

# Multiple pasts, converging presents, and alternative futures for the European Union\*

Heikki Patomäki  
University of Helsinki  
heikki.patomaki@helsinki.fi

## Introduction

The European integration process has channelled the multiple and often conflictual European pasts into converging presents. The project of the European Union has been about overcoming centuries of violent intra-European conflicts between militarily suspicious or ambitious sovereign states and empires. In the 1990s and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this project seems to have succeeded, at least to a sufficient degree, in creating a European security community that is essentially linked to its North American counterpart, at least for the time being. The EMU, symbolized and united by a single currency and central bank, includes the majority of EU member states. The EU has also generated significant elements of political community and efforts are now being made to formalize them in a constitutional treaty.

There are, however, many possible futures for the EU. Accordingly, the relationship of inside and outside of the EU can evolve in a number of different ways, with varying effects on its future borders and its economic, foreign and security policies. In this article I will introduce four simple “snapshot scenarios”, leaving to an extent aside a systematic analysis of the possible causal processes that could bring them about. Broad descriptions of these processes will have to suffice to outline the key choices that lie ahead in our historically and structurally conditioned paths to alternative futures.

The time-horizon of these scenarios is not particularly long. I am intentionally omitting exploration of longer-term possibilities in order to focus on current tendencies and processes. Many of the components of alternative European futures are already partially present. It is a necessary feature of action that, at any point in time, the agent can choose an alternative course of action. The point of this article is to shed light on the way we, as Europeans, are now making history by our own actions.

*Scenario 1: The EU evolves as a neo-medieval political community within the US-led capitalist world economy*

Many have maintained that the European political community in the making is qualitatively different from the territorial sovereign states. They have asked whether the process of European integration, coupled with changes in the capitalist world economy, is

---

\* The title of this article has been inspired by List (2004).

leading to the emergence of non-territorial spaces and multi-perspectival and pluralistic politics where authorities are overlapping and loyalties divided.

For instance John Ruggie (1993, pp. 143-144) has encouraged scholars in this field to ask “whether the modern system of states may be yielding in some instances to postmodern forms of configuring political space”. Very often these kinds of postmodern spaces are conceptualized in terms of a new medievalism. The term “new medievalism”, which refers to “a system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalty”, was introduced by Hedley Bull. Bull (1977, pp. 254-255) contended that “if [neo-medievalism] were anything like the precedent of Western Christendom, it would contain more ubiquitous and continuous violence than does the modern states system”. However, Bull failed to analyze the connections between the dynamics of capitalism, the development of technology and the emergence and transformation of social spaces.

My first snapshot scenario focuses on emergent non-territorial economic spaces of investment decisions and transnationalized systems of production and exchange. Any given state tends to appear as a mere constraint in corporate regional and global strategic calculations. This model also summarizes the somewhat gloomy world scenario of many journalists, futurologists, science fiction writers and sceptical (or cynical) postmodernists. Elements of this model can be found in Martin & Schumann’s (1997) journalistic best-seller *The Global Trap: The Assault on Democracy and Prosperity*, which envisages development of a global “one-fifth society”, where four fifths of humanity is kept content with some material relief and “tittytainment”. Others can be found in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*, as well as in the spectacle-like *Batman* movies of the 1990’s, in which the US-style metropolises, decorated with monuments of post-modern architecture, have not only become obsessed with new technologies of construction and destruction alike, but also plagued by rampant violence and corruption as well as pervasive class divisions. Indeed, the postmodern condition, internally related to flexible and intensified commodity capitalism, may in itself generate violence. It can be argued that when subjects – already reduced to the condition of subjectivism – feel swept along by irresistible forces of permanent revolution in the relations of production and consumption, they may well resort to nihilism (Dean, 2003, pp. 36-37). Pauline Rosenau’s (1992, pp. 138-144) cynical post-modernists may thus be very much part of the picture. Cynical postmodernists can at best see something worthwhile pursuing in the

ironic) violations of modern conceptions of normalcy, at worst in the acts of insanity, terrorism, violence and insurrection.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the non-territorial social spaces in this model are very exclusive. Access to them is based on positions in the hierarchies of corporate, state, or international organizations, as well as on transnationally valid credit ratings<sup>2</sup>. Overlapping centres of power co-exist with a generalized sense of powerlessness, insecurity and chaos among large segments of the population, particularly in the less well-off parts of divided cities. Divisions may also assume the form of cultural clashes and involve apparently senseless violence. Whereas the US may in some respects already approximate this model, the EU is following suit. As in Harvey's (1990, pp. 310-311) picturesque description of the *Blade Runner*, there are also scenes of "punks and scavengers roaming among the garbage, stealing whatever they can" in the "decrepit landscape of deindustrialization and post-industrial decay"; and in other locations where "architectural designs are a postmodern mish-mash" and "simulacra are everywhere", there is a chaos of (commercial) signs, all sorts of people and languages.

Yet, even this model, the myth of a centre may be alive, at least in part, thus enabling the reproduction and representation of some of the core states as "sovereign" and legitimating the partial – to the limited extent that states are able to control migration – exclusion of non-citizens. In the case of the EU as well, there will be insider-citizens and the outsider-foreigners, although the lack of substance in the prevailing forms of European citizenship is likely to blur the line between being inside or outside. The EU institutions, nevertheless, constitute a kind of centre.

The partial novelty of this world is evident in the practices of security. In this scenario, security means hyper-technologically produced and exclusionary law and order in certain districts and spaces of inter-connected multicultural cities as well as security of the productive, commercial and financial spaces that are spread all over the planet. Manuel Castells (1989, chapter 5) speaks of the transition from the urban welfare state to the *suburban warfare state* in his analysis of the development of the US since the 1970's. In the 1980's, the largest peacetime military build-up ever seen was justified by "the old conservative justification for the strength of the state as the rampart of national security

---

<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the path from the anxiety of radical scepticism to religious "fundamentalism", whether Christian, Islamic, Hindu or whatever, may be very short. It is a well-known paradox of radical scepticism or nihilism that it has no counterarguments against absolute truths or goodness. Radical scepticism implies that claims based on absolutist notions are as good or as bad as any other arguments. Also from a sociological point of view, the postmodern condition, nihilism and fundamentalism are closely connected. Anthony Giddens (1994, p. 85) argues that fundamentalist "defence of tradition only tends to take on the shrill tone it assumes today in the context of detraditionalization, globalization and diasporic cultural exchanges". "This is why fundamentalist positions can arise even in religions (like Hinduism and Buddhism) which have hitherto been very ecumenical and tolerant of other beliefs." Like radical scepticism, fundamentalism is a form of incapability of engaging in global dialogue with different others, of recognizing them as subjects. However, fundamentalisms always draw their plausibility from perceptions of the legitimacy of prevailing social relations and processes. If social relations are widely seen as unjust or otherwise illegitimate, and as sustained by violence, they tend to generate hatred, which can be articulated in fundamentalist terms, particularly in the absence of plausible alternatives.

<sup>2</sup> The credit rating market is controlled by US American transnational corporations. For analysis of the role and power of credit rating in global governance, see Sinclair, 1994; and its role also in surveillance, discipline, and exclusions of individuals, see Gill, 1995, particularly pp. 27-38.

and the guardian of domestic law and order” as the main motto *for economic restructuring*. The end of the Cold War and the Clinton years softened these tendencies, but did not reverse them. The massive military build-up continued in the 1990s and has again been intensified in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. This kind of technology-driven defence policy has had significant effects on urban and regional structures. Militarily, the traditional weaponry has become in many ways obsolete. Now,

[...] if the state succeeds in finding and utilizing new information technologies, it could dramatically improve its power by gaining a performance edge over its rivals, and by making possible flexible use of military force adapted to a diversity of geopolitical situations. (Castells, 1989, p. 262)

The US has indeed consistently aimed at widening its performance edge over its rivals. In this scenario, the EU is in fact more postmodern than the US; the *de facto* distinction between the inside and the outside of a political community has been partially blurred. Nevertheless, the EU may also be increasingly drawn into the neo-imperial interventions and practices now being orchestrated by Washington. The EU will not become an autonomous superstate or superpower, but it takes part in the operations initiated and led by the US. Moreover, although the military capabilities of the EU continue to be subsumed under NATO structures and US hegemony, it may also assume a semi-independent regional sphere of independent influence, including engagement on its own.

Apart from cultural deep-structures, the causes of these neo-imperial tendencies are largely economic. During the long downward economic phase of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the US has attempted to solve its economic problems – including excess production capacity, declining competitiveness, and underconsumption at home – by systematically opening up markets elsewhere for the expansion of US-based actors on their own terms, and by channelling world-wide financial flows for its own particular uses, such as military consumption and private consumption of upper strata of its society. (See e.g. Martin 1994; Maynes 1999; Patomäki, forthcoming) This has been made possible by the increased financial dependence of many states (e.g. due to the debt problem); by the divide-and rule-policies of the powerful (e.g. the US-led attack on all horizontal multilateral forums of the dependent states from the global south), and by global re-regulation that aims at ensuring free trade and free markets wherever it suits powerful states, yet sustains protectionist and cultivates monopolistic practices in other areas. The EU used to be a junior partner in this but has assumed an increasingly active role, going sometimes further than the US.<sup>3</sup>

As an unintended result, the growth of the world economy has come to a halt. There has been no genuine per capita economic growth in the world economy for 15-20 years.

---

<sup>3</sup> In their massive study of global business regulation, Braithwaite and Drahos (2000, p. 27) summarize one of their main findings: “The US has been by far the most influential actor in accomplishing the globalization of regulation. Today the European Commission is beginning to approach US influence. When the US and the European Commission can agree on which direction global regulatory change should take, that is usually the direction it takes.” Perhaps the main reason for the failure in the Cancún WTO summit in 2003 was the EU’s determination to force the new Singapore issues onto the WTO’s agenda despite opposition from the developing countries.

Since the mid- or late-1980s, growth in one part of the world has meant economic decline somewhere else.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, many weaker states in the global south have been on the verge of collapse. This has co-caused humanitarian disasters, massacres and wars. (See Nafziger & Auvinen, 2003) Giving the aim of securing productive, commercial and financial spaces that are spread all over the planet and the related globalist redefinition of security and defence doctrines, there is a constant call for military intervention, often on humanitarian grounds. The real reasons to intervene always involve other aims as well, such as securing property rights, acquiring control over natural resources, opening up potential markets, geopolitical and military calculations of relative power, and other similar interests. The combination of widespread economic decline, on the one hand, and economic and humanitarian interests to intervene militarily, on the other, opens up a space for Western neo-imperialism. Once established, the neo-imperial conceptions and processes are unlikely to change, even with an improbable long-term economic upswing. Some of the occupied territories may become (quasi-)formal dependencies.<sup>5</sup>

In this scenario, the “postmodern” EU is playing a role of a subordinate partner in global neo-imperial practices. Normative legitimization will be partially replaced by mere simulation of endless media-images of threats of violence and senseless terror and the consequent precautionary actions of security apparatuses. Despite the multiculturalism of the urban centres in particular, there will be a widespread perception of threats of violent civilizational clashes in the context of upspeeded ICT-based networks of destructive capabilities, mostly controlled by the Pentagon, but regionally also by the evolving organs of the EU. An armed attack on the territory of the EU by other states is losing credibility as a threat scenario. Instead, there are perceptions of threats of occasional terrorist attacks, possibly with weapons of mass-destruction, as well as threats of popular unrest and uprisings in certain areas, perhaps in the manner of the *zapatista* movement, which at one point declared a fourth world war against global neoliberalism.<sup>6</sup> Samuel Huntington’s (1993) famous thesis about the clash of civilizations is an attempt to reterritorialize and securitize some of the conflicts of the post-Cold War global political economy. Yet, for Huntington, “the West versus the Rest” is not simply a spatial struggle between a distinct “here” (the West) and an identifiable “there” (the Rest), but a cultural and spatial struggle that occurs *everywhere* (Tuathail 1996, p. 247). Therefore, this scenario conceives of movements of people and differences of cultures as internal security threats inside the EU as well (cf. Huysmans, 1995).

---

<sup>4</sup> The 2004 Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (2004), which was set up by ILO, includes, to my knowledge, the first official recognition of the problematic impact of globalization on economic growth. By globalization the report means liberalization of trade, finance and investments. Figure 10 on p. 36 shows that the growth of world GDP per capita was 4% in the 1960s, 2% in the 1970s, 1% in the 1980s and 1990s, and declining. This is a rather optimistic interpretation, however. Freeman (2003) argues that in constant dollar terms growth in fact vanished entirely in the late 1980s. Per capita world economic output in 2002 was essentially the same as in 1980 and slightly less than in 1988. For an explanation, see Patomäki, forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup> Should the military occupation of Iraq end up in a defeat as humiliating as that of Vietnam, the neo-imperial tendencies will be considerably weakened, at least in the absence of developments with contrary effects, such as simultaneous wars elsewhere or further erosion of democracy in the US. As far as the latter is concerned, Emanuel Todd (2003, p. 19) believes that although liberal-democratic institutions remain formally in place in the US, at least for the time being, *de facto* the US has already become an oligarchic state.

<sup>6</sup> See *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 1997. It is also possible, however, that these kinds of movements of resistance will gain control over state apparatus, thereby creating another pariah state on the international scene, along with its attendant “security dilemmas”.

Moreover, connections are made between terrorism, drugs, crime, delinquency, border surveillance, fighting against major trafficking, and controlling illegal immigration. An enlarged “public security” agenda is thus an important part of the picture. The tendency to blur the distinction between police and military security is getting stronger (Bigo 1998). New powers are being given to the internal security apparatus, developing new surveillance technologies, particularly networks of information technology. Non-territorial spaces, overlapping authorities and divided loyalties (whenever any loyalties remain) may thus co-exist with a securitized panopticon in Europe and worldwide. In the early 2000s, the EU is constantly moving in this direction in response to terrorist attacks, such as those in Madrid in March 2004, and other similar problems of “instability” and violence.<sup>7</sup>

*Scenario 2: The EU becomes a new territorial state and superpower in the context of eroding systems of global governance and neo-imperial tendencies*

A modern state has been characterized by its ability to defend itself against the outsiders, particularly against other states, by force if necessary. The original six members of the EU attempted to create a defence union already in 1954, without having the social and political basis for a defence community. Their plan failed in the French parliament. As Johan Galtung (1973, pp. 105-6) put it at the time of the first enlargement of the EEC, “it is rather obvious (in retrospect!) that such a Defense Community could not come into being without a Political Community”.

The Maastricht Treaty was, among other things, an official admission that there is a European political community in the making. In 2004, this political community is being further formalized in the pending constitutional treaty of the EU. Fifty years after the failure of the plan to construct a defence union, it may well be possible that the EU is in the process of becoming a superstate, with a clearly defined centre and borders that separate it from the outside. Is it also possible that one day it will define particular other states as its enemies, giving rise to new security dilemmas? Is it possible that the EU will also assume a status of a global superpower, with military capabilities as far-reaching as those of the US today?

In my second scenario, the EU will become a new federal, territorial state and a superpower, in line with Galtung’s analysis. According to Galtung (1973, pp. 18-32), periods of deepening integration and enlargement will follow each other until the EU becomes a federal superstate and a superpower with an economy whose resources match with those of other superpowers. Today the only competing superpower would be the US, while China may be catching up. Japan, Russia and India have more limited global

---

<sup>7</sup> In the aftermath of the 11 March 2004 attacks in Madrid, Bertie Ahern, speaking as President of the European Council, declared that “in the context of the European Security Strategy and reviewing the 2001 Plan of Action on Terrorism, the Presidency will bring forward a revised Strategy to combat terrorism. This will identify high-level priority objectives, covering all aspects of EU activities in this area. A Comprehensive Implementation Plan will follow, which will identify key tasks under each objective, specific achievable targets and the EU bodies responsible for delivery.” EU Council press release, 2004.

ambitions and/or capabilities. The point of the European integration process is to reverse the catastrophes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the intra-European world war of 1914-1945 and the subsequent Cold War, which made Europe a mere theatre for extra-European powers, Europe lost its position as the centre of the world and was humiliated. According to this scenario, the project of the European Union has always been, and will continue to be, about building structures of peace and unity within Europe in order to become more powerful in the rest of the world.<sup>8</sup>

The main contrast to the first scenario is that in this scenario the EU will not be content to remain a mere junior partner of the US. The European elites will assume that the EU will have to become as powerful as the US, as capable militarily, as willing to use its capabilities in order to demonstrate its agency and to make a real difference in the world. As Javier Solana (2003, p. 2) puts it in a paper that was adopted by the European Council at the 2003 Thessaloniki summit:

As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), the European Union is, like it or not, a global actor; it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security.

Solana's vision may in fact be much closer to the first scenario than this second scenario of the EU as a countervailing superpower. What is critical, however, is that the almost self-evident point of comparison is the US and its global power projection. The aim of Solana and European heads of states is to make the EU resemble the US. However, by becoming more similar and equal, the EU would also become more separate from the US, possibly with far-reaching consequences. A global military reach requires not only rapid deployment forces but also rapid reactions and decisions, implying the need for centralized political institutions. This will necessitate a strong political community, defined in part in terms of its (potential) enemies and its ability to defend itself against outsiders, including other military alliances. Simultaneously, internal violence and securitization may also push the EU towards increasing centralization.

The legitimization of the process of building a new territorial superpower must stem, at least in part, from the idea of European civilization, which is represented as more cultivated, more pluralist, and more just than that of the US. In this scenario Europe is discursively placed not only *against* its internal and external enemies but also *above* the rest of the world, which is assumed to be less civilized. Despite variations in concrete details, this is how Europe has usually been articulated since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (see Delanty, 1995). In the next 10-15 years, US unilateralism and arrogance may – particularly in the context of future trade wars and other likely crises – trigger or

---

<sup>8</sup> Understood in terms similar to those of Galtung's analysis, the European project has been discussed by others as well. Christopher Booker and Richard North (2003, chapters 1 and 2), for instance, document in detail how this notion – of making Europe rise again by uniting it – emerged in the aftermath of the First World War. They explain how this idea was discussed and adopted by liberalists, socialists and, although perhaps more ambiguously, by the fascists and Nazis alike. Various European intellectuals and politicians criticized the perpetuation of Europe as a patchwork of nation states and supported the idea of a single market, a single currency, and uniform policies within the framework of a European federal structure. These ideas were advanced by such federalists as Altiero Spinelli, who also contributed to the Draft Treaty on European Union (1984) later in his life; see Pistone 1994.

accelerate the process of creating a European counterbalance. Galtung (1973, p. 104) anticipated more than 30 years ago a division of labour between the European left and right in which “the left takes care of smearing the US, the right uses this to safeguard its military, political and business interests from US penetration”.

In terms of political economy, this scenario is more contradictory than the first one. While situated in the same context of neoliberal globalization and the long downward phase of the world economy – and later, in the unlikely event of a new upward swing without global-Keynesian reforms, its aftermath – there are two main reasons why, in this scenario, the EU should also come up with European solutions to sustain or reinforce aspects of welfare state institutions or recreate them at the European level. Firstly, Europe’s nascent centralized political institutions must gain widespread legitimacy. This legitimacy cannot be granted by Europeanized elites only but has to come from wider segments of European society. In the postwar period, social welfare benefits have been the most important way to acquire mass loyalty and political “stability” in Western Europe (Habermas, 1976). Although the EU remains more egalitarian than the US, which has returned to early 20<sup>th</sup> century levels of inequality, the EU is following suit. The representation of Europe as more cultivated, more pluralist, and more just than the US is not credible unless there is clear supporting evidence in everyday practices. Secondly, perceptions of the counterfactual consequences of the overtly restrictive fiscal and monetary policies and welfare cuts may become more widespread due to increasingly sluggish growth, despite twenty years of sweeping neoliberal reforms. The view that these reforms have in fact contributed to European economic troubles may well gain ground (for an argument that they have, see Boltho, 2003).

At the same time, however, it is proving difficult to sustain or reinforce welfare state institutions. Apart from the self-imposed constitutional restrictions, the structural power of transnational capital and finance makes it difficult to alter current economic policy (see Gill, 1997, pp. 215-30). This is also the result of past decisions and actions: the EU has been furthering the freedom and rights of transnational capital and finance. Many of the pathologies of neoliberal global capitalism – such as counterproductive attempts to export unemployment, while other countries are undermining these efforts by doing exactly the same, and related rivalry over competitiveness by making the territories of states more attractive to financial and productive capital – are very real also within the EU. Moreover, the standard neoliberal principles are part and parcel of the Economic and Monetary Union. For instance, the difficulties to meet the convergence criteria of the EMU indicate some of these fundamental contradictions. The anti-growth bias of the EMU is also a reason why the euro may not be able to challenge the dollar (Cohen, 2003, pp. 584-8).<sup>9</sup> It is not at all clear how the EU could overcome these contradictions by mere technocratic steering of the European single market with the few available instruments, without radical revision of its neoliberal constitution and policies.

---

<sup>9</sup> The US is struggling to keep US dollar as the main currency of world trade and finance. It has been suggested that this was also one of the two main reasons for the military occupation of Iraq (Clark 2004). Iraq decided in November 2000 to switch its oil export revenues from dollar to euro and in 2002 there were serious discussions in Iran and even in OPEC to adopt the same policy, which involves replacing dollars with euros in their currency reserves. The consequent likely crash of dollar would have caused a major financial and economic crisis in the US.



The more the EU alters its basic orientation and policies, the more distance it will take from the US. US unilateralism may also trigger rounds of tit-for-tat policies. The prolongation of the long downward spiral of the world economy may lead to a rapid deterioration of US-EU relations, particularly in the context of a sudden economic crisis.<sup>10</sup> Both may also begin to build new military alliances, particularly with China, India, Japan, Russia and other larger states.

### *Scenario 3: The EU disintegrates*

There are two main reasons why the EU may disintegrate in the next 10-15 years (and possibly even earlier). The first is the incompatibility of the first two scenarios. If the political will to become stronger and more autonomous gathers momentum within the present eurozone, and particularly within the original six member states, they will face the resistance of other members. Some member states seem loyal first to the US, second to the transatlantic alliance, and only third to the Union. If the UK and the new Eastern European members block further deepening of integration and attempts to revise the neoliberal constitutive treaties and policies, it is likely that the EU will disintegrate, partially or completely. I leave aside the currently ambiguous role of Italy; that may well change as quickly as the role of Spain did early in 2004.

The second reason why the EU may disintegrate already during the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a general, overall legitimacy crisis of the EU. Neither mere negative peace in Europe nor the Monnet method is sufficient to ensure the legitimacy of EU as an increasingly centralized political community (Patomäki, 1997, pp. 183-91). The Monnet method assumes that political loyalties and identities and beliefs in legitimacy follow the transfer of technical, economic and welfare functions from the nation-states to regional and international organizations. This is neither inevitable nor irreversible. A crisis of legitimization based on Hobbesian peace and technocratic functionalism alone is not only plausible but, in the longer run, perhaps likely, not least because of the difficulties to sustain or reinforce welfare state institutions, or to make the EU democratic in any meaningful sense (*ibid.*, pp. 200-203).

These two main reasons for disintegration may coalesce. The British and the Eastern Europeans elites tend to follow a harder line in their neoliberalism than do their continental European or Nordic counterparts. They seem disposed to block most attempts to form collective policies aimed at creating elements of a European welfare state. If the new superstate and superpower is seen to presuppose collective European measures to sustain or reinforce at least some social welfare measures, it may be easier to deliver them without the British and the Eastern Europeans. The internal legitimization problems

---

<sup>10</sup> A sudden economic crisis in the US could, in part, be caused by a switch from dollar to euro; in part it may also trigger such a switch. Should Wall Street and the dollar decline rapidly in importance, the US would quickly face: (i) the consequences of the difficulties of continuing to roll over the accumulated debt; and (ii) the spectre of the return of the dollar stock from all over the world, which could cause a major currency crisis and/or inflation. (See Gowan, 1999, pp. 73-74). The EU might well become a scapegoat for the US economic troubles, leading to accusations and demands that the Europeans may find impossible to accept.

may well translate into a project of creating a Union of “two speeds” whereby the troublesome countries are marginalised or excluded from the political community proper.

This choice may be painful. Disintegration would mean that the EU’s aggregate resources would be diminished. Aggregate resources may or may not imply real transformative capacity depending on the context, but resources can normally be translated into making claims to power and prestige. Partial disintegration could also aggravate the internal legitimization problems of the Union. Thus far, the legitimacy of the European project has rested, to a significant degree, on its success in widening its scope and strengthening its grip while peace and relative welfare have reigned in Europe. Although the aim behind creating a system of “two speeds” or something equivalent may ultimately be to create a European superstate and perhaps also a global superpower, doing so may risk the integrity of the Union. The US can use this dilemma – and the loyalty of some member states – to employ divide and rule tactics vis-à-vis the EU.<sup>11</sup> The continental European elites may thus be facing a chronic dilemma which they would muddle through until something happens that will decide the future course of the EU. A cynic might even ask whether they should hope for trade wars and other serious crises that could trigger or accelerate the process of building a “true balancing power in the world”.

*Scenario 4: The EU cultivates its sui generis character as a political community and develops its agency in the context of global social-democratic reforms.*

In the fourth scenario, it is assumed that the EU can also build identity and agency by playing an active role in reforming global governance. This scenario may seem somewhat more distant from the actual practices of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century than scenarios 1-3, but like them, it is also based on existing real tendencies. A number of sociologists are discussing Ulrich Beck’s theory of reflexive second modernization in Europe (see Beck, Bonss and Lau, 2003; Latour, 2003; Lash, 2003), according to which many actors are questioning, in different contexts, the meaning and value of modernization. This on-going social (meta)process, which is a result of a number of unintended consequences of the first modernization, is also contributing to the democratic cosmopolitization of European citizenry. Global civil society actors and cosmo-political networks are to a large extent based in Western Europe.<sup>12</sup> Many movements in Europe are calling for new institutional responses to the risks and threats created by the processes of the first modernisation, which, though originally European, has now become global.

---

<sup>11</sup> Narcís Serra (2004), one of the first civilians to serve as minister of defence in Spain after Franco, argues that the “Letter of Eight”, in which eight European countries, led by Great Britain and Spain, published an open declaration supporting the US stance on Iraq in late January 2003, “was in fact an American initiative which the Spanish government hastily adopted and championed to the end. It followed the disdainful comment of the US secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, about the division of the continent into an “old” and a “new” Europe – the latter corresponding to those who favoured the US’s new security doctrine. [The division of Europe] is not a *result* of the Iraq war, but rather the *goal* sought by the ultra-conservative architects of American foreign policy. They have thought for years that a unified Europe would become a counterweight too powerful for the policies they aspire to implement.”

<sup>12</sup> One indicator is that 60 per cent of the secretariats of international NGOs are based in the EU and one third of their membership is in Western Europe. Another is that over half of all parallel alternative summits have taken place in Europe. Anheir, Glasius and Kaldor, 2001, p. 7.

On the basis of concerns characteristic of reflexive modernization, a number of European philosophers and political theorists have been trying to articulate new ethico-political conceptions and post-national institutional models for regional and global governance. In some EU member states as well as in the European Parliament, these networks of intellectuals, NGOs and political movements have been able to shape the agenda of discussions and, in some cases, albeit thus far with rather limited success, also influence decision-making.

In my fourth scenario, the EU will focus on developing its identity, agency and capacities mainly as a civil power. This means that the EU will resist the securitization of political issues. As Ole Wæver (1996, p. 106) argues, securitization “is characterized by dramatizing an issue as having absolute priority. Something is presented as an existential threat: if we do not tackle this, everything else will be irrelevant [...]. And by labelling this a security issue, the actor has claimed the right to deal with it by extraordinary means, to break the normal political rules of the game (for example, in the form of secrecy, levying taxes or conscripts, limitations on otherwise inviolable rights).” The securitization of the global economic order tends to imply exclusive safety in certain districts of multicultural cities as well as law and order in the global economy. This means securing property rights and controlling sources of raw materials and energy through the flexible use of global military force. Moreover, an enlarged ‘public security’ agenda at home is an equally important part of the securitized global political economy.

Desecuritization means a move (back) to civic rules of the game. Sometimes this may suggest among other things diplomacy as communication and mediation between different political communities, perhaps in a multilateral context. Typically, however, desecuritization involves creating space for democratic world politics. Thus, in this scenario, the energies of the European project are channelled to finding new transnational forms of democracy both in Europe and globally. In this scenario the distinction between the inside/outside is partially blurred; here also, the authorities are overlapping and loyalties are divided. This model is akin to the more optimistic or “affirmative” interpretations of post-modernity, but can also be thought of as a possible outcome of the transformative politics of transnational political movements.

In this scenario, membership in the EU will be relatively inclusive, based on new definitions of universal human rights and citizenship that acknowledge them as historical and ambiguous. From one perspective, this kind of EU can be seen as manifestation and fulfilment of critical and post-structuralist ethico-political visions. For instance, Jürgen Habermas (1979, pp. 88-94) expects the post-conventional morality of discourse ethics to lead to the development of a global, universal, yet pluralistic morality and a related conception of world citizenship. In another context, Habermas (1994, pp. 27-34) also develops this idea by arguing that post-national public spheres in Europe and elsewhere must be based on a universal notion of human rights and a shared *political culture* of free transnational discourse. Andrew Linklater (1998, p. 8) has developed these Habermasian themes in his account of the transformation of political community:

The transformation of political community would constitute a revolution in the areas affected because societies would no longer confront each other as geopolitical rivals in the condition of anarchy. More dialogic relations would spell the end of the Westphalian era. Participants in this project could cooperate to engineer a wider process of change which secures higher levels of respect for pluralist and solidarist international arrangements. While designing post-Westphalian forms of cooperation, these societies could work for the establishment of these two additional frameworks in which dialogue and consent replace domination and force. In this way it is possible to approximate the normative ideal of a universal communication community and to ensure that global arrangements have the consent of a greater proportion of the human race.

However, the problem with many “progressive” visions of Europe and, even, of cosmopolitan democracy, is that they tend to remain Eurocentric, however implicitly.<sup>13</sup> Because of the lack of concrete accounts of world historical processes and their own place in them, these kinds of neo-Kantian visions reproduce all too easily the Eurocentrism characteristic of the European past. For instance, in the recent calls to revitalize Europe, Habermas, together with Jacques Derrida (Habermas & Derrida 2003; see also Borradori, Derrida & Habermas 2003), seems to advocate “balancing out” rather than “resisting” or “combating” American hegemony. Despite his attempt to avoid geopolitical confrontation with the US and advocacy of world domestic policy, Habermas and, with him, Derrida, seems to presuppose that the choice is between the actual US and the actual European practices, both of which somehow represent the heritage of the Enlightenment as the highest stage of humanity. Of these two models, Europe is represented as the more civilized one. In contrast to the US, Europe has overcome a history of national chauvinism and militarism and now favours international legal bodies over the use of force as a means of resolving conflicts. Europe is also more egalitarian.

Habermas and Derrida (2003) use the term “counterweight”: “Europe must add its weight to the scales on the international level and within the United Nations and it must be a counterweight to the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States”. This phrasing seems to invoke a new global power-balancing system as a solution to the need to preserve both peace and pluralism, in particular against US imperial ambitions. However, by and large this is also how the balance of power system was supposed to work in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe (see Alker, Biersteker and Inoguchi, 1989). Power-balancing failed, for in the context of global geopolitical rivalry between the European empires, it led eventually to the First World War. A new global power-balancing system between continental alliances, premised on the supremacy of the West, would not necessarily be very different

---

<sup>13</sup> The model of cosmopolitan democracy developed by David Held (1995) draws both from Habermas’ political theory and the experiences of the European integration process. Moreover, Held’s model is based on a territorial account of space and linear understanding of time, which presuppose that Europe is the centre of the world as well as forerunner of world history. Therefore, Held’s model of cosmopolitan democracy remains the Eurocentric. For a critique and alternative, critical realist conceptualization of global democratization, see Patomäki, 2003.

from the European past, or from my future scenario two.<sup>14</sup> It has also the potential of bringing about scenario three, that is, partial disintegration of the EU. Habermas and Derrida indicate that their May/June 2003 essay was a response to the “Letter of Eight”, in which eight European countries, led by Great Britain and Spain, published an open declaration supporting the US stance on Iraq in late January 2003. In this sense, the origin of their statement has to do with geopolitics. The origin of their statement also lies in the division of Europe, in effect in the conflict between the first two scenarios. Their intervention can be read as a call to realize the second scenario also against the will of “those who have an understandable interest in freezing the existing mode of intergovernmental administration” (Habermas & Derrida, 2003).

In my fourth scenario, however, the EU goes beyond Habermas and accepts the calls to de-centre Europe, both inside and outside.<sup>15</sup> There is no single centre inside Europe, and the new reflexively cosmopolitan movements accept that Europe will never again be the centre of the world in any sense. Mutual dialogue and learning will replace regional and global hierarchies. The EU will develop new institutional arrangements – regarding for instance citizenship, public sphere, subsidiarity, parliament, decision-making structures, industrial relations, taxation, etc. – but will not represent itself as the civilising centre of, or model for, the rest of the world. Rather, the EU will recognize that it is merely one part of a much wider and deeper totality, the world as a whole, and will act accordingly.

The European transnational political movements, and the global civil society of which they form a significant part, question the hegemony of neoliberalism. These movements and civil society organizations will attempt to democratize global governance and build elements of global Keynesianism also in order to overcome the long downward phase of the capitalist world economy. From a global Keynesian perspective, publicly co-mobilized or stimulated large-scale investments, particularly in new fields of economic activities, would increase aggregate demand and generate investments in sectors linked to that field. Both would have multiplier and cumulative effects on other economic activities. Additional new fields could include the exploitation of old and new renewable and ecologically sustainable energy sources, information and communication technologies (including perhaps the development of a cheap and simple folk-computer and adequate public networking infrastructure for it), and biotechnology.

---

<sup>14</sup> Perhaps Galtung’s anticipation concerning the division of labour between European left and right should be up-dated: it now seems that while the left takes care of articulating the difference between Europe and the US, the right may use this alleged difference to safeguard its military, political and business interests when they contradict or compete with the US interests. The longer the downward phase of the world economy continues, and the more unilateralist the US becomes, the more likely this scenario becomes. The tendency towards antagonism between the EU and the US would be reinforced by regional re-organisation of not only politics and security but also economy, favoured by Habermas (in Borradori, Derrida and Habermas, 2003, p. 40): “This tension between rather power-pragmatic and more normative goals will only be resolved if one day the large continentwide alliances, like the EU, NAFTA, and ASEAN, develop into empowered actors capable of reaching transnational agreements and taking over responsibility for an ever more closely tied network of organisations, conferences, and practices. Only with this type of global players able to form a political counterbalance to the global expansion of markets running ahead of any political frame would the UN find a base for the implementation of high-minded programs and policies.”

<sup>15</sup> These calls include Derrida’s (1992) earlier attempt to rethink the identity and direction of Europe. It also includes the endeavours of eastwards-looking critical realists such as Roy Bhaskar (2000) to construct a dialogue, bridge and synthesis between traditions of both radical libertarian Western thought and mystical Eastern thought. For the lessons of these and other attempts to overcome Western metaphysics and domination, see Patomäki (2002).

A wave of new developments would also reverse the prevailing deflationary tendencies by inducing economic growth, which involves some inflation. The new developments would also make the horizons of firms longer and raise positive expectations, thereby increasing the marginal productivity of capital. This will in turn generate further investments with all the characteristic multiplier effects. Global tax-and-transfer policies are also part and parcel of global Keynesianism. Publicly funded key investments in human capacities, such as building a system of public health and education for everybody on the planet, would make individuals and households more equal, which should, in turn, increase the overall propensity to consume, and thereby total demand.

However, it also seems that this shift would have to be accompanied by a more general reorientation of the prevalent economic policies. Monetary and fiscal policy – as well as social and industrial policy – must be compatible, and they must resonate, with the effects of the productive investments. In addition, the global financial system should be reformed thoroughly and its characteristic mechanisms re-regulated or removed. This is perhaps the core problem of global economic governance in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The problem is not only to mobilize large-scale investments – also globally – but to transform the mechanisms of the capitalist market economy in order to enable various heterodox economic policies to flourish.

To this end the EU will take part in various alliances for global social-democratic reforms, including those initiated and led by movements and states from the global south. Instead of setting up a permanent continental alliance and a counterweight to the unilateralist hegemony of the US, global reforms require various transcontinental alliances, involving transnational movements and NGOs. Sometimes these alliances may concern only some of the member states of the EU. The US and US-based actors should always be invited to participate but only on democratic terms. Indeed, in this scenario, the Europeans will finally come to recognize that in democratic systems of global governance, the Union, its member states, and its citizens can have no special privileges.

Some transnational movements may also want to go beyond social-democratic reforms of global governance. In this more emancipatory view, if we are interested in pluralizing and democratizing the control over means of production and world markets, while creating and sustaining decommodified contexts of social activity, we will have to analyze and assess ways of creating new democratic world political spaces and mechanisms of policy-making. *After* Europe-born international relations and *after* Europe-born capitalism may therefore be essentially connected. Since world history is open, however, any viable and politically possible concrete utopia would have to be understood as a step in a potentially cumulative series of open-ended reforms. These reforms may also take Europe beyond itself.

### *Conclusions*

My fourth snap-shot scenario may sound somewhat distant or, perhaps, utopian. This sense of its utopian nature should strengthen the plausibility of the first three scenarios, at least in terms of anticipating possible futures, although not as normative ideals. In fact, some of these developments might lead to a major global catastrophe.

All four of these scenarios reveal something significant about the world we are already living in. The EU seems to be evolving as a kind of neomedieval political community in the context of a US-led capitalist world economy and its neoimperial tendencies. Clearly, there are also attempts to turn the EU into a federal superstate, coupled with a process of nation-building. The contradictions of these attempts have, in part, already reinforced tendencies towards disintegration. While the EU is somehow muddling through these complicated and ambiguous processes, a number of intellectuals and civic actors are articulating alternative visions of Europe's identity and its place in the future.

The point of my paper has been to clarify some of the structurally conditioned choices that we, as Europeans, are facing. As often, when the roads lead nowhere, or worse, to potential catastrophes, it may be better to go back and find alternative routes. This is also the point of those reflexive movements that are questioning the meaning and value of modernization. My fourth scenario outlines what this might mean for security and economic governance, both in Europe and worldwide.

At any rate, those who run the EU believe that the process of integration is a bicycle that will fall if it stops. Standing in the crossroads of alternative futures is thus no option either. Choices with far-reaching consequences must be made.

### REFERENCES

Alker, Hayward R., Biersteker, Thomas J. & Inoguchi, Takashi (1989): "From Imperial Power Balancing to People's Wars: Searching for Order in the Twentieth Century", in J. Der Derian & M. Shapiro (eds.): *International/Intertextual Relations. Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Lexington: Lexington, pp. 135-162..

Anheier, Helmut, Glasius, Marlies and Kaldor, Mary (eds.) (2001): *Global Civil Society 2001*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Beck, Ulrich, Bonss Wolfgang and Lau, Christoph (2003): "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization. Problematic, Hypothese and Research Programme, *Theory, Culture & Society* (20):2, pp. 1-33.

Bhaskar, Roy (2000): *From East to West. Odyssey of a Soul*. Routledge: London.

Bigo, Didier (1998): “Bond of Union: Military Involvement in Internal Security”, paper delivered at the 1998 ISA Annual Convention, Minneapolis, 17-21 March 1998.

Boltho, Andrea (2003): “What’s Wrong with Europe?”, *New Left Review*, (22): 3, pp. 5-26.

Booker, Christopher & North, Richard (2003): *The Great Deception. The Secret History of the European Union*, Continuum: London.

Borradori, Giovanna, Derrida, Jacques & Habermas, Jürgen (2003): *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Braithwaite, John & Drahos, Peter (2000): *Global Business Regulation*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Bull, Hedley (1977): *The Anarchical Society. A Study of Order in World Politics*, MacMillan: London.

Castells, Manuel (1989): *The Informational City. Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process*, Blackwell: Oxford.

Clark, William (2004): “Revisited – The Real Reasons for the Upcoming War with Iraq. A Macroeconomic and Geostrategic Analysis of the Unspoken Truth”, mimeo, available at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/RRIraqWar.pdf>.

Cohen, Benjamin (2003): “Global Currency Rivalry: Can the Euro Ever Challenge the Dollar?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* (41): 4, pp. 575-95.

Dean, Kathryn (2003): *Capitalism and Citizenship*, Routledge: London.

Delanty, Gerard (1995): *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*, MacMillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke.

Derrida, Jacques (1992): *The Other Heading. Reflections on Today’s Europe*. translated by P-A. Brault and M. B. Naas, Indiana University Press: Bloomington.

EU Council press release (2004): “European Council to Focus on Fight against Terrorism”, C/04/81, 15 March 2004, 7429/04 (Presse 81).

Freeman, Alan (2003): “Globalization: Economic Stagnation and Divergence”, in A. Pettifor (ed.): *Real World Economic Outlook. The Legacy of Globalization: Debt and Deflation*, Palgrave MacMillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke, pp. 152-159.

Galtung, Johan (1973): *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making*, George Allen & Unwin: London (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo).



- Giddens, Anthony (1994): *Beyond Left and Right. The Future of Radical Politics*, Polity: Cambridge.
- Gill, Stephen (1995): "The Global Panopticon? The Neoliberal State, Economic Life, and Democratic Surveillance", *Alternatives*, (20):1, pp. 1-49.
- Gill, Stephen (1997): "An EMU or an Ostrich? EMU and Neo-Liberal Globalisation; Limits and Alternatives", in P. Minkkinen & H. Patomäki (eds.): *The Politics of Economic and Monetary Union*, Kluwer: Dordrecht, pp. 207-231.
- Gowan, Peter (1999): *The Global Gamble. Washington's Faustian Bid for World Dominance*, Verso: London.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1976): *Legitimation Crisis*, transl. T. McCarthy, Heinemann: London.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1979): *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, translated by T. McCarthy, Heinemann: London.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1994): "Citizenship and National Identity", in B. van Steenberg (ed.): *The Condition of Citizenship*, Sage: London, pp. 20-35.
- Habermas, Jürgen and Derrida, Jacques (2003): "Europe: plaidoyer pour une politique extérieure commune", *Libération*, 31 mai 2003.
- Harvey, David (1990): *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford.
- Held, David (1995): *Democracy and the Global Order. From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Polity Press: Oxford.
- Huntington, Samuel P. (1993): "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, (72):3, pp. 22-49.
- Huysmans, Jef (1995): "Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of 'Securitizing' Societal Issues", in R. Miles & D. Thränhardt (eds.): *Migration and European Integration*, Pinter: London, pp. 53-72.
- Lash, Scott (2003): "Reflexivity as Non-linearity", *Theory, Culture & Society* (20):2, pp. 49-57.
- Latour, Bruno (2003): "Is Re-modernization Occurring – And If So, How to Prove It?. A Commentary on Ulrich Beck", *Theory, Culture & Society* (20):2, pp. 35-48.
- Le Monde Diplomatique* (1997): "La 4e guerre mondiale a commencé. Par le Sous-Commandant Marcos", (44), p. 521.

- Linklater, Andrew (1998): *The Transformation of Political Community. Ethical Foundation of a Post-Westphalian Era*, Polity: Cambridge.
- List, Dennis (2004): "Multiple pasts, Converging Presents, and Alternative Futures", *Futures*, (36):1, pp. 23-43.
- Martin, Hans-Peter & Schumann, Harald (1997): *The Global Trap: Globalization and the Assault on Prosperity and Democracy*, Zed Books: London.
- Martin, Pierre (1994): "The Politics of International Structural Change: Aggressive Unilateralism in American Trade Policy", in R.Stubbs & G.Underhill (eds.): *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, MacMillan: Lontoo, pp.
- Maynes, Charles William (1999): "US Unilateralism and Its Dangers", *Review of International Studies*, (25):3, pp. 515-518.
- Nafziger, E.Wayne & Auvinen, Juha (2003): *Economic Development, Inequality, and War. Humanitarian Emergencies in Developing Countries*, Palgrave MacMillan: Houndmills, Basingstoke.
- Patomäki, Heikki (1997): "EMU and the Legitimation Problems of the European Union", in P. Minkkinen & H.Patomäki (eds.): *The Politics of Economic and Monetary Union*, Kluwer: Dordrecht, pp. 164-206.
- Patomäki, Heikki (2002): "From East to West: Emergent Global Philosophies – Beginnings of the End of the Western Dominance?", *Theory, Culture & Society*, (19):3, pp. 89-111.
- Patomäki, Heikki (2003): "Problems of Democratising Global Governance: Time, Space and the Emancipatory Process", *European Journal of International Relations*, (9):3, September 2003, pp. 347–376.
- Patomäki, Heikki (forthcoming): "The Long Downward Phase and Possible Further Crises in the Capitalist World Economy: An Explanatory Model", *Review of International Political Economy*.
- Pistone, Sergio (1994): "Altiero Spinelli and the Strategy for the United States of Europe", in Nelsen, Brent & Stubb, Alexander (eds.): *The European Union. Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*, Lynne Rienner: Boulder, pp. 69-75.
- Rosenau, Pauline Marie (1992): *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences. Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.
- Ruggie, John G. (1993): "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations", *International Organization*, (47):1, pp. 139-174.

Serra, Narcís (2004): “America and the Iraq war, or Thinking ‘Inside Out’”, trans. by J.Kramer, *OpenDemocracy* online publication available at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-2-103-1868.jsp#>.

Sinclair, Timothy (1994): “Passing Judgement: Credit Rating Processes as Regulatory Mechanisms of Governance in the Emerging World Order”, *Review of International Political Economy*, (1):1, pp. 133-159.

Solana, Javier (2003): “A Secure Europe in a Better World”, European Council, Thessaloniki, 20/06/2003, available at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom>.

Todd, Emmanuel (2003): *After the Empire. The Breakdown of the American Order*, trans. by C.J.Delogu, Columbia University Press: New York.

Tuathail, Gearóid Ó. (1996): *Critical Geopolitics. The Politics of Writing Global Space*, Routledge: London.

Wæver, Ole (1996): “European Security Identities”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (34):1, pp. 103-132.

World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (2004): *A Fair Globalization. Creating Opportunities for All*, ILO: Geneva.