Transformation of the German Cultural Political Approach in the EU – Narrative – Construction

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Introduction

This paper makes an elementary research on the causal relationship between the new form of construction of the narrative in EU and the German cultural policy. The European Union as a successful political community in transnational form with growing impact dries attention from beyond academic sides. It is confirmed that beyond organizational institutions a political community needs also a set of narratives which points to an ultimate end of the road. On the other hand, the "leading role" of Germany since a decade is also an interesting topic for researches from various disciplines. It is assumed that this has not only to do with the priority of the German economics, due to the fact that the discourse of the German foreign policies is relatively restrained.

Since the "cultural turn of sociology" and the "political projecting of culture", the interdisciplinary between sociology, political science and cultural study has gained in importance, which directly inspire the cultural policy researches. This paper tries to fulfill the research gap that the cultural policy has not been integrated in social – and political researches, and that the link between micro and macro level has not been socially constructed in cultural policy researches.

Narrative and Community Construction

Narrative is how observers make sense of social phenomena (Czarniaasks, 2004). Socially, narratives are social acts involving complete, inherent series of relations that define social space and borders (Eder, 2006:257). It is also the institutionalized form of political myths, which provide a cognitive and normative map for understanding and testifying why a political community has come together as well as what is done in its name (Bottica, 2007, Flood, 2001). "Myths are distinct narratives forms in that they are sacred narratives that are repositories of a collective representation of values, beliefs,

aspirations, finality, ideals and attitudes" (Della Sela, 2015:4). Literatures which deal with this topic try to explain it from different aspects, using different terms and jargons. But they can be summed up to three elements which are essential to the construction of the political myth: the foundational myth, which defines the birth and construction of a given political community and expresses the meaning of the existence as well as the mission of this community, the sacred normative features, which are drawn selectively from the historical past, interpret the present, provide the members of the community with loyalty and give the community a direction of legitimacy, and the eschatological myth, which reveals the interpretation and imagination of the ultimate of the given community. If narratives are to be understood as the ordering of events (Bal, 2009) for certain purpose, then those consisting of foundational myth, sacred normative features and eschatological myth are complete narratives with an integrated horizontal set, that is the set of beginning, middle and end, and an integrated vertical set, that is the set of the circulation and inter-transformation of the cultural, political and institutional levels of a given society.

During this process of construction, plots are considered as central to the notion of narrative (Della Sela, 2015). The process of the intentional selection and diffusion is also the process of creation of the sacred normative features. The compilation of the sacred normative features explains not only why this instead of another event has been selected from the sea of historical events, i.e., that the selection is not at random, but also fabricates a chain of events. This chain of events implies not only the normative basic of the political community, but also legitimates the liability of the identification of the members with the community.

Some researchers develop the "Sociology of myth" and analyze the construction of narrative with more careful attention in that they try to subdivide the process of the construction into three steps and observe the procedure in each step. The first step is diffusion, in which social and cultural elites select some events, give them a structure which is narratively understandable and socially normatively interpretable. The second step is ritualization, in which the structured narrative integrates itself in the social life, becomes an institution and justifies the collective actions done on its name. The third step is sacralization, the final step when narratives become political myth through that the sacred normative features drawn from the narratives sublimate to the basic legitimation of a political community. (Bouchard, 2013, Bouchard, 2014:137-152) The act in combination of the vertical and the integrated sets ensure that the functions of political myths are beyond establishing of political legitimacy. More importantly, they also provide an ontological security, which Giddens suggests "refers to the confidence that most humans beings have in the continuity of their self – identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (Giddens, 1990:92)

The "Missing Part" in the EU – Narrative - Construction

The classic theory suggests that a successful political myth has a clear normative message. (Della Sela, 2015, Bouchard, 2013) By extracting some sacred values from the historical and social narrative, this message always points to the ultimate end of the "road" of the social development. There are literatures which have pointed out the commonness of the political myth: the sacred narratives about the birth or rebirth of the political community centering on the legitimation of the political right and differing one political space from another. (vgl. Bottici, Challand, 2014, Schöpflin, 1997) Not only do they "explain the present in terms of a creative act that took place in the past" (Tudor, 1972:91), but also point to the end of the eschatological myth, to ensure that during the development processing, "the old order is abolished and the new order comes into being, but the world as such remains." (Tudor:92)

As any political community, as it is pointed above, the EU must also seek out narratives which frames its cultural boundary and defines what it is and its legitimation as a collective actor, which strengthens the confidence of the identity. (Mitzen 2006a, Stelle, 2008, Berenskoetter, 2014)

What is missing is the eschatological myth, the "sacred narratives that look to the end of things rather than the moment of creation". (Della Sela, 2015:6) The EU as a political community seems to thrive to overcome the national sovereignty based on the international system since the Westphalia Contract in 1648. As any other international/transnational organization, say UNO or WTO, it functions on the basic that the national states are obliged to "hand over" certain political and economic rights to the transnational level. This assumption is the starting point of the approach of the "decay of national states". (Hirsch, Jessop, 2001, Loth, 2002) What distinguishes the EU from the other international organizations is that EU claims itself as a political community, a community with common sense and collective identification which seeks an identity bounding the loyalty and confidence of its member. The construction of identity consists of the inter-legitimations between cultural, political and social mechanism, among which narratives play an essential role. But until now, there is no statement about what the definite goal of EU is.

Up to now, the main form of political community remains the national states. The eschatological myth reveals itself in many contexts, but one could almost always find its expression in the constitution of a certain national state. Take some examples:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." (Preamble of the Constitution of the United Stated of America)

"Conscious of their responsibility before God and man, Inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe, the German people, in the exercise of their constituent power, have adopted this Basic Law. Germans in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia have achieved the unity and freedom of Germany in free self-determination." (Preamble of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany)

This, yet, is not to be found in the comparable declarations or files of the EU. Compare several official acts of the EU with the files mentioned above: The Treaty of Paris has always been considered as the cornerstone of the EU's constitution. But it only states that this political organization will make a contribution to civilization and to a new form of international order. The Treaty of Lisabon claims that it is "drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe". The Treaty of Maastricht mentions that the task of the EU is to promote integration, without a clear, specific reference to the ultimate which the integration could probably be heading to. There are no such phrases of the grand-narrative (Lyotard, 1983, Lyotard, 1985) like "in Order to" or "conscious of their responsibility before God and man" or "achieve" as those in the constitutions of the United States and of Germany.

Whereas the national states are the "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983), it is also clear that there have been efforts to imagine Europe (Bottici, Challand, 2013) with almost the same projecting of the national states: through the collective memory, the repository of the values and the political myths. Despite of the relatively completed construction of the sacred normative features to some extent, among the three elements which were mentioned above and traditionally considered to be essential to the construction of the narrative, the foundational myth of the EU has only been halfway constructed. Comparatively, the construction of the eschatological myth has almost not taken place. It has been argued, in relating contexts, that the EU lacked "the tangibility and intelligibility that would enable it to capture the imagination" (Obradovic, 1996:196).

The Discourse of the German Kulturpolitik

The German version of the concept of cultural policy is Kulturpolitik. Nevertheless, it is always important to point out at the very beginning that the German term of Politik is the whole of the English terms of policy, polity and politics. In social – and political science, the polity refers to the structural, formal and institutional dimension, i.e., it answers the questions like "what is the mission of the state". The politics refer to the processual dimension of the political process, i.e. it answers the questions like "How does the political system function", "how are political decisions to be made". The policy refers to the content dimension, i.e. it answers the questions like "what concerns the policy", "what does the regime do", "how does the idea look like". So, although the German term of Kulturpolitik refers in most contexts to cultural policy, that is, the content dimension of the regulation, distribution, consummation and the construction of the cultural artifacts from one or more authorities, the use of the term always implies the inclusion of the other two dimensions.

It is also important to keep in mind that in the current German discourse, the narrow and broad concepts of culture and policy is differenciated. Generally speaking, the narrow culture concept had been dominating in Germany. The cultural artifacts in the middle age were enacted either for the sake of the "ambition of the country-side gentlemen" or for the sake of the "education of the dominion" (Wagner, 2009). After the modernization, even if public libraries and museums were established in the name of the publicity, the cultural activities were always following the concept of the "cultural care", the meaning of which found its expression in the guiding principles of the city-congress of Germany in 1952 as following :"The care of the culture is for cities an important and urgent task both for the sake of the cultural values which must be nurtured, and in which a mental attitude has been displayed, and for the sake of its importance that this care belongs to the community life." (City Congress of Germany, 1952) This attitude base on the so called "affirmative comprehension of culture" (Glaser, 2000, Wagner, 2009), which is a materialized one and which is later criticized as "aesthetic lamination of brutal selfishness" (ibid).

A turning point is marked by the birth of the New Cultural Policy ("Neue Kulturpolitik") in 1976. "Cultural policy is, among other things, characterized through the following characteristics: Cultural policy is at the first place cultural policy of the community; it serves emancipation; it sees its task in the manufacturing of the cultural democracy; it is essentially Social Culture; it sees in itself a counterweight against the demands and stresses of industrial society; it identifies itself, among other things, as education policy, in the middle of which are the developments and the evolutions of social, communicative and aesthetic possibilities and needs of the citizens." () As we can see, the relationship between culture and polity is re-interpreted in this statement, especially at the point

that instead of "culture for culture's sake", the social relevance of culture is being asked for. What is emphasized here is the concept of the mediation of the competence and of the self-responsibility.

The Paradigm Shift

In this context, the concept of "cultural employment" took the place of the "cultural care", which indicates a paradigm shift from passive towards active – "active" in the sense that the citizens are to be motivated in that through education, they should be capable and conscious to express themselves culturally. They are not conceived as recipients of the cultural "supply" any more, but they are expected to actively engage in the employment of culture with full self – consciousness. The justification context is the so called "Civil Rights Culture" ("Bürgerrecht Kultur"), implying that the individuals are the reference point to the state so that the educational/cultural equality is the starting point for the equal opportunity, which is why that the state is not only obliged to provide the legal guarantee for the freedom of speech and art – expressions, but also obliged to practically enable every citizen to have the chance and competence to express himself (Glaser, Stahl, 1974 Röbke, 1993, Glaser, 2000). Consequently, the measures of the New Cultural Policy can be summarized as following: a, facilitating and expanding access to existing facilities; b, supplementing the cannon of the subsidized arts through new, previously neglected areas; c, motivating the people towards their own cultural activities (Röbke, 1993, Glaser, Stahl, 1974, Heinrichs, Klein, 2001).

On the other side, this brought about a complementation of the shift from a narrow, reduced comprehension of culture towards a broader one. It is also an active one in that culture here is not only to be seen as expressions of the emotions and experiences of human, but also as an independent political field, which is intensively taking its shape and making its significance. It has been recognized that this political field contributes to the composition of the society in that the cultural democratization leads to the social democratization. What can be observed here is that the traditional boundary between politics, society and culture went blurred in that culture is not attributed to society any more, but is now an independent field which is socially and politically evaluated. Correspondently, society and politics are also culturally evaluated.

Meanwhile, the institutional power has been deconstructed. According to the German constitution, those tasks, which "are rooted in the local community or can be handled independently and autonomously through the public community" (BVerfGE 11/266), are undertaken by the community. For cultural political activities since the New Cultural Policy, this logic means that: a), the community

is not only entitled to "whether", but also obliged to determine "how" in details during the process of discretion, whereas the inhabitants must be "united to self-responsible fulfillment of the public tasks" (BVerfGE, ibid.) and the needs and approaches of the local citizen must be taken into account; b), the actors of all three dimensions of "Politik" are not only political, administrative system, but potentially also all of the social groups (Wagner, 1992, Klein, Heinrichs, 2001, Heinrichs, 1999).

Therefore, not only are the states and the authorities largely relieved from financial and organizing pressure, but also is their power deprived. The paradigm shift consummates itself doubly: the individuals are being "pushed" to the foreground and the "top – down" power is declining. The right for articulation, expression, determination and interpretation in culture activities is transferred from states and authorities to inter – humanity. At the same time, an integration of culture, society and politics can also be notified.

The Application of Methodology: Social Mechanism and Process Tracing

Social mechanism as a methodology can be seen as a systematic set of statements that provide a plausible account why A and B are linked to each other (Schelling,?). It emphasizes more on the process within the social structure than on historical events. Nevertheless, only tracing the process is likely to ending up with description instead of analyze because of the coexistence of millions of events. The happening of any event at random does not lead necessarily to change of the dependent variables. It would be then appropriate to narrow down the tracing to social mechanism particularly because the mechanism belongs also to relationships. So this would be suitable when one tries to explain why it is likely to be the case instead of detecting if a relationship is likely to exist. To summarize, tracing mechanism in social relationships is not about tracing a chain of events, but about detecting some logics which bound events together (Hedstroem, Ylikoski, 2010). In empirical studies, these logics always express themselves in principles and norms. So, a researcher would need, during the process tracing of social mechanism, to abstract from the chain of events some principles which consist later to an institution.

In several relating literatures, it is methodologically advised to look for principles instead of describing a chain of events, and to look at the causes and consequences of the individual action orienting to the behavior of the social settlement instead of looking at variables. There are dozens of literatures dealing with the multiplicity of the mechanisms, studying the immense, transmission and

interaction within the structures. As for how to stratify the mechanism, to make it simple and clear, this paper tends to adopt the suggestions which Hedstroem and Swedberg have made:
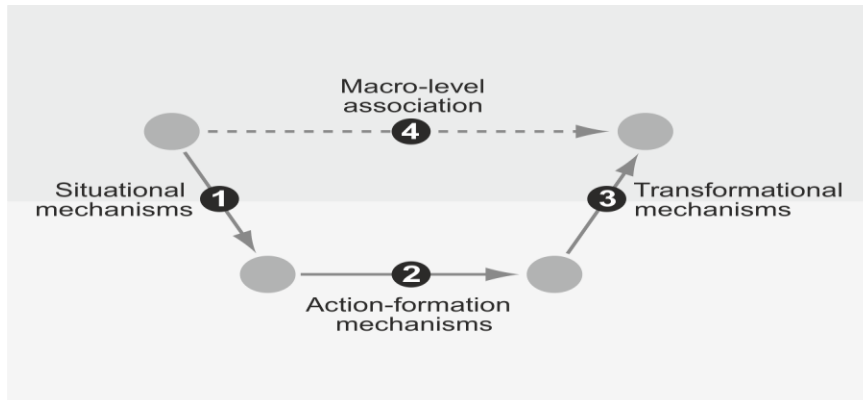
(Hedstroem, Swedberg, 1998a)

Line 1 indicates that the social structures and settlements constrain individuals' cognitive. Line 2 indicates that the action formation of the individuals links from cognitive to actions. Line 3 indicates that the actions and interactions of the individuals generate social outcomes. Line 4 indicates that the macro properties relate to each other (Coleman, 1990, Hedstroem, Swedberg, 1998b). This figure clearly demonstrates that the mechanisms at different levels are not independently, isolating existing. If institution is to be understood as a set of rules which frames the actions of social which could be personal or interpersonal, then those principles consisting the set can be produced, reproduced, communicated, circulated and routinized among the mechanisms within the social structure.

The New Form of Construction on the Micro – and Macro - Level

The empirical parts have shown that the narrative construction of EU has experienced an "unusual" formation in that although the EU identifies itself as a political community, which means it needs a bounding identity to provide its citizens with affiliation, loyalty, identification and ontological security, it lacks an eschatological myth, which is to be found in the statements of the other political communities, derived from the foundational myth, representing the sacred normative features and exemplifying the finality. It was also shown above that through the reorientation of the German cultural policy, a paradigm shift has also been executed, the influence of which goes far beyond the field of cultural policy.

One definitive principle which can be drawn from the cultural political practice since the New Cultural Policy would be deconstruction of the power through the activation and entitlement of the individuals. Cultural – politically, every fellow man in the society does not only have the right, but are also culturally qualified and motivated to construct his social surroundings, which is not only to be defined as society but also as space (Glaser, Stahl, 1974). The society as well as the community, is therefore constructed bottom up. This principle turns later, on the macro – level, into decentralization which utters itself evidently through the looser expressions like "integration", a principle which commonly appears not only in the statements, but also in literatures, which, among other things, implies the emergence of a new form of narrative.

"Europeanism has meant not just the retreat of the state and the weakening links between authority and state, but also new approaches to understanding the nation, citizenship, and patriotism, driven by the cosmopolitan ideas that all human beings belong to a single moral community that transcends state boundaries or national identities." (McCormick, 2010:67)

We may also find the deconstruction of the political power on the macro – level of political culture, which would be no set prescribed finality due to the fact that the power of interpretation, expression, participation and determination has been deconstructed and assigned to the micro – level of the individual actors. Either there is no traditionally assumed eschatological myth, or we may argue that to some extent, principles like "decline of national state" and "an even closer union" and "integration" are becoming another eschatological myth. In another word, the "end of the grand-narrative" is growing into narrative, not least due to the cultural political practice in Germany which has led to the blurring boundaries between the fields of culture, society and the three dimensions of Politik.

Conclusion

Every political community needs narrative to protocol its story and to legitimate its existence. What is new on the construction of the EU – narrative is that there is hardly a dictated finality. This mechanism on the macro – level has something to do with the cognitive schemes under the individuals on the micro - level, which can be traced back to the New Cultural Policy in Germany. The motivation to the codetermination through the cultural emancipation leads to the activation of the citizens, which ends up with the fact that the narrative has been written diversely and the descent principles has become a discourse. On the other side, the concept "culture" has gone through a paradigm shift from passive to active. That culture on the one hand is being treated as an

independent field, leads to the theoretical shift on the other hand that culture, society and politics are being evaluated and legitimated reciprocally.

This seems to have confirmed the observations of some researchers dealing with modernity like Therborn that after the cold war, it is generally not that important that political communities thrive to fulfill certain absolute values and what matters now is to keep along on the road (Therborn, 1995). Theoretically, this also offers an insight in a new upcoming institution between the fields which are traditionally called as culture, society and politics.

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