieties in a world of growing unrest, wars, emigration, and abuses of the arts in the interests of power (Table 8.1).

Originally neo-primitivism was not regressive because it was combined with ultra-modern technological elements. Technological innovations, however, made neo-primitivism increasingly obsolete once Picasso abandoned it around 1912. The next step in innovation was achieved by the development of the collage in the works of Braque and Picasso: the *collages and assemblages* of Duchamp and the Dadaists, the *photomontages* by Russian Archaism and *neo-primitivism as passéisme for the future*.

Constructivists and German leftist artists such as Heartfield, Grosz and Hausmann might display some elements of former archaism, but on the whole they were in the idiom of technologically-minded modernists. The art of the ‘Documenta’ in Kassel and of the ‘Biennale’ in Venice is full of First and Third World examples of ‘neo–neo-primitivism’, if there is painting at all. The problems raised in the historical debates about archaism and neo-primitivism as an instrument for representing collective historical memories in a contemporary way, however, have not been solved but abandoned for new discourses.

Table 8.1 Theories of archaism and exoticism

Countries	France	Italy	German-speaking countries	Jewish artists	Russia	Mexico	USA
Theories of synergy of archaism and modernity	Lévy-Bruhl Breton Gleizes	Carrà Soffici	Worringer Freud K. Einstein Seligmann W. Paalen Kandinsky and Polyphony	Aronson M. Buber Machmadim Zemach Leo Steinberg	Shevchenko Khlebnikov Kruchnych archi-ology	Vascon- celos	Newman Rothko Mother- well
Anti-archaism Travelling exoticism	Delaunay Gauguin Matisse	Marinetti	Macke Klee Nolde Pechstein	Soutine	Kandinsky in Vologda	Later Siqueiros	Pollock Selig- mann in Canada
Archaism as survival	Vlaminck Cubists Surrealists Brancusi Art brut Dubuffet	Macchiai-oli Marini Soffici Magnelli	Blauer Reiter Glass pain-ting Marc Kirchner	Chagall Max Weber J. Adler A. Segal Brauner	Lubki, icons Kandinsky Goncharova Larionov D. Burlyuk Filonov	Aztec art Orozco Rivera Tamayo	Gotlieb Baziotes Rothko
Long-term memories	Ancient art of "Gaul"	Etruscan	Late middle ages man-ner-ism, Kirchner, Beckmann	Books and art against Jewish or- thodoxy	Ancient Russia	Mestizo culture	Indian, negro culture jazz
Nationalist temptation	Vichy ar-chaism Derain Gleizes	Nove cento under fascism	Quietism of inner emi-gration (Altmeist-erlichkeit)		Neo-lubki in war propaganda Malewich	Archaeo- logism late Rivera	Regiona- lism in the 30s and 40s

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# Chapter 9

## Capital-Building in Post-War Germany

### 9.1 Introduction: The Change of National Representation in Architecture

The erosion of the old *societas civilis*, civil society, and the separation of art and politics is a process that has been going on since the Italian renaissance. But the functional subsystems of art and society continued to mutually strengthen their acceptance by the whole of society. Architects as a rule served an *art of power*. Only occasionally, in revolutionary times, did they demonstrate the *counter-power of the arts*. Democracy hoped to reach a balance between power and art through a communication free from power, as Habermas would call it. Experts and juries have replaced the power to decide exercised by rulers and fulfil the function of *mediation between the subsystems of art and politics*.

Capital cities in Europe developed in pre-democratic times, and so democratic mediation in measures for capital-building remained undeveloped. But even in democratic periods, the use of the arts in state representation preserved pre-democratic features in the four elements employed by state rulers:

- historical painting,
- monuments to former leaders and great national events,
- architecture in capital-building, and
- the employment of symbols, emblems and flags in national ceremonies.

The symbols used for the legitimation of power have developed historically in a sequence of paradigms:

- The first step towards limitation of power used to be the *legal state*, promoting equality before the law.
- Great monuments of the legal subsystem of power are the palaces of justice which stand in the centre of capitals like Paris or Brussels. In decentralized Germany, their equivalents were located in a decentralized but nevertheless ostentatious way: the Imperial Court in Leipzig (Reichsgericht), and now the more modest Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe.

The *national state* developed the idea of equality between citizens who were united by language and history. This was expressed in national symbolism mainly through history painting and monuments. Female incarnations of the nation were placed in city centres, such as ‘Marianne’ in France and ‘Germania’ in Germany, though Germany really preferred to display them on mountains, not without a demonstrative gesture towards the ‘arch-enemy’, at that time France, as in the case of the Niederwalddenkmal near Rüdesheim above the Rhine. Only nations which were very insecure in their existence could ruin a whole city centre by a monstrous monument like the ‘Vittorio Emanuele’ in Rome, dwarfing the buildings of the Roman Forum.

The national state with its equality between citizens was not able to keep to legal equality. Soon the *democratic state* with universal suffrage and equal participation was added—in many European countries, not before the end of the First World War in 1918/1919. Democracy was not easy to represent. In general, revolutionary forebears were used to symbolize it; an example from Germany was the holding of the revolutionary parliament of 1848/1949 in a church, the Paulskirche, in Frankfurt. More frequently, history painting served as a symbol of democracy, as with Jacques-Louis David’s ‘Le serment des Horaces’ (The Oath of the Horatii 1784) or Delacroix’s ‘Freedom leading the people’ (1831).

The consequence of equalization was that equal citizens with voting rights discovered their inequality in social matters. The *welfare state* had to be added to the political achievements and it was represented in the proliferation of social buildings from hospitals to the ‘dwelling cathedrals’ of new developments on the periphery of capitals, sometimes on the old pattern of castles, as in the ‘Römersiedlung’ in Frankfurt, or Britz in Berlin or the tower blocks in Vienna which became a kind of model for Communist capitals from East Berlin to Moscow. Precursors of welfare were represented even in painting, from Antoine-Jean Gros’s ‘Napoleon visiting the plague-stricken in Jaffa’ (1804) to Chodowiecki’s ‘Death of Prince Leopold of Brunswick while trying to save drowning citizens’ (1785). Variations on Christian iconic symbols such as the ‘Feeding of the five thousand’ were frequently used in the search for symbols of the welfare state.

History shows that the dualism of ‘efficient parts’ and ‘dignified parts’ of the constitution which Walter Bagehot constructed in the nineteenth century does not mean that the efficient parts are always the most efficient parts and the dignified parts are only symbolic politics. The preamble on reunification has been ridiculed and quite a few politicians would have liked to drop it, but in its utopian character it proved to be the most efficient part of the constitution at the moment when reunification had a chance and the majority of the West German elite still wanted it—which might not have been the case 20 years later.

Democratic state representation in the capital was in a dilemma, especially in lands without continuity of statehood in Germany, and where political symbolism hinted at an entity which no longer existed, ‘the German empire’. Which of the four principles of legitimation of modern rule should artists emphasize? The development of modern art by the avant-gardes of the twentieth century led to

abstract modes of painting which despised concrete historical events as subjects to be represented. The iconographic elements of symbols, emblems and flags were increasingly used as a way out, together with the rather abstract tapestry or mosaics used in some parliaments, from Stockholm to Brasilia. The representation of former monarchs in the arts laid claim to ‘eternity’. Modern democracy lives under conditions of short-lived media casting. The *mise en scène* of rule only rarely reminds us of the state banquets of former kings. Occasional meetings in rural areas between Mitterrand and Kohl, displaying a kind of ‘sauerkraut diplomacy’, demonstrated the decline of state representation as much as those on Bush’s farm in Texas, where a woman Chancellor like Angela Merkel had difficulty in matching the degree of informality of the American president in his quasi-cowboy dress.

## 9.2 The Reluctant Capital: Bonn (1949–1991)

All these historical changes in national representation affected the way Germans tried to build their capital cities after 1945. Many architectural symbols of national representation lay in ruin, many symbols of national glory were no longer acceptable. Germany even had to revise her national anthem and stick to the last verse of the ‘Deutschlandlied’ that hailed ‘unity, law and freedom’, all of which the Germans had lost. *Rien ne dure que le provisoire*, nothing is so enduring as provisional arrangements—a saying the French coined for the failure to create one constitutional text in 1875. The Germans quoted this frequently when they tried to settle in Bonn, a small city dubbed by the British ‘a restaurant on the Rhine where parliament meets’ and despised by many Germans, who thought that Bonn was chosen because the first Chancellor, Adenauer, was not yet in 1950 powerful enough to offer his village of Rhöndorf, near Bonn, as a capital. In reality there were, however, several options such as Karlsruhe or Koblenz. The American military governor Clay, advised by our colleague Carl J. Friedrich from Harvard and Heidelberg, would not accept a city in the French zone. North Rhine–Westphalia was the biggest of the artificially created new Länder. The cities of Düsseldorf, Cologne and Bonn in this area were examined. Bonn seemed to suit—though the Americans would have preferred Frankfurt. But that city had a bad reputation among the Catholic politicians of the Rhineland as Protestant, ‘red’, and unruly. The final decision between the alternatives involved bribery (though the first committee of investigation in the post-war German parliament found no evidence of any money having been paid for votes) (Deutscher Bundestag 1. WP., Drs. 3274: 23, 67,6, 1951 5849 C 4, Der Bundesminister 1989: 20). This was also the result of all later investigations into corruption (Lockheed scandal etc.).

The partisans of a future capital in Berlin in their ‘bad luck’ had the ‘good luck’ that little Bonn finally won with a majority of seventeen votes (mostly from the post-Communists). Frankfurt had already started to build a parliament



building, later used by a radio station, and this proved to be a bad move in the competition because other areas resented this 'fait accompli'. If Frankfurt had made it, the German capital after reunification would certainly have remained in Frankfurt, and 40 years of lip-service in favour of a future capital in Berlin would have been in vain. In 1991, the nascent capital of Berlin was Frankfurt's revenge over Bonn.

Poverty was the main argument against the representation of democracy in public buildings. Schwippert (1947: 18), nominated by the American forces in Aachen on the Western border as the first head of the construction office of a great city at the end of 1944 announced "First we need cleaning brigades in the three fields of ruins: in the ruins of the city, in the ruins of the soul and the ruins of the spirit of the Germans." Even the modest use of Bonn's former teacher training institute in the town with its self-image of 'Sparta on the Rhine' was sometimes criticized as luxury, and the carnival river boat parties sang the popular song 'Wer soll das bezahlen? (Who's going to pay for all this?)' when they passed the construction site. More often, however, the modesty of the building was criticized. The architect Schwippert (1951: 70), when asked for more representative features, refused bluntly. "Maybe in the future when politics has proved to be a success we will build in a more representative way", he said. The new Bundestag was democratic only in its style, not in the way it was accomplished without authorization. The architect originally planned a 'rotunda' to represent the idea of a democratic dialogue in parliament. Adenauer vetoed some of these plans, but even he had to accept that deputies and their secretaries got the same type of uncomfortable 'democratic' chairs in their offices (Adenauer 1985: 46; Schwippert 1951: 70). On the whole it was recognized that the German Bundestag was the "most modern and most modest parliamentary building in the world" (40 years, 1989: 64f.). Democracy in state architecture was identified with transparency and this demanded huge windows. Adenauer (Mensing/Adenauer 1985, vol. 3: 46) abhorred the plans for a 'glass box'.

Bonn as a capital was handicapped in its planning by jealous opposition to the move away from the provisional character of the capital. The construction of the Ministry of Defence (the people of Bonn dubbed it 'Penta-Bonn') aroused vehement criticism in the whole republic. In 1956, the Bundestag imposed a ban, which remained in force until 1963, on the construction of all public buildings (Höroidt 1983: 28). The most important executive functions, such as those of the federal Chancellor and the federal President, were housed in old villas ('palaces' would be an exaggeration) quite unsuited to this new purpose. Oddly enough, the provisional character of the Bundestag changed overnight when reunification became imminent. In 1987 the hall for the plenary sessions was torn down. It was decided by a narrow majority (178: 174) to return to the circular arrangement of seats, as Schwippert had originally planned in 1949. This helped to avoid quarrels about which party should sit farthest to the left—since the Green Party had entered parliament as a fourth party and claimed to be to the left of the Social Democrats, and the Liberals refused to sit next to deputies in 'jogging shoes' in the centre.

There was some good new architecture in Bonn, but only in churches and other buildings for public use, and in the ‘garden cities’ of the suburbs. The federal buildings are considered mediocre and cannot be offered as proof that good architecture and good politics are identical. The new Chancellor’s office was somewhat unrepresentative. The people dubbed it ‘the insurance company’. A lonely skyscraper for the deputies (‘long Eugene’, named after the parliamentary president Eugen Gerstenmeier) was built by one of the best-known German architects, Egon Eiermann. Although it has some architectural merit, it does not fit its garden city surroundings. The headquarters of the political parties remained in provisional buildings for a long time, with the exception of the Ollenhauer house of the SPD. Some groups even preferred to stay in other cities like Cologne and Düsseldorf.

In the 1970s, when more lasting solutions in Bonn seemed possible, the goal in the capital, Bonn, was to combine the preservation of the traditional baroque character of what the bombs had left of Bonn, while also answering the federal government’s need for modern functional architecture. Torn between these poles, Bonn as a capital was mostly a permanent “non-decision”.

With the building of the wall in Berlin and the de facto recognition of the GDR as a second German state by Chancellor Brandt’s government in 1971, planning for Bonn ceased, being conducted mostly in secret. A competition for the planning of a capital was held. A committee of architects and city planners including Paul Baumgarten (reconstructor of the Reichstag), Sep Ruf (architect of the Chancellor’s office), Eugen Eiermann (the building for the deputies) and city planners such as Rudolf Hillebrecht (the rebuilders of the city of Hanover) made secret plans for the buildings in Bonn. Strangely enough there was never a general parliamentary debate in 1970s on planning for a capital city, though everybody was quoting Adolf Arndt’s famous pamphlet *Democracy as a patron of architecture* (1961: 29), which called the buildings surrounding the Bundestag the “most miserable sin committed since 1945”. He was not able to foresee that more miserable architecture was to follow later.

In 1970 under Brandt there were new initiatives for new ministries. When Schmidt replaced Brandt in 1974 he was unhappy with the plans and asked for ‘intellectual and art-oriented concepts’. In 1975 an ‘Agreement for a capital city’ (*Hauptstadtvereinbarung*) was drawn up, which for the first time tried to include citizens in the process of planning (Krüger 2006: 183, 194). In an architectural competition in 1973 for a new parliament and a building for the deputies, Behnisch, the celebrated architect of the Olympic stadium in Munich, won first prize with plans for a “cheerful building in the tradition of the Olympic games” (Behnisch 1992). In 1984 the council of parliamentary aldermen in the Bundestag nominated Joachim Schürmann as planner, partly to rid themselves of the extremely expensive rents for public offices (Flagge 1992: 240). The much-hailed skeleton of the building was inundated and ruined by the flooding of the river Rhein. The Berlin lobby hailed this event as ‘God’s judgement’. The minister, Irmgard Schwaetzer, claimed that she took responsibility but was not to blame for this disaster. The accident nevertheless cost her job in the long run. Under Kohl, there was a new attempt to make Bonn more attractive as a ‘cultural capital’. A

federal art gallery and a ‘House of German History’ were built. In the 1980s, Bonn was subsidized with 1.34 billion Deutsche Marks, in the 1990s with 1.2 billion. At the same time, Berlin was being subsidized. In the 1980s, half of the budget of Berlin was financed through the federal budget (Krüger 2006: 258).

The process of capital-building was halted by the breakdown of the GDR and the renewed attractiveness of the old capital of Berlin. Bonn was not a model for the second capital Berlin after 1991. Bonn stood for a history of half-hearted measures. The small majority in Parliament which decided that the capital should be transferred from Bonn to Berlin showed that the West Germans, in spite of the miserable town planning, had become accustomed to the little capital on the river Rhein. When this author wrote a pamphlet in favour of Berlin (von Beyme 1991a, b), it was circulated by the publisher Unseld (Suhrkamp) to all the deputies. Only one, the SPD shadow minister for construction, Peter Conradi, wrote “You have convinced me, though I still have many problems with Berlin”. This conversion was not decisive. Seventeen votes of the followers of the GDR state party (SED), PDS, finally decided the fate of Bonn.

A happier coexistence between democracy and architecture is to be found in some of the capitals of the federal Länder. Sometimes old castles were restored (Wiesbaden, Mainz, and with some new additions, Hanover). More rarely, completely new parliament houses were built in the 1950s, as in Bremen and Stuttgart. Whereas most Länder remained appropriately modest in their architectural ambitions, many cities were seized by megalomania for their Rathäuser (town halls), which dwarfed the neighbouring old city, as in Bonn, Göttingen and Kaiserslautern.

### **9.3 The Capital Which is Always Budding: But Never Exists in a Sustainable Way: Berlin Since 1991**

Three functions of the capital had to be strengthened by the planners:

- services for the population, which in the Eastern parts lagged about 30 years behind;
- the political functions of the capital;
- functions for a cultural centre in Germany.

In financing the capital of Germany there is a paradox: Bonn received much more money from the federal budget than Berlin, but West Berlin was financed abundantly as long as it was simply the window of Western democracy, surrounded by Communist territory. More than half of the budget of West Berlin was financed by the central state in the 1980s. Kohl, the Chancellor who as a former historian and political scientist was unusually open to reunification, had always invested in a future capital in Berlin and promoted the restoration of the Reichstag and the building of a Museum of German History. When the transfer of the capital to Berlin happened, Bonn was rewarded by 2.9 billion Deutsche Marks for the transition, more than it received in subsidies in forty years (Krüger 2006: 259).

Moreover, certain ministries and public organisations such as Deutsche Telekom and the German Postal Service remained in Bonn. Seventeen years later, there is a movement to concentrate all public functions in Berlin because the ‘tourism of officials’ between the two de facto capitals costs the federation an enormous amount of money. Bonn began a ‘beggar-thy-neighbour’ policy because of impending poverty in the Rhine valley. The opposite happened: Berlin as a capital was not able to attract much industry and remained a poor state near the Polish border, permanently pressing for subsidies from the federal budget. The Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, began a campaign to insert the financing of the capital into the constitution, and some journalists promoted the idea of transforming Berlin into a ‘federal district’ like Washington DC in the USA.

Berlin, as soon as it became the capital, was never so lavishly financed as Bonn, which received 10 % of its city budget from the federation. Things changed:

- there is less public money available;
- Berlin—allegedly—does not need to be embellished as a new capital because it has enough impressive buildings which survived or have been restored;
- moreover Berlin, with three opera houses and many museums, was always a cultural centre, something which Bonn never became, despite all the subsidies.

### 9.3.1 *The Infrastructure of the Capital*

Berlin has always consisted of two cities: first Berlin and Neukölln, then East and West Berlin, and since 1949 Berlin the capital of the GDR and West Berlin. Moreover Berlin, in East and West, is unique in its traditional suburbanization—many people never leave Pankow or Zehlendorf (Tendenzen 1994: 81). So, after seven o’clock in the evening, the centre of the national capital city, Berlin, is still a desert, without urban life—even Friedrichstrasse, which used to be the incarnation of a lively urban centre in international architectural literature. When Ernst May and other German architects built new cities in Siberia in the 1930s, disappointed Soviet experts commented on the models ‘But where is your Friedrichstrasse?’. Urban life remained decentralized: in the West around Savigny Platz in Charlottenburg, in the East around Prenzlauer Berg.

A modern town for citizens is not yet to be seen. The town planner responsible for Berlin, Hans Stimmann (1995: 405), has declared that no new centre on the lines of Paris’s *La Défense* is planned for Berlin. A new central station has been built and has been open for two years. Initially planners were afraid it would be too empty. This is why the former railway station at the Zoo in Charlottenburg was closed to rapid trains. In the meantime, the new station was accepted, but no new urban centre is developing, despite the many creative visions of ‘governing above a pizzeria’ promoted by urban writers. The ‘Sinful Babylon’ around other big stations such as Frankfurt and Hamburg, with their prostitution and bars, cannot be planned but will have to grow on demand.

Road projects in the new capital proved to be the main source of dispute in the debate about the ecological renovation of the city. The plan for a tunnel under the Brandenburg gate was dropped, together with the transport minister Irmgard Schwaetzer. The railway tunnel under the river Spree was implemented for the new central station.

There was not even an appropriate airport for the new capital. Tegel was too small and too close to the city, so that the inhabitants complained about the noise. Schönefeld, used in the GDR, is still not yet complete. Important time was lost over planning a megalomaniac airport south of Berlin.

### *9.3.2 Political Representation in the Capital*

Germany was not really prepared for reunification. Only a list of abbreviations for the licence plates of German cars was available as preparatory planning work, despite so much rhetoric in favour of reunification (which was even a demand of the preamble of the Basic Law). But in general planning was, as usual, a non-decision. Bonn's policies had left vast vacant spaces in West Berlin between Potsdamer Platz and the Brandenburg Gate for a proposed new quarter to house government buildings. The building of cultural institutions was foreseen in a possible new centre across the wall between East and West in Berlin. On the whole, even the historical centre of Berlin in the East resembled a frozen desert; there, individual new buildings of the GDR like the 'People's Chamber' (parliament) and the Foreign Office stand in the open space created by the demolition of the Stadtschloss (imperial city palace). In the meantime, most of these buildings have been torn down, the exception being the 'State Council Building' of the GDR, containing one big doorway of Schlüter's baroque palace, because it was the place where Liebknecht tried to launch a socialist republic.

In the meantime, the Bundestag opted for the restoration of the palace for mixed use by museums, the Humboldt University, and archives depositories. The restoration campaign was initiated by private donations and many small contributions. The model was the rebuilding of the 'Frauenkirche' in Dresden—originally attacked by many experts, but now hailed as a successful combination of rebuilding and restoration of the old parts of a building which was a pioneer of Protestant church building in the age of the Baroque. A private initiative even reconstructed a fake façade of the palace, in order to convince the politicians that the old silhouette of Berlin was essential for the capital.

Berlin tried to study the building of capital cities in a comparative way. It was found that there was never complete harmony between the national and local centres of a capital, with the exception of artificial new capitals far away from historic centres, such as Canberra and Brasilia. Even the 'District of Columbia' did not create a lively local city centre very quickly (US Capital 1983). In spite of L'Enfant's planning on a huge scale, the elegant quarter of former embassies north of the White House deteriorated to a slum, and south of the Mall a quarter containing ministries and hot dog stands did not create a lively urban centre.

Berlin has the advantage that the Rotes Rathaus, the ‘red town hall’, remains highly visible within the local centre. We do not know, however, what will happen when the Länder of Brandenburg and Berlin merge and the new state transfers its capital to Potsdam. If we compare Berlin with other capitals, we could say that the coexistence of local and national institutions does not work in Washington, hardly works in London, and is perfect only in Paris (Hauptstädte 1992). The political centre of Berlin is most like Whitehall, a highly dense transitional area. But Berlin does not offer the attraction of Westminster, west of the political centre. The tourist attractions in West Berlin, in Charlottenburg, are far away and separated by a huge park, the ‘Tiergarten’, which is inviting for picnics and rallies, but not for cultural life. One former city centre of East Berlin, around the Alexanderplatz, so famous in German literature, is still a heterogeneous conglomerate. Plans by the architect Kollhoff to reconstruct this square threaten to create a new ‘architecture of intimidation’.

One common heritage of the plans of East and West in Berlin was the abandoning of the post-war ideology of a ‘loosely structured and dispersed city’. The first chief town architect, Hans Scharoun, had the crazy idea in the late 1940s of revitalizing the ancient geological formation of the river Spree (*Urstromtal*). Critics like Jobst Siedler commented “This restoration of a prehistoric landscape in the city would mean the appointment of Neanderthal Man as the chief city planner” (cit. Kampffmeyer 1985: 1897). Later the paradigm changed. The British device of ‘low-rise high-density’ was accepted by the general city planner Hans Stimmann. He was also heavily criticized for his ‘Prussian classicism’, not allowing houses taller than about thirty metres or five storeys and preserving the traditional roof structure and small individual facades. This was hardly compatible with the administrative structures responsible for capital-building. Germany tried to expel the devil of state economy in East Berlin with the Beelzebub of a para-state super-institution called *Treuhand* (trusteeship), responsible for the distribution of many construction sites. This institution was interested in large buildings in order to attract big investors more quickly. A great number of ‘cosmetic facades’ was the result: behind small individual facades were located huge firms and institutions (Spiegel-Streitgespräch 1994: 50). In the early 1990s, there was an ideological war between the ‘modernist internationalists’ and the ‘Berlin faction building in old-fashioned stone’.

The international comments of experts were not favourable. The French architect of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Dominique Perrault, called it ‘homespun sterile architecture’. Responsible for this provincialism was the legend that the Berlin senator responsible for construction tolerated a ‘mafia group’ containing some local celebrities such as Josef Paul Kleihues, Jürgen Sawade and Hans Kollhoff. The opposite was true: no other city has employed so many (about 150) foreign architects as the budding new capital of Berlin. The counter-argument was a petty counting of commissions: Helmut Jahn was only awarded eight projects, but the local matador Kleihues received thirteen. The projects were, however, only counted rather than weighed: the more prestigious commissions were taken over by foreign architects. Some of them, like Philip Johnson, grudgingly accepted

the restrictions of the city of Berlin, though he would have preferred to build skyscrapers (Schwilk 1995: 61). The legend of an ideological civil war between a 'provincial Prussian mafia' and the 'pioneers of enlightened modernism' was misleading: German architects were completely divided in this conflict. There were even three factions, oriented towards classical Bauhaus modernism, post-war modernism, and postmodernism (Stimmann 1995: 405). Oddly enough, most of the participants had one early prophet whom they oriented themselves by: Friedrich Schinkel, the most famous classical architect of the early nineteenth century. His buildings were partly destroyed, not by the bombs, but earlier by megalomaniac city planners, as in the case of Berlin's neo-baroque cathedral, built on the site of a smaller Schinkel church. Schinkel himself did not respect older architecture if he saw a chance to replace it by a new work of his own. Not by chance did one of the main early historians of art and architecture call Berlin "the city always budding, but never existing in a sustainable way" (Karl Scheffler).

The critics forgot that the ban on skyscrapers in the old city had existed in Paris and London long before Berlin took a similar measure. Moreover Berlin proved to be flexible: at the new-built centre of Potsdamer Platz, the size of buildings was restricted in order not to dwarf the surrounding cultural forum; at the eastern centre, Alexanderplatz, however, no such restrictions were envisaged. Post-war architecture in Berlin used to be a conglomeration of unconnected solitary architectural masterpieces. But a whole city needs a structure. That was one of the reasons why even former leftists saw no alternative to Stimmann's rigid city reconstruction (Hoffmann-Axthelm 1994: 13). They were afraid that the unconnected highlights would leave the public disoriented and that the confusion necessitated replacing 'marketing' by 'urban communication'.

After reunification, Berlin needed 200,000 new apartments, but in 1993 only 10,000 were built and in 1994 only 15,000 (Banghardt 1995: 450). One huge complex, the so-called 'Serpent', was constructed for the deputies, but most of the apartments were not rented by politicians.

The lack of money for new buildings has saved the life of certain Nazi buildings (such as Göring's former Air Ministry) and GDR institutions such as the State Council Building or Staatsrat, which was preserved and contains one of the main entrances to Schlüter's palace, in memory of the Communist leader Liebknecht who tried to launch a 'socialist republic' in the early Weimar Republic. The rest of the castle was destroyed in 1950 by the Communists in their hatred against 'Prussia', though hardly any Prussian king had ever lived in it. The state council building will serve as a congress centre for the government.

Safety considerations came to the fore in an age of increasing terrorism. Barring the North-South lane, an idea discussed in the Chancellor's office in order to increase the safety of this building, would have reinforced a belt north of the city, something which, according to expert opinion (Fischer/Bodenschatz 1992: 95ff.), should be avoided as much as any memory of Speer's axis for the Nazi capital of 'Germania'. Nazi architecture was identified with neo-classicism and sometimes a totalitarian style was even physically constructed, the main examples being the two pavilions of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia confronting each other at

the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. Monumental classicism had therefore to be avoided or smoothed down in a postmodern way, as in the case of the Chancellor's office.

The most vehement discussions developed around the new Chancellor's office on the banks of the river Spree. Axel Schultes, who was comparatively unknown and had built only one important work, in Bonn, won first prize. The SPD expert for architecture, Peter Conradi (1995: 9), called this model a 'dark mausoleum'. The second prize, for Oswald Mathias Ungers, a well-known architect, was called 'a pseudo-classical design with distance-creating imperial gestures'. Bernd Niebuhr's model for a city house on the island in the river Spree was even dubbed 'the Central Prison of Atlanta'. The Chancellor's office was a postmodern building with some merit because of its variety of open and close parts, change of transparency and massive monumentality. Because of its huge round window it was popularly known as 'the washing machine'. The normal verdict 'too big' proved to be wrong. It is not big enough to house all the officials of the Chancellor's office. The building has many incomprehensible details. In the entrance area, trees grow out of columns with no supportive function—bordering on architectural kitsch. The architect Stefan Braunfels, who was once a vehement critic of the megalomaniac 'State Chancellery' for the state government in Munich, turned likewise to monumental monotony in Berlin in the so-called 'Alsen Block', an office building for the deputies (Bartetzko 1995: 27).

Not only was the government transferred, but also other representative institutions like the headquarters of political parties and the embassies. The two major parties built rather spectacular headquarters buildings at some distance from the government centre. Only Russia had inherited the GDR–Soviet embassy with its Stalinist style in Unter den Linden. Japan and Italy were able to modernize their buildings which were in a fascist style dating from the 1940s. The USA was very upset not to get a free-standing building on Pariser Platz, next to the Brandenburg Gate, where Britain and France had to integrate their embassy buildings into the skyline of the representative ensemble. The USA created a building which was meant to remind people of their old, pre-1933 embassy. Criticism was harsh: a kind of 'Bunker Hill', a 'mixture of hysteria and nostalgia': narrow windows (apparently for safety reasons), cheap materials, mediocre design. Criticism took the building for its country: the decline of American design, no great architects any more since Gehry, Meier and Eisenman. The retro look of American cars seems to be reflected in America's architecture (Maak 2008: 25).

### ***9.3.3 Cultural Representation of the Capital***

Political representation no longer creates an aura. The Chancellor's office is hardly popular. German planners dreamt of Canberra where, in a little town with little amusement, parliament became a centre of art exhibitions and cafeteria excursions. In Berlin, the cupola on the Reichstag, which houses the German



parliament, unexpectedly became popular—and is a spectacular democratic counter-monument to Speer's plans for a megalomaniac dome in his planned Nazi centre of the capital Germania. There are huge queues every day and the documentation centre is not just used by the mandatory visits by school groups. The postmodern citizens like political institutions in an intimate way and find even satirical treatment acceptable. When Christo wrapped up the Reichstag, the politicians were divided. Only a small majority accepted the plan. The success of the project was enormous: millions of visitors benefited from the carnival mood around a political building.

If an aura is demanded, political elites rarely have the courage to offer a building of political representation. Cultural buildings have occupied the place of architecture with an aura. Only isolated monumental buildings were built in this area by an elite of international architects, like Mies van der Rohe (the National Gallery), Hans Scharoun (the Concert Hall), and James Stirling (the Science Centre). Later cultural buildings were less noteworthy, such as Rolf Gutbrod's Museum of Decorative Arts and the 'Art Gallery' at the cultural forum. The art gallery was built even though it was made clear that after reunification the 'Museum Island' in the Eastern centre should concentrate all the major museums. The sculptural museum in the meantime has been transferred to the Bode Museum on the Museum Island. The 'New Museum' on the Museum Island, still under reconstruction, deliberately presents itself not only in the main staircase, but also from outside, with an unembellished 'look of ruins'. What was meant as a memorial to the disaster of war and the modesty of the new Germany is sometimes already seen by the people as a scandal (Jürgens 2008: 18). The chairman of the foundation 'Prussian Cultural Property', Hermann Parzinger, defended this solution with good reasons, as a highly intellectual compromise between 'brute imitation' and completely new architecture (Rauterberg/Wefing 2008: 49). Only in rare cases, however, did architectural additions such as the glass construction of the Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei for the historical baroque 'Zeughaus' of Schlüter find universal approval.

Nevertheless, the separation of two cultural areas—in the West near Potsdamer Platz, in the East on Museum Island—is unsatisfying (Heikamp 1994: 305). The major art gallery (Gemäldegalerie, now near Potsdamer Platz) will be transferred to the Museum Island. But even better solutions—still being discussed—such as the transfer of certain museums to the old palace when it is rebuilt will not create a 'Louvre', and even London has no complete concentration of all the major museums. But a division of functions, such as between the British Museum and the National Gallery within walking distance of each other, could have been feasible. The chaos of decentralized decision-making has not created a more convincing solution.

The forthcoming rebuilding of the palace is meant to serve various purposes, under the name 'Humboldt Forum'. Some planners even want to preserve the GDR parliamentary chamber, which was eliminated because of damage to the building. The most important museum for paintings, the 'Gemäldegalerie' near Potsdamer Platz, should be sited, according to the chairman of the foundation

‘Prussian Cultural Property’, next to the Bode Museum of Sculpture, which has already been restored. It was especially important to concentrate all the museums which were located far away in the West in the suburb of Dahlem, hardly accessible for foreign visitors (Rauterberg/Wefing 2008: 49; Kilb/Maak 2008: 33). Some people aim to create a new national symbol with the reconstruction of the imperial Berlin City Palace. Others, with more modest targets, envisage only a multifunctional cultural centre; they trust that the missing enthusiasm for the idea of reconstruction will grow, as happened in Dresden with the rebuilding of the ‘Frauenkirche’, finished last year and attracting huge crowds since. Architects are normally vehemently opposed to reconstruction. This is understandable in the light of their profession. In the case of the palace, they accept reconstruction only grudgingly. But there is no harm done: they do not oppose the reconstruction of Schinkel’s famous ‘Academy of Architecture’ (Bauakademie), dating from 1836, because there is a chance that the Organization of German Architects will reside at this historical place in the future. A sponsor donated twenty million Deutsche Marks so that the building, destroyed by the war, reconstructed by the GDR, and torn down again in 1961 as an ugly public building, can receive its “moral rehabilitation” (Illies 2008).

## 9.4 Conclusion

Berlin is better than its reputation. The critical remark by the American architect Liebeskind—who built a wonderful Jewish Museum in Berlin—that Berlin is transforming itself into a ‘new Teutonia’ in the tradition of Albert Speer’s planning for Hitler, was unjustified. The chaotic disorder with plenty of space left and the anti-traditional behaviour of so many citizens, combined with an interesting cultural life, makes Berlin attractive to international elites—more so than Paris, but less so than London.

Berlin’s preference for a classicist style is not—as sometimes suspected—post-fascist, but rather East European, if we compare it with Eastern capitals such as Warsaw, Vilnius, Prague (Czernin Palace) and St Petersburg. As early as Diderot (1968, vol. 1: 1968: 661), austerity was thought to fit republican traditions. In Berlin, however, it was meant to be typical of monarchical traditions, such as ‘honour, mildness, and gallant self-representation’. Republics have changed: they now want to be joyful and not austere. The political class has become self-referential and is increasingly incapable of mobilizing the masses, except in certain populist campaigns. Therefore, the elites try to appear ‘responsive’ to the wishes of the people. The values of ‘grace and carefreeness’, originally attributed to monarchs, now become the values in the moods of republican self-representation.

What is democratic in architectural representation? Most frequently, ‘transparency’ is mentioned. The dome above the German parliament made of transparent glass seems appropriate. Citizens can watch their deputies from above. But they remain distant. Too much transparency would disturb work. Democratic buildings

want to be pluralist and decentralized. The forum with the Chancellor's office and the building for the deputies are still too monumental in this respect and hardly invite the citizens to seek contact with politicians. The simple system of pavilions, such as the Chancellor's pavilion in Bonn, proved to be only possible in a provisional capital.

Capital-city builders and patrons of political architecture now meet with self-confident architects, somewhat aloof from political life and no longer subservient to the political elites. Economic institutions offer rather more rewarding patronage for architects. Most of them no longer need politicians. This is one of the reasons why architectural representation does not lead to a coherent style, but rather creates individual works of art in an incoherent pluralist society: 'representation without obligation', as a German philosopher called it (Marquard 1994: 90). Media offer more and cheaper political representations than architecture. Democracy as a patron of the arts cannot offer a unified concept, and there are no longer periods of a predominant style in postmodern architecture.

The representation of democratic values—which was tried in Schinkel's 'Neue Wache', a little temple on the main street, Unter den Linden—caused vehement debate. Finally, an overly big replica of Käthe Kollwitz's 'mourning mother' was installed—because Chancellor Kohl preferred it. Most controversial was the monument to the memory of six million murdered Jews. The location—next to the Brandenburg Gate—was certainly not 'clean'. Underneath used to be Goebbels's air raid shelter. None of the firms contributing to the construction of hundreds of columns was 'uncontaminated'. Degussa, which provided the 'anti-spray protection', had in the Nazi period produced Zyklon B for the gas chambers at Auschwitz (Naumann 2005: 46, Leggewie/Mayer 2005). Other persecuted groups, such as the Sinti and Roma, resented the fact that they were not mentioned, and even Jewish experts disagreed with each other, as the quarrels between Lea Rosh and the architect Eisenman have shown. Chancellor Kohl was against the massiveness of the monument, as he had formerly fought against the use of 'concrete' for the Chancellor's office (Wefing 2001: 156).

Even the emblems of the state are no longer universally accepted, as the conflict over the Eagle in the German parliament has shown. Self-representation of the elites is carried out by the media rather than by the arts. Germany has problems with its national identity, and we should not expect that this fact can remain secret in the architectural setting of the capital in Berlin.

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**Maximilian von Beyme [Max Beyme]** studied political science, history and economics in Munich and Paris. Since 1993 he has worked as a freelance journalist for several German TV networks in Berlin. Looking to his journalistic work, he reflects in his paintings the narrative strategies of modern media. He therefore scans digital media for forgotten pictures and stories to reprocess them in the old-fashioned analogue medium of canvas.

## About the Book

Klaus von Beyme is a distinguished German political scientist and recipient of the Mattei Dogan Award for Political Science (2012). On his eightieth birthday, this book addresses political culture, cultural policy, art and politics. The first part, on transformation theory, looks at “Historical Memories in Political Theories”, “Historical Memory in Nation-Building and the Building of Ethnic Subsystems”, “The Concept of Totalitarianism—A Reassessment after the Breakdown of Soviet Rule”, “Political Culture—A Concept from Ideological Refutation to Acceptance in the Soviet Social Sciences”, “Institutions and Political Culture in Post-Soviet Russia” and “Political and Economic Consolidation in Eastern Europe. Evidence from Empirical Data”. The second part, on cultural policies, addresses “Why is there no Political Science of the Arts?”, “Historical Memory and the Arts in the Era of the Avant-garde: Archaism and Neo-Primitivism as a ‘Passéisme for the Future’”, and “Capital-building in Post-war Germany”.