

- Comments by Heikki Patomäki on:

**“EUROPEAN SCENARIOS AND
CLIMATE POLICIES IN A NEW
GLOBAL CONTEXT”**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

- There are multiple reasons why it is important to think about the future:
 - a) The feasibility and viability of policies and institutional changes – their possible realisation and effects lie in the future, and all claims thus concern the future.
 - b) Organisations such as the EU anticipate and plan for the future in various ways, and any change requires either an intervention in current multiannual plans or proposals for new plans, e.g. from 2034 onwards...
 - c) The present is relative to ongoing processes and their duration, and thus current relevance requires systematic consideration of those processes, many of which may be long-lasting, taking from years and decades to centuries and beyond (for example, cyclical processes of growth, climate change).
 - d) The key problem of humanity concerns organising long-term, risk-minimising, and cooperative action on a global scale: what are the conditions for a long-term and cooperative world that guarantees the flourishing of life and the future of humanity?
- The EuroMemo discussion paper by Jacques Mazier and Pascal Petit explores the future of the EU in terms of four scenarios.
- In part, all their scenarios are set in a global context, and this is particularly true of the fourth scenario – this is the right direction to take.

SCENARIOS ARE GROUNDED ON THEORY-BASED ACCOUNTS OF THE PREVAILING MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES

	Legitimation theory: Schumpeter	Legitimation theory: Habermas
Neoliberal economic theory	(A) The Maastricht Treaty is firmly grounded, the EMU is legitimate and functional	(B) The EMU works, but its legitimacy is unstable
Post-Keynesian economic theory	(C) The Maastricht Treaty is unstably founded: the EMU will strangle Europe economically, and is prone to crisis	(D) The Maastricht Treaty is unjustified, and economic crises will eventually destroy its legitimacy

EUROMEMO RECOMMENDATIONS AND MAZIER-PETIT SCENARIOS

- Since the late 1990s, EuroMemo has combined post-Keynesian economic theory and “Habermasian” theory of legitimation.
- The Mazier-Petit scenarios are based on post-Keynesian economic theory, and there are also at least traces of a “Habermasian” type of understanding of legitimation.
- Thus, M & P stress the role of European scale investments, EU taxation, common debt and increasing the EU budget significantly from the current 1% level.
- They also criticise some of the prevailing anti-democratic tendencies.
- The M & P discussion paper is relatively short, so it is unreasonable to assume that the paper could have discussed all aspects and viewpoints in detail.
- Rather, the four scenarios are meant to be a sketch of possible futures, although these scenarios “do not fit into the same time horizon” (their temporal horizons are not specified).

A FEW OBSERVATIONS IN THE
SPIRIT OF SYMPATHETIC AND
FRIENDLY CRITICISM

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE EU

- M & P do not consider the possibility of revising the EU Treaty → the tacit assumption is that the only realistic alternative is to move forward by means of forming coalitions of the willing, prepared to violate the EU rules selectively (at the risk of instigating conflicts).
- The problem is that the disintegrative tendencies within the EU are not only due to the heterogeneity of member states, but stem in large part from the constitutive rules and principles of the EU itself:
 - 1) budget rules, implying austerity; absence of taxation & common debt; market-oriented economic order (market logic, rules of competition, ownership rules, etc.); plus the overall aim of competitiveness, including competition against other member states (these have complex – also – indirect consequences, which tend to generate disintegrative tendencies)
 - 2) counterfactually: a transformed EU could reduce heterogeneity by means of large-scale investments, common taxation, shared responsibilities, systems of redistribution, universal rights, etc.
- If the constitutive principles are left by and large intact, then the most likely integrative alternative stems from securitisation, as common threats and enemies can unify...
 - the perception of “the peril of Russia” serves to facilitate developments into this integration, but there are also intrinsic reasons within the EU generating such tendencies, and these interact...

THE EU IN THE WORLD SYSTEM

- M & P take into account the global context; e.g. they argue that a more cooperative global order could be conducive to intra-EU mobilisation for progressive reforms.
- But why is the world going through processes such as trade wars, securitisation of supply chains, weaponisation of interdependence, alliance formation, and an arms race?
- The fields of interstate relations (made specific by nationalism and modern equivalents of the *reason-of-state*) and the industrialised, capitalist world economy (predisposed toward historical variations of orthodox liberalism) intra- and interact, resulting in various non-deterministic cyclical and other processes that involve conflicts and wars
 - see my *The Three Fields of Global Political Economy* (Routledge, 2022)
- The question: what is the future role of the EU in the interstate system? -- It has always been a potential problem of EU-federalism that it may result in a new continental national state that assumes the position of “great power” in the world system
 - cf. the historical process of German unification in the 19th century
 - this goes against the fundamental idea of European integration, namely that integration aims to overcome the logic of power politics (the EU is *sui generis*, not a new sovereign state)

INSTITUTIONS OF COOPERATIVE WORLD SYSTEM

- Cosmopolitan scenario: the EU develops common institutions as part of a far broader planetary whole, which in turn will not become a replicant of current sovereign states.
- M & P take steps in this direction: they discuss the possibility of enhanced multilateral environmental/ ecological cooperation and the “revival of SDR regime” and mention, in passing, also the idea of the International Clearing Union (ICU).
- There is no space here to explain the following idea, but arguably, there is already in existence a fragile layer of world statehood, which can further evolve as a situated and contested outcome of worldmaking practices responsive to shared and long-term human and planetary concerns.
- Conceived as a worldmaking project in its own right, this would involve ICU, global taxes, world economic policy, world parliament, planetary control of nuclear weapons & AI, etc.
 - it would also include elements of global fiscal policy and public investments to shape and allocate economic (non-)growth, mitigate planetary ecological problems, and create the basis for long-term common projects.
- The task is also to extend collective time horizons at the global level, involving long-term governance, mechanisms of intergenerational representation, and more integrated forms of global political authority (→ “temporal socialism”).