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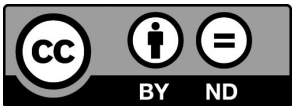

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Constructing Foreign Policy vis-à-vis the Migration Crisis: the Czech and Slovak Cases

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Abstract: The study examines contemporary discourses in two small Central European states, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The aim is to analyze how key domestic political players discursively construct foreign policy vis-à-vis the migration crisis. Securitization, a concept developed by the Copenhagen School, serves as an analytical framework for revealing the kinds of discourse being produced in the two countries. The analysis of the discourse of the Prime Ministers from 2015 to 2018, indicates that in the Czech Republic and Slovakia foreign policy is being constructed around the issue of Europeanness (belongingness) and accommodation in the core-periphery spectrum. The article shows that the construction of external threats is done in different security sectors in each country, but in both it seems to promote the in-group coherence needed to affirm their belongingness to Europe, and it no longer happens on grounds of ethnically defined nations, but on grounds of the broader idea of civilizational Europe.

Keywords: Czech Republic, European Union, migration, securitization, Slovakia.

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Before 2015, for two decades the Central European countries attempted to prove that they belonged to the core, to the West. This was done by transforming national policies to conform to the European Union (EU) *acquis*, but it also included an identitarian dimension. In Milan Kundera's (1984) words, Central Europe was the *"kidnapped West,"* and with the fall of the Communist regime, it could return home. In practice, *returning home* meant a high degree of emulation through which these countries would transform themselves, in terms of policy and identity (re)affirmation, to conform to the core, the West, epitomized by the EU. However, in the migration and refugee crisis, whose apex was in 2015, these countries promptly showed their lack of commitment to the principle of solidarity and burden-sharing by opposing the mandatory quota system put in place by the Union. Their emulation in terms of policy and identity was put into question. The migration crisis in Europe seems to be one of those moments in which the concepts of core and periphery were contested and redefined in the geopolitical imaginaries of, not only, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Since 2015, there has been a shift in the discourse in these countries: a shift away from the post-Cold War conformity. The position of the Visegrad countries distanced them from the core of the Union, whose position was symbolized, at that point, by the kind of solidarity and burden sharing advocated by Germany. The migration crisis together with

the illiberal turn happening in Poland and Hungary led to the diffusion of a strongly securitized discourse in the Visegrad countries that portrays migration and a particular type of migrant as a threat. At the same time, the Central European countries started being portrayed by the political elites (not only) in the core countries, and also started to be researched, as a subgroup (Stepper 2016; Kazharski 2017; Brubaker 2017) within the structures of the Union. In this way, their discursive particularities, including those regarding securitization moves, have not been analyzed in-depth.

What is particularly interesting is that in contrast to Western European countries, where the constructed fears of migrants can be related to already existing immigrant communities with a particular cultural background, the referent subject (Balzacq 2011) of securitization in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (and more broadly in the Visegrad countries) is an *imaginary migrant*. Data from the Pew Research Center (2018) shows that Ukrainians, Russians, and Vietnamese form the majority of non-EU nationals residing in the two countries. From this, one would expect that if migration were to be securitized in the two countries, it would also include migrants from these countries of origin. Nevertheless, the facts on the ground are different and form an interesting puzzle which deserves further scrutiny.

The study critically examines contemporary discourses in two small Central European states, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The aim is to analyze how key domestic political players discursively construct foreign policy vis-à-vis the migration crisis and show how the two countries' different securitizing discourses have, nevertheless, led to similar policies. In order to do so, through discourse analysis, the research focuses on the speech acts of the Prime Ministers in both countries from 2015 to 2018.

The paper contributes to our understanding of how identity and securitization interplay in the foreign policies of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and how securitization can operate in different security sectors but still share the common feature of threat creation in relation to the same type of migrant. It challenges the positioning of the Central European countries in regard to migration policies as homogenous, especially after 2015 when they, as a group, articulated their opposition to the mandatory quota and relocation scheme proposed by the Union. Securitization theory is applied to show how the discourses in both countries converge and diverge both in relation to the EU and in relation to the national contexts. By looking at the discourses of the Prime Ministers, we will see that securitization in this region is a process that should be analyzed by taking into consideration each country's specificities, as it is a trend happening in the entire region, but the countries show different constructions of external threats. Genuinely understanding how these countries construct foreign policy vis-à-vis the migration crisis requires that we go beyond treating the Visegrad countries as a single object of analysis and move towards uncovering each country's specificities.

The following text is organized into five sections. The first section provides an overview of the securitization theory and how it contributes to the understanding of foreign policy construction in these countries, mainly the approach developed by the Copenhagen School, and how we can apply it to the study of the Czech and Slovak foreign policies towards migration. The second section proceeds to review the hitherto research on securitization of migration in Central Europe, and the third section introduces the method of analysis that has been applied in this study. The fourth section analyses the Czech and Slovak securitization of migration between 2015 and 2018, and it contains four subsections that focus on the language and actors of securitization, societal and political sectors of securitization, the accommodation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the core-periphery spectrum of the EU, and, finally, the hierarchy of Otherness in the Czech and Slovak discourses. The article ends with a discussion and the main conclusions drawn from the empirical analysis.

SECURITIZATION THEORY AND FOREIGN POLICY

The way that the discourse about migrants is framed plays a role in the legitimization of the kind foreign policy that is adopted. This is my initial social constructivist assumption, and hence, as a starting point, I rely on the theoretical framework elaborated by the Copenhagen School to examine practices of threat production.

The Copenhagen School defines securitization as a situation in which through a speech act an *"issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure"* (Buzan et al. 1998: 23–24). Security, in this way, is not to be understood in purely objective terms, as something given, but as something that is intersubjective (an idea shared by individuals) and socially constructed. Moreover, for the Copenhagen School it is through the speech act that an issue is placed in the realm of security – *"security is thus a self-referential practice because it is in this practice that security becomes a security issue"* (Buzan et al. 1998: 24).

Furthermore, Buzan et al. (1998), in an attempt to expand the agenda of security studies beyond *political* and *military* sectors, introduce three other commonly used sectors where we can speak of security and through which we can conduct analysis on security: the *societal*, *economic*, and *environmental* sectors (see also Buzan – Little 2000). Security sectors are *"seen as analytical devices that are used to shed light on the diverse practices and dynamics of securitization"* (Albert – Buzan 2011: 415). Jef Huysmans (2006: 2) sustains that *"insecurity differs depending on the nature of the threat and the referent object that is threatened"*. This, in turn, enables us, at least for analytical purposes, to organize security into these different sectors as proposed by Buzan et al. (1998).

In the societal sector, which is particularly relevant for this present analysis, identity is the key *"organizing concept"* (Buzan et al. 1998: 119) around which insecurity is created. Insecurity occurs whenever there is a potential threat to the survival of a social group, for the survival of the community. The community in this sense is seen as a homogenous one – formed by citizens who share the same culture and values. Buzan et al. (1998) point out the three most common issues connected to societal (in)security: cultural and linguistic influence from neighboring countries, migration, and integrational processes (such as those of the EU). Another relevant sector for this present study is the political sector. *"The political sector is about relationships of authority, governing status and recognition"* (Buzan – Little 2000: 73) – here, a key organizing concept around which insecurity is created and articulated is sovereignty.

The current state of affairs in Europe, as will be shown throughout the paper, places countries like the Czech Republic and Slovakia in a double process of insecurity: one where too much integration is seen as a threat against their ability to decide on matters that have historically been limited to the nation states (who is allowed to enter and stay in a particular territory), and one where the Muslim "migrant other" is framed as a threat against "us", "Europeans". In this double process of insecurity, securitization may serve as an instrument for identity creation. Jef Huysmans (2006) argues that processes of securitization help to create a sense of community where this is absent – as in the case of the EU. Huysmans (2006: 52) argues that *"creating a political domain of insecurity in which fear of Islam becomes a political currency can consolidate identity without requiring revisiting explicitly the sources that unite a people."* Buzan et al. (1998) go further in their analysis and point to three *facilitating conditions* for securitization. These conditions enable one to explain why some issues are more easily securitized than other issues, but are not part of the speech act *per se* (Buzan et al. 1998: 32). The first condition is the adoption of a language of security; the second is the position of authority of those speaking that increases the chances of the discourse becoming legitimized; and the third

is the *"historical resonance of particular 'threats'"* (McDonald 2008: 567). It is through intersubjective processes that only certain threats resonate.

Treating security as a self-referential practice was not accepted by other scholars without some revisions. Among the main voices in this regard is Thierry Balzacq (2005: 172), who claims that *"securitization can be better understood as a pragmatic practice"* or as *"discursive techniques"* that enable the securitizing agents to make up the audiences' minds in relation to what is presented to them. Securitization is to be understood as *"a set of interrelated practices, and the processes of their production, diffusion, and reception/translation that bring threats into being"* (Balzacq 2011: 48). For Balzacq, his approach increases the explanatory power of the securitization theory by including a social context that is *"independent from the use of language"* (2005: 173).

The social context independent from the use of language, is a crucial aspect of securitization that was not properly developed by the Copenhagen School. At the same time, I also agree with Hansen (2011: 360), who points out that *"the self-referentiality of security does not imply that it is disconnected from intersubjective processes."* However, we must acknowledge Balzacq's contribution to strengthening securitization theory by focusing on an issue that was not thoroughly addressed by the Copenhagen School. Hence, throughout the article security is to be understood as both *"a self-referential activity [and] an intersubjective process"* (Balzacq 2005: 179; Balzacq 2011). For me, as for Balzacq, every act of securitization is immersed in a historical process that occurs before the speech act and this is reflected in the empirical analysis presented later in the article. Securitization also benefits from the context – such as the event of a 'migration crisis' – and the analysis also takes this into consideration. In this way, the context and how each country positions itself vis-à-vis the European Union provide a different framework for the articulation of foreign policy, and enable us to identify particular differences in the securitizing discourse of each country.

Presenting an issue as an existential threat is the central aspect of securitization. However, in the Czech Republic and Slovakia the securitizing actors direct their discursive practices to introducing a new issue, migration as a threat, that, prior to that, had been almost absent from public debates on security in these countries, or, at least, it had not been systematically framed as a severe security issue by the political establishment. What I aim to make sense of throughout the paper is that instead of securitizing migrants coming from other EU member states, Ukrainians, or Russians, who form the vast majority of migrants in the two countries, the political elites' discourses address a kind of migrant that is nearly absent from the two societies: the Muslim migrant from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

SECURITIZATION OF MIGRATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Securitization of migration in the European Union has been studied by several scholars such as Huysmans (2000; 2006), who addressed how migration policy developed in the EU and how it became a security issue, or Didier Bigo (2002: 71), who discusses the interconnection of the terms migrants and security, which must be understood not as a phenomenon, but as concepts that are constructed *"to mobilize political responses"*. Léonard (2010: 232) did not study the EU as a monolith, but FRONTEX, in particular, and its contribution *"to the securitization of asylum and migration in the EU"* and, based on that, further developed securitization theory by pointing out two core criteria to identify securitizing practices: activities that are implemented to address issues that are perceived as threats, and the extraordinary character of such activities.

More recently, studies have focused on the responses to the 2015 migration crisis. Ceccorulli (2019) looked at how the Schengen regime was securitized since 2015, producing an internal crisis in the EU. She shows how securitization in the case of the

Schengen regime did not call for the adoption of extraordinary measures, as is usually the case in securitization moves, but rather called for a return to normalization, where European internal security measures would be preserved. Léonard and Kaunert's (2019) comprehensive study looks at securitization of asylum-seekers and refugees on the Union level in a very detailed manner – by differentiating between asylum and migration policies and also by differentiating between *"EU asylum policy […] and EU's policies towards asylum-seekers"* (Léonard – Kaunert 2019: 8). The latter involve a broad range of policy areas that go beyond asylum but affect the lives of asylum-seekers.

Roger Brubaker (2017) attempted to understand and highlight some of the similarities and differences between populist movements in Northern and Western Europe, and those in Central and Eastern Europe. He claims that Northern and Western European populist movements are distinct from the Central and Eastern European movements in some particular ways. In Northern and Western Europe, in response to Islam, populism has a strong focus on Christianity not as a religious practice *per se*, but as a form of *"cultural and civilizational identity"* (2007: 1198). There has also been a focus on secularism, and on the populists' commitment to freedom of speech, LGBT rights, gender, and philosemitism in these parts of Europe. This makes their type of national-populism less nationalistic and more civilizationist. Brubaker briefly looks at the case of Hungary and Poland and claims that the mainstream political discourse in Central and Eastern Europe is still grounded in a nationalist, rather than civilizational, rhetoric. He also claims that the liberalism so much promoted in Northern and Western Europe has been challenged in Central and Eastern Europe – a Central and Eastern Europe that Brubaker seems to associate too much with the image of Viktor Orbán. He goes further and points out another difference between West and East: anti-Muslim sentiment in Northern and Western Europe has developed over a long period of time and reached its apex after 9/11 while in Central and Eastern Europe it arose abruptly and has been more *"opportunistically exploited"* (2017: 1209) since the refugee crisis. Slačálek and Svobodová (2018) argue, on the other hand, that the Czech populist movement shares many of the features of the Northern and Eastern European populist movements. It expresses forms of secularized Christianity and *"defense of liberal and secular values"* (Slačálek – Svobodová 2018: 3).

Kristýna Tamchynová (2017) looks at the interconnection between processes of securitization and Europeanization in the Czech Republic in a period after the refugee crisis and claims that in the Czech case, securitization of migration seems to serve as a tool for strengthening the *"notion of Europeaness"* (2017: 108), even though it is in a country known for its Euroskeptic stances. She also claims that in the Czech case, the EU is criticized for some of its actions, but the sense of belonging to a higher European civilization (that is nowadays epitomized by the EU) is still present in the mainstream discourse.

Moreover, Aliaksei Kazharski (2019), in a recent study, showed that the Czech Republic and Slovakia, although sharing a common history and statehood, and having similar languages, position themselves differently in their relations to the core of the EU. Both are small states but build their geopolitical imaginaries of core-periphery relations differently. Kazharski (2019) argues that in the Czech Republic, the securitization of peripherality that Eurooptimists attempt to perform, directly competes with the Euro-sceptic securitizations of the EU's breach of national sovereignty, epitomized by the German domination. The Czech discourse, he argues, shows a tendency towards an intended form of self-marginalization when the discourse is framed in a way that shows the country's attempt to stay away from the *"EU 'core' through various opt-outs"* (2019: 11) without, however, leaving the EU as such. He goes further and shows that the Slovak mainstream dominant discourse is marked by a fear of marginalization that plays a key role in supporting what he calls a *"Euroenthusiast"* attitude towards the EU. In this way,

EU peripherality is securitized more vigorously in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. For Kazharski (2019: 11), the Slovak soft Euroscepticism focuses more on opposing certain policies rather than on creating *"grand geopolitical narratives [like those] one discovers in the Czech Klausite discourse"*.

Throughout the paper, I draw on both Tamchynová (2017) and Kazharski (2019) by showing that the two countries' articulations between not conforming to some EU policies, and at the same time affirming their *belongingness* to Europe, epitomized by the EU, facilitate both countries' accommodation in the core-periphery spectrum. The article moves beyond these authors by indicating more specifically how migration is securitized, and by providing a more in-depth view of the differences and similarities of how the securitizing discourse is produced in the two countries – in regard to the EU and in the national contexts. Securitization, rather than being the focus of the analysis, reveals the kind of discourse being produced in the process of the Czech and Slovak affirmation of belongingness to Europe and accommodation in the core-periphery spectrum. I will show that the discourse produced following the migration crisis indicates that even if the Czech political class has been more prone to being selective regarding European integration, and to conducting a deliberate form of self-marginalization (Kazharski 2019) than its Slovak counterpart, both countries have a mainstream consensus on EU membership. What differs is the sector in which securitization occurs in each country. The Czech discourse securitizes more often in the political sector, posing the EU policies following the migration crisis as a threat to Czech sovereignty and European security. The discourse produced in Slovakia more intensely concerns the societal domain, with identitarian references to migrants as threats to "us".

The findings are relevant for the broader academic discussion (or rather contestation) of the Central European countries as a homogenous group within the European political sphere, at least in regard to migration policy. This kind of discourse that frames the Visegrad countries as a monolithic and consistent group when it comes to migration policies is produced mainly by key actors in the four countries in an attempt to create an imagined community in the region, for instance by releasing joint declarations on the issue (The Czech Government 2015b). On the EU level, this was broadly implied since the four countries formed the loudest voice and rejected the EU-proposed quota system back in 2015. Several scholars have also worked with the Visegrad countries as a group in their analysis (Stepper 2016), or as a "subregion" (Kazharski 2017) when it comes to migration policies – suggesting some congruence between these countries, while a few scholars have pointed to the existence of differences between the countries (Nagy 2017; Nič 2016), but without going deeper into the discursive particularities of each.

ANALYZING THE CZECH AND SLOVAK SECURITIZATION OF MIGRATION

I use *securitization theory* in order to explain how the issue of migrants coming from MENA countries, mainly Muslims, is being constructed and framed in the Czech and Slovak contexts. I do so by identifying the context in which securitization occurs and by providing an *"understanding of who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent objects), why, with what results, and under what conditions"* (Buzan et al. 1998: 32). I look at the languages of security used by the main securitizing actors by doing a qualitative analysis of the discourse of the Slovak and Czech Prime Ministers between 2015 (the beginning of the European migration crisis) and December 2018. The aim is not to systematically compare the two countries, but to analyze and contrast the discursive articulations regarding migration in two countries with a shared history and similar languages that can be understood by the publics in both countries. Securitization and its correspondent sectors are operationalized through a search for speech acts

referencing the particular security sectors outlined by the Copenhagen School. References to migrants through the use of words such as *infiltration, problems/issues, terrorism,* and *risks* denote threats, and justify the adoption of extraordinary measures situated beyond the bounds of ordinary politics. References to *Muslims* and *radical Islam* denote the identitarian boundaries between "us", Christian Europeans, and "them" – the others. Threat to sovereignty can be operationalized in references to *mandatory* policies imposed upon member states, and to Brussels' strong interference in domestic affairs. An inductive data-driven approach was used in the construction of the coding scheme that led to the identification of several codes: anti-Muslim sentiment; externalization of migration policies; the EU quota scheme as a threat to sovereignty; the EU quota scheme as a channel for "invasion"; civilizational Europe (us vs. them); Eastern neighborhood migrants as "lesser" others; and pro-EU discourse.

For this study, I gathered the original samples through a search engine by using the following combinations of keywords:

a) 'migration Bohuslav Sobotka,' the Czech Prime Minister in 2015 (until January 2017);
b) 'migration Andrej Babiš,' the current Czech Prime Minister who replaced Sobotka but who was also part of his government as a minister of finance;
c) 'migration Robert Fico,' the Slovak Prime Minister in 2015 (until March 2018);
d) 'migration Peter Pellegrini,' who replaced Fico as Prime Minister in March 2018.

The search was also repeated in the Czech and Slovak languages (here the keywords were 'Migrácia/Migrace' plus the name and surname of the given Prime Minister). The most common sources of speech transcripts were the official webpages of the respective governments. All speeches regarding migration from the particular analyzed period that were found on the official websites of the two governments were carefully processed and analyzed. Nevertheless, the sources were *not* limited to these websites and, as mentioned, the combinations of keywords were entered into a search engine in order to find further speech acts that matched the combinations of words. All the retrieved text sources were processed in full scope during the analysis – about 200 sources were analyzed.

I considered the fact that foreign policy is not only informed by Prime Ministers, and in matters related to migration the discursive acts coming from Ministers of Interior, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Presidents and other actors are also relevant. However, following Buzan et al.'s (1998: 32) approach that points out that *"in concrete analysis […] it is important to be specific about who is more or less privileged in articulating security"* I decided to narrow down the object of analysis to the Prime Ministers. This is due to the fact that I am interested in analyzing the discourse produced at and towards the national level as well as at the European Union level, where migration policy is decided on in the European Council with the participation of the Prime Ministers – the more privileged actors articulating security at the EU level. Also, the discourse of the most privileged actors in liberal democracies (in this study the Prime Ministers) is usually not totally disconnected from the discourses circulating among the larger public. Such disconnection is unlikely because it involves political risks.

This methodological choice, however, limits my ability to make more general claims about securitization, for example by claiming that Eastern migration is not being securitized in the Czech Republic in general, or that anti-Russian sentiments are not present in the country. Nevertheless, I can still make claims in regard to the particular discourse produced by those more privileged in articulating security – in this case, the countries' Prime Ministers. Still, the article contributes to the deconstruction of the discourse that frames the Central European countries as a homogenous group within the EU when it comes to issues revolving around migration.

THE CZECH AND SLOVAK SECURITIZATION OF MIGRATION

By opposing the quota system proposed by the Union in 2015, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (together with the other Visegrad countries) distanced themselves from the political mainstream of Western Europe. By doing so, they reproduced the discourse of the rising right-wing parties that are present in Western Europe but whose anti-migrant claims have been, at best, only partially legitimized by the broader public. What is paradoxical is that the Czech and Slovak political elites have been reproducing a Western-like (Ciftci 2012) anti-Muslim discourse in the absence of Muslim immigrant communities on their own territories that would be comparable to those in Western Europe. This section will analyze the securitization processes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia by first focusing on the facilitating conditions for securitization of migration in the language and actors of securitization, and then on the societal and political resonance of migration as a threat (Buzan et al. 1998: 32). The following section will discuss the similarities and differences in the Czech and Slovak relationships with the core of the EU as another kind of condition that arguably shaped the Czech and Slovak securitizations of migration. Finally, this section will also discuss the hierarchies of Otherness in the Czech and Slovak discourses on migration.

The Language and Actors of Securitization

When we consider the question of *what* is being securitized in the discourse, throughout the analysis we see that different referent objects of security are present in the Czech and Slovak Prime Ministers' discourses and are evoked differently on different occasions: sovereignty, identity, and European values are among the issues often evoked and framed as being threatened. In relation to European values, it is epitomized by the idea of Christianity (for instance, by only accepting Christian migrants as these can integrate into our societies). Yet, it is important to mention that in the two cases (although more among the Czechs than the Slovaks), the concept is evoked in the sense of *secularized Christianity* that Brubaker (2017) points out in relation to national populist movements of Northern and Western Europe. Christianity here *"is embraced not as a religion but as a civilizational identity understood in an antithetical opposition to Islam"* (Brubaker 2017: 1194).

Turning back to the language of securitization (Buzan et al. 1998: 32), in the following analysis we will see that migration has been linked with security by the use of expressions such as *infiltration* and *wave* to describe the influx of asylum-seekers arriving in Europe. Kristýna Tamchynová (2017: 115) has found similar results in her analysis of the Czech media coverage of the migration crisis and points out that references to a wave or a flood, and the focus on statistics suggest *"an apocalyptic vision of Europe being submerged and destroyed"*.

Regarding the position of authority of those speaking, which is seen as a factor increasing the chances of the discourse becoming legitimized, we can note that the Czech and Slovak Prime Ministers are the actors who articulate the discourse on the two levels: domestic and European. They are the ones producing the securitizing moves that, at times, turn into a securitization that has an impact on the broader European context. This is not to say that Miloš Zeman and Tomio Okamura in the Czech Republic, or Štefan Harabin and Marian Kotleba in Slovakia play no role in securitizing migration. They do impact on the process of securitization of migration – however, when it comes to foreign policy one can argue that the position of authority of the Prime Ministers increases the chances of a successful securitization of migration. In the Czech Republic's foreign policy, Babiš uses his position of authority to balance between his political supporter Zeman's strong anti-Muslim discourse and a discourse that accommodates the Czech Republic as part of the European Union project.[1] Slovakia, on the other hand, has always

adopted more pro-EU stances than the Czech Republic and regardless of its anti-migrant discourse, it has continued to reaffirm its position as part of the EU core, as we will observe later in the analysis. Moreover, in Slovakia, the former president Andrej Kiska held strong pro-migrant stances but this has had little impact on *desecuritization* of the issue because, as one can observe in the Eurobarometer surveys from 2015 until now, concerns about the migrant Other have been increasingly present in the public.

The Societal and Political Sectors of Securitization

If we look at data from the Eurobarometer survey, we see that in regard to the question *"What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?"* there is a major increase in the number of citizens who perceive *immigration* as one of the main issues facing the Union nowadays, from 11% and 26% in 2014 to 48% and 58% in 2018 – in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, respectively (European Commission 2014, 2018). When the question asked was *"What do you think are the two most important issues facing (our country) at the moment?"*, until the year 2014, immigration was not mentioned as being a major issue for either Slovakia or the Czech Republic. In the autumn of 2015, however, immigration became the most frequently mentioned issue in the Czech Republic and the third most mentioned issue for Slovaks. These numbers have decreased since then but were still higher in 2018 than they were in 2014 (European Commission 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). The Eurobarometer numbers tell us that in the period following the migration crisis immigration has become a growing area of concern for the citizens (audience) in both countries, particularly if more recent data is compared to data from before the crisis. Mapping and analyzing all the variables affecting the way the public perceives immigration falls outside of the scope of this paper. However, we can in fact hypothesize that a highly securitized discourse emanating from the main political elites in these countries affected the way the public perceives immigration, but also that the presentation of migration as a threat indeed resonated quite strongly in the Czech and Slovak public.

Political parties that have strong anti-immigrant (anti-Muslim) voices formed major parts of the governments in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia in recent years. Nevertheless, the anti-migrant discourse was stronger in Slovakia during Robert Fico's government (though it was more intense between 2015 and June 2016, before the country assumed the presidency of the European Council) than in the Czech Republic under Bohuslav Sobotka's government at the beginning of the crisis. In Slovakia, especially during Fico's government, anti-Muslim and fear-based stances dominated the official discourse substantially more often than in the Czech Republic. Slačálek and Svobodová (2018: 1) have pointed out that the Islamophobic movement in the Czech Republic *"did not manage to enter party politics*," even though Tomio Okamura and his Freedom and Direct Democracy party profited from the Islamophobic movement. In addition, the Islamophobic protests that happened in the country in the wake of the migration and refugee crisis did not find large support – reaching a maximum of 10 000 people (Slačálek – Svobodová 2018), despite the negative attitude of Czechs towards immigration as shown in the Eurobarometer surveys.

In the Czech Republic, it was initially said that the country would be willing to help by voluntarily accepting a few hundred asylum-seekers coming from Africa and neighboring countries (Pravda 2015). Sobotka stated, in the same year, that *"in the past, the Czech Republic has always acted in solidarity with refugees and contributed to resolving refugee crises and our Government is continuing along this path during the current immigration crisis. We have decided to assist 152 Christian refugees from Erbil in Iraq, who have approached our country with a request for help"* (The Czech Government 2015a). However, by looking at the speech acts, we can reasonably argue that soon policy mimicry

was put in place, and Sobotka started aligning himself with and reproducing the anti-migrant, anti-Muslim discourse of other V4 leaders – including Robert Fico. Sobotka, again less often than Fico, stated that *"honestly speaking, we [the Czech Republic] do not even wish that a strong Muslim community be formed here, in the light of the problems we see [elsewhere]"* (Pravda 2016) and that *"when we look at the problems in other European countries, we in Czechia do not want more Muslims"* (Visegrad Post 2017). Sobotka's rhetoric was based on a specific selection of migrants, in which mostly Christians were selected, as evidenced by the quote above. It is important to understand that especially in the Czech case, where most Czechs do not believe in God (Pew Research Center 2017), Christianity is not stressed in terms of its religious content, but in terms of being a sign of a civilizational identity (Brubaker 2017) which the Czechs are part of.

In Slovakia, Robert Fico argued that the terrorist attacks that happened in Paris were a result of the *"infiltration of the Islamic State in the migratory wave"* (Petrovič 2015). The word infiltration, *per se*, is a term used in the security realm to indicate the act of penetrating an enemy territory – having, therefore, a bad connotation. Fico intensified his securitizing discourse based on fear and on framing migrants as a threat, especially after the sexual attacks in Cologne, Germany. Right after the attacks, he claimed, *"they [asylum-seekers] cannot be integrated naturally; they would have to be kept in one place, which would lead to security risks. The situation is extremely serious"* (The Slovak Government 2016).

Portraying an issue as an existential threat is a core step towards its securitization, as identified by Buzan et al. (1998). By framing an issue as an imminent threat, political elites can justify the adoption of extraordinary measures that would not otherwise be justifiable, such as the rejection of the quota scheme and the closing of borders regardless of the Schengen agreement. Fico also wrote a comment for *Hospodárske noviny* in which he stated, *"we know that 80 percent of the migrants are men, the overwhelming majority of them aged 25–35, not women with children fleeing war. Today, it is clear to everyone that if we do not stop this wave, Europe has no chance of coping with the crisis. If the president, opposition and media are treating this threat and these security risks lightly, it is their decision. We talk about these things openly and truthfully, and especially, we act"* (Fico 2016). He continued, on another occasion, by further associating asylum-seekers with terrorists by stating, *"there is a link between migration and terrorism, and terrorists can use the migration to transfer weapons and explosives, so the probability of attacks is very high"* (Novinky.cz 2016). He has also claimed that *"Islam has no place in Slovakia. It is the duty of politicians to talk about these things very clearly and openly. I do not wish there were tens of thousands of Muslims [in Slovakia]"* (Matharu 2017).

My claim that the Czech discourse was based less on the spread of fear of one particular type of migrant than that in Slovakia is not only based on the quantitative analysis of the data gathered. At the same moment when Robert Fico was associating migrants with terrorists, Sobotka was claiming that *"[t]he refugee wave is the result of the outbreak of radical Islam in large areas of Syria and Iraq. It is not possible to put two things together and to affirm that refugees are terrorists"* (Pravda 2016).

When we look at Robert Fico's discourse, we see that from 2015 until the time he left office, in March 2018, there is a continuation of his rhetoric that further legitimizes securitization of migration. There were no attempts to fully *de-securitize* migration under Fico, even though he moved a bit towards a more pragmatic approach during the Slovak presidency of the Council from July 2016. It is here, for example, that the connection between securitization as a self-referential and securitization as an intersubjective (context-based) practice, can be made. At the national level, Fico's discourse was, most of the time, based on fear and on portraying the types of migrants arriving in Europe as incompatible with European societies. Pellegrini adopted a different stance. In 2018, he

stated that *"the government continues to refuse the quotas and mandatory redistribution of migrants [...] [but it also refuses] the abusive and unreasonable spread of fear among citizens in regard to migration by some opposition parties as part of the ongoing campaign for the municipal elections"* (Pravda 2018a).

Therefore, in Slovakia, especially during Robert Fico's government, anti-Muslim and fear-based stances dominated the official discourse substantially more often than in the Czech Republic. With the migration crisis, the rejection of the (historically) Hungarian "Other" in Slovakia seems to have lost importance in the mainstream discourse, giving way to quite the opposite: Slovakia and Hungary strengthening their ties through the structures of the Visegrad group.

In the Czech Republic, this identity-based discourse was also produced, but it was only secondary in Babiš's rhetoric, while in Slovakia it dominated the discourse on migration. Babiš, on the other hand, has adopted a stricter stance that was not so often specifically on the grounds of ethnicity or religion, but that rather stressed the Czech Republic will not comply with *any* kind of mandatory quota scheme (Voice of Europe 2018). Robert Fico, in contrast, became known for his hard stances towards migrants and was often put in the same category as Viktor Orbán in connection with his harsh discourse. The same did not happen to Sobotka or to Babiš, who, at least in the speech acts analyzed within the scope of this paper, focused less on fear-spreading and more on a pragmatic stance against the EU mandatory quotas and in favor of border security and externalization of migration policies.[2]

During the period from 2015 to 2018, *opposing the quota scheme*, and focusing on *border control* and *externalization* dominated the discourse in the Czech Republic and this tendency was also very present in Slovakia, especially since the Slovak presidency. First, if the discourse is securitized on an identitarian basis, then we can justify the support for externalization measures regarding EU migration policies. In various circumstances Robert Fico has argued *"that the fight against illegal migration is the most effective protection of the Schengen external borders, and a clear open cooperation with the countries from which the migrants come and with the countries that can help us in the regions [is preferred]"* (The Slovak Government 2017c). Similarly, in Brussels Pellegrini has stated that Slovakia supports the fight against traffickers, addressing the root causes of migration and protecting the external borders (Pravda 2018b).

The rejection of the mandatory quotas, the increase in border security and externalization of migration policies were the most discussed issues regarding migration in the Czech Republic for the period analyzed. There is a continuation between Sobotka's rhetoric and the one adopted by Babiš, who has claimed that *"[i]t is absolutely unacceptable that someone else wants to decide on who will work and live here"* (The Slovak Spectator 2018), that *"[w]e are resolutely against anybody dictating to us who should live and work in our country"* (Voices of Europe 2018) and that *"[t]he real solution lies outside of Europe. That is where Europe must be stronger, more active in talking with the representatives of these states, and in the fight against smugglers and organized crime"* (The Czech Government 2018).

The opposition to the quota scheme seems to be led by different motivations in each country. In Slovakia, the discourse is framed around the fear of an Islamization of the country. In the Czech Republic, the key motivation for opposing the quota scheme seems to have less to do with the asylum-seekers and more to do with the Czech tradition of only a partial acceptation, in a kind of stubbornness, of whatever seems like an imposition *"from Brussels"*. In other words, or speaking with the language created by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al. 1998), in Slovakia securitization predominantly (but not exclusively) happened in the societal sector, where the referent object was identity. In the Czech Republic, the quota scheme was framed as the predominant (but, again, not exclusive)

threat to the Czech Republic and its sovereignty – therefore, as fitting in the political sector, where security is organized around the concept of sovereignty.

The Accommodation in the Core-Periphery Spectrum

Following the migration crisis, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also Poland and Hungary, *"have adhered to a more culturalist and particularist interpretation of European nations, which increased these countries' inclination towards national sovereignty and their partial rejection of the liberal universalism advocated by the Western countries in the core of the EU"* (Kazhraski 2017: 2). This opposition from what comes "from Brussels," as illustrated above, symbolized a break with the *"return to Europe"* discourse – an instance of reaffirmation of being the *"kidnapped west,"* in Kundera's (1984) words, that has been in place since the fall of the Soviet regime.

In-group coherence and the processes of othering are particularly relevant in situations in which *"overwhelming events […] sufficiently disturb held ideas, [and as a result] the stories and the views of self and other may collapse, not able to maintain their hegemony"* (Reinke de Buitrago 2012: xviii). In such circumstances, new ideas are created, and the process of othering is reinitiated. The migration and refugee crisis seemed to be one of these moments in which a new other, *"the migrants,"* was created.

One may argue that the Czech Republic and Slovakia form a bridge between the EU and the other two more problematic Central European countries, Poland and Hungary, as a consequence of the illiberal turn the latter two are facing. This has a particular impact on foreign policy because both the Czech Republic and Slovakia have to adapt to two different positions – the position of the EU, and the position of Poland and Hungary as it is in the interest of Slovakia and the Czech Republic to keep the alliance of the Visegrad Group alive. The articulations related to conforming to both the EU and the position of the V4 are reflected in the foreign policy discourse of both countries.

Potočárová (2018) has shown that Slovak foreign policy is strongly based on a fear of marginalization, or what she calls *"the fear of being left behind"*. She argues that this was a result of changes in the international scenario – such as Brexit and the discussion on multi-speed Europe – and that it led Slovakia to constantly attempt to make sure it is part of the EU core. For the Czech Republic, there seems to be no such necessity to systematically reaffirm that it belongs to the EU, and issues of sovereignty appear more often in its discourse. This helps to explain the meaning and purpose of securitization in the two countries and why securitization is articulated in different sectors and in different ways in them.

Slovakia is found on a much deeper level of integration than the Czech Republic. This can be traced back to the period following the Mečiarism era and the necessity for Slovakia to go through higher degrees of policy emulation at a faster rate in order to join the Union together with the other candidates in 2004, as well as to the adoption of the Euro as the country's currency. Additionally, assuming the rotating EU Council presidency in mid-2016, when important decisions on matters of migration were being taken, placed Slovakia in a very puzzling position in which it was strongly institutionally immersed in the EU structures. The securitization constructed around the political sector and organized around issues of sovereignty would not receive the support of the audience that is necessary for the sustainability of politics of emergency and exception. The context and the fact that the country is institutionally constrained by its links with the Union pose barriers for the production of a securitizing discourse in the political sector.

In fact, we can see that during the Slovak presidency of the Council Euroscepticism softened in Slovakia, and the country's increasing support for the EU project became more evident. In October 2017, during a speech at the University in Nitra, Robert Fico stated: *"People can think anything of the EU, but there is no better project for us"* (The Slovak

Government 2017a). In a different speech, he also affirmed that *"a clear continuation of the pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientation is in the strategic interest of the Slovak Republic"* (The Slovak Government 2017b). Right before leaving office, he stated that *"we are the European Union [...] there is nothing better than the EU"* (The Slovak Government 2018). This kind of rhetoric saw a continuation with Prime Minister Pellegrini, who, in his first EU summit as PM, stated that his first task was to reaffirm to other EU leaders that his *"government will maintain a strong pro-European course"* (Reuters 2018).

Similarly, in the Czech Republic, the Prime Ministers maintain a clear pro-EU discourse, but there seems to be less language of security, in Buzan et al. (1998) terms. The less eminent pro-EU discourse, although less central in the Czech Republic, still appears there on some occasions. In August 2018, Babiš affirmed that *"[w]e are a solid part of the West, we are members of the EU, and we are allies within NATO, and no one can question it […]. If someone talks about a Czexit, it threatens our future"* (Tyden.cz 2018). Thus, even if the Czech political class has been more prone to being selective in regard to European integration, and to conducting a deliberate form of self-marginalization (Kazharski 2019), both countries have a mainstream consensus on EU membership, as we could see in the narratives of both Babiš and Pellegrini. While the securitization of migration has been successful in both countries since 2015, the same kind of discourse was not systematically sustained by the Prime Ministers vis-à-vis the EU.

Foreign policy is articulated in a two-level game in the absence of an audience in Brussels. The pro-EU rhetoric was most of the time presented when the political actors were speaking in the EU institutions. This is because, as we saw earlier, there is no successful securitization without an audience to legitimize the threat narrative of the securitizing actors. With the already mentioned position of the two countries as bridges, plus the fact that without an audience in Brussels the threat narrative could not achieve securitization, the two countries started adopting a more pragmatic narrative – especially in comparison to Hungary and Poland, which have not softened their tone since 2015. These articulations between not conforming to some EU policies and at the same time affirming their *belongingness* to the EU were common in the countries' positioning vis-à-vis the EU.

Finally, the congruency between the anti-immigrant position of the political elites and the societies can be explained by cultural and historical aspects. This is another point where Balzacq's (2005) argument about contextualizing securitization discourse is shown to be of extreme relevance to understanding the securitization of migration in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. A discourse that has been historically constructed and often reproduced is that these countries have been culturally and ethnically homogenous societies with little or no tradition of immigration, although they have been significant emigration countries for a very long time (Lahav – Guiraudon 2007). It is said that their lack of experience with (im)migration generates fear – a fear of the unknown or a fear of an *otherness* that would disrupt the homogeneity and jeopardize the national identities of Slovaks and Czechs, but also of Europeans in general.

However, the irony is that the implicit assumption of cultural homogeneity which is threatened by the cultural *other* is, in itself, a selective exercise in collective memory construction. The region that is usually referred to as Central Europe has historically been one of the most culturally diverse and multi-ethnic regions in Europe. The fate of the Eastern European periphery is closely tied to the multiethnic empires, in particular, the Habsburg Empire. The Eastern European pattern of a delayed modernization preserved cultural heterogeneity on a scale which was absent from the more rapidly modernizing Western European core. Therefore, in this case, in historical terms, it is not entirely accurate to speak of culturally homogenous societies that lack the experience of accommodating

cultural otherness. On the other hand, here cultural otherness itself is organized as a kind of a hierarchy, where the Ukrainian other, for instance, is a lesser other than people arriving from MENA countries. The process of identity formation in the region has been historically characterized by a sense of insecurity, which tends to be a characteristic of small nations. In Kundera's (2006) definition, a small nation is one whose existence can be jeopardized at any moment.

The Hierarchy of Otherness

We are, then, left to ask, *why* is securitization of migration selective in the two cases analyzed? As we observed, the Czech securitization, analyzed through the discourse of the Prime Ministers, occurs in the more traditional political sector of security, mainly framing migration as a threat and advocating the rejection of the mandatory quotas, more border control, and further externalization of migration policies. In the Slovak Prime Ministers' discourse, there is a congruency to the Czech stances towards border control and externalization of migration policies, but what dominated the discourse in the period analyzed was the rejection of the mandatory quotas though the anti-Muslim and fear-based discourse. Thus, the Slovak discourse stays more within the societal sector of security.

The empirical analysis further shows that an absolute majority of the discursive acts produced by the Czech and Slovak leaders thematize solely the asylum-seekers and refugees coming from the MENA countries. In fact, all the speeches and comments published in the section *speeches* of the official webpage of the Government of the Czech Republic from the year 2015 until December 2018, show *no* (zero) negative references to migration/migrants from Ukraine, Slovakia, Russia, Vietnam or Poland – the top five countries of origin of the majority of migrants in the country. Nearly the same thing occurs in Slovakia. Except for one reference by Pellegrini in 2018 (see below), both governments referred to Ukrainians only before the EU agreement on the visa-free regime for Ukrainian citizens, in which they showed support for this initiative. In fact, in a joint declaration in June 2016, the V4 as such declared their full support for the visa-free regime with Ukraine (The Czech Government 2016), which was then approved by the EU one year later (Denník N 2017). The single further indirect reference to Ukrainian migrants in Slovakia was made in late 2018 by Prime Minister Pellegrini when he declared his intention to facilitate conditions for *"good quality migration"*. He claimed *"the lack of labor is now the most prominent problem and that is why now comes the time for us to talk about managed migration very openly. A migration that will have a certain level of quality and that will bring people to positions we need"* (Pellegrini in Gdovin 2018). From this, we can assume that *"*bad quality migration*"* in his discourse probably refers to Muslim asylum-seekers and refugees while "good migration" comes from the countries that have traditionally contributed to the workforce in Slovakia – including Ukraine. Formerly, the construction of otherness revolved around questions of ethnicity (the Roma Other, the Hungarian-Other, etc.), while now it is constructed in civilization (European) terms.

What happens is that when the Muslims are framed as a cultural other, the "Ukrainian other" and the "Hungarian other" are inevitably placed as lesser "others". A hierarchy of "otherness" is created. Social constructivists (see Neumann 1999a, 1999b) have shown that this is a common feature of identity formation; to forge a common identity, we always need to find an outgroup. Otherness helps not only to differentiate "us" from "them", but also to increase the in-group coherence. Processes of securitization also serve the purpose of forging in-group coherence. However, securitization of migration seems to promote in-group coherence not on the grounds of ethnically defined nations, but on the idea of civilizational Europe.

This hierarchy of otherness, nevertheless, does not just fall from the sky. Didier Bigo (2002) builds a strong argument about the fact that migrants and security are concepts that are constructed *"to mobilize political responses"* (2002: 71). He claims that in each country the political discourse works to build the image of the migrant as an inversion of *"the image of the good citizen"* (2002: 70). However, this would imply that the image of the migrant other differs from country to country and no Europeanization of migration would be possible at the EU level. How could we, Europeans, manage migration if each of us has a different understanding of who the migrant is? Bigo (2002: 71), then, claims that harmonization is reached *"if each security service uses the word immigrant as a sign of danger"*. The migrant is then framed not as the Czech other, or the Slovak other, but as the European other, in civilizational terms, that comes here to jeopardize the European values (whatever this might mean). There is a process of Europeanization of *migrants* (not of migration!). In this way, the Ukrainian, Russian, or Polish migrants are not the Czech and Slovak others because they share at least some European values. Interestingly, the Vietnamese migrants are not portrayed as the inverted image of the good European citizen either – at least not the way that Muslims are portrayed to be.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined how contemporary foreign policy discourse is constructed through securitizing discourses in the Czech Republic and Slovakia vis-à-vis the migration crisis. I focused on foreign policy discourse about migration in these two small states to understand how they have been positioning (and re-positioning) themselves in relation to migration and the core-periphery spectrum of the European Union. By analyzing the discourse of the Prime Ministers from 2015 to 2018, I found out that their foreign policy is being constructed around the issue of *Europeanness* (belongingness) and accommodation in the core-periphery spectrum, where securitization reveals the kind of discourse being produced in this process.

The analysis reveals that securitization in the two countries happens mainly in two different sectors, in Buzan et al.'s (1998) terms. In the Czech Republic, even though the migrant Other was also posed as a threat in identitarian terms, what dominated the discourse was the framing of the quota scheme as a threat to sovereignty, and the need to externalize migration policies. Therefore, the country more often expresses its discontent with decisions taken in the core of the EU. In Slovakia, especially under Robert Fico, securitization was predominantly done in the societal sector – where migration was securitized as a threat to identity. The Slovak criticisms towards the quota scheme (and towards the EU as such) were later softened, but still very present, especially after the Slovak presidency of the Council. Yet, the criticisms appeared more often as a consequence of articulations done at the Visegrad level. The findings contribute to the contestation of the mainstream discourse that implies that the process of securitization of migration in Central Europe is homogenous, especially after 2015 when the Central European countries, as a group, articulated their opposition to the mandatory quota and relocation scheme proposed by the Union.

One may argue that the Czech Republic and Slovakia form a bridge between the EU and the other two more problematic Central European countries, Poland and Hungary, as a consequence of the illiberal turn the latter are facing. This has a particular impact on foreign policy because both the Czech Republic and Slovakia have to adapt to two different positions – the position of the EU, and the position of Poland and Hungary as it is in the interest of Slovakia and the Czech Republic that the alliances within the Visegrad Group be kept. The articulations related to conforming to both the EU and the position of the V4 are reflected in the foreign policy discourses of both countries.

Between the two countries, there is also a uniform view in regard to who the migrant Other is – the migrant Other is the figure of Islam, one that is the antithesis of, and threatens the European civilization in this view. There is a process of Europeanization of *migrants*. In the hierarchy of Otherness, in today's scenario, the migrant Other is framed not as being the figure of the Czech Other, or the Slovak Other, but as being the European Other, in civilizational terms. In the kind of discourse that is produced, this migrant comes to Europe to jeopardize the European values and the European project – as the quota scheme has divided the Union. The Ukrainian, the Russian, and the Polish Other are not the Czech and Slovak identitarian antitheses in this way because they do share at least some European values. Nonetheless, the European project, in turn, is subject to criticism (especially by the Czech Republic) but it is still framed as part of who we are, and where we want to be. Therefore, the analysis indicates that these countries' articulations between not conforming to some EU policies, and at the same time affirming their *belongingness* to Europe facilitate both countries' accommodation in the core-periphery spectrum. In a broader sense, we can claim that securitization of migration seems to promote the in-group coherence needed to affirm the in-group's *belongingness* to Europe, epitomized by the EU. The two cases analyzed suggest that in-group coherence will be more commonly built not on grounds of ethnically defined nations, but on the broader idea of civilizational Europe.

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[1] Slačálek and Svobodová (2018: 10), by conducting interviews with participants in the Islamophobic movement in the Czech Republic, show that *"with a few important exceptions, such as the president, the political class is perceived in the Islamophobic discourse […] as consisting of traitors to their own society, and as [an] essentially obedient long arm of 'Brussels'".*

[2] David FitzGerald (2019) shows that liberal democracies tend to create what he calls an *"architecture of repulse"*, in which they use remote control (externalization of asylum policies) and hidden techniques to repel migrants while at the same time reinforcing the rhetoric of compliance with human rights and international law. In this way, they do not violate the principle of *non-refoulement* in its *stricto sensus*, but still create a complex apparatus to keep asylum seekers from reaching their territories.

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Estonian Identity Construction Between Nation Branding and Building

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Abstract: Whilst most accounts of nation branding emphasize the economic and diplomatic relevance of the phenomenon, this article examines the way Estonia has been proposing a nation "branding + building" strategy. Drawing from an empirical study of 1) evolving campaigns of Enterprise Estonia; 2) the leverage of the national e-Residency program in attracting foreign investment; and 3) tourist and marketing strategies based on the revisiting of 'Estonian' culinary tradition, we look at the way official narratives have been claiming, with the help of nation branding elements, that the country has quickly de-Sovietized and that there is a new understanding of the Estonian nation and "Estonianness". This is intended to eventually prompt a reflection on the relationship between nation-building and nation branding, which can, in some circumstances, overlap and influence identity construction at the domestic and international level.

Keywords: digitalization, Estonia, food, identity, nation branding.

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Since its initial theorization (Deutsch – Foltz 2010 [1966]; Pye 1962) debates about nation-building have tended to emphasize macro and state actors in the construction of national identities. However, its initial focus on domestic elites and institutions (Connor 1972) has gradually been expanded to include the efforts of foreign powers as nation-building actors as well – most notably the US, in the stabilization of transitional countries (Fukuyama 2006). In line with these tendencies, debates on identity construction, in the post-socialist world and beyond, have emphasized the role of the ruling elites in rediscovering, or making up, national identity markers (Adams 2010; Brubaker 1996; Laitin 1998).

In contrast, an emerging stream of scholarship has started looking at non-state-inducted efforts to define and spread a national identity (Agarin 2010; Isaacs 2015; Isaacs – Polese 2016; Richardson 2008; Polese 2010; Rodgers 2007). The roots of this approach can be sought already in the mid-nineties, when debates on nationalism and construction of identity started paying attention to the unintended consequences of political actions. From Billig (1995) on, it is no longer only "what you see" that influences your identity but also what can be called invisible, or unnoticed, markers. The flags hang limply (Billig 1995: 40–41, see also Skey 2015), but how do we know that people don't notice them? Eventually the very fact of "not noticing" a national symbol can be regarded as a sign of acceptance of national narratives (Fox 2017: 4). These ideas have informed an emerging stream of research on the everyday (Edensor 2002; Foster 2002; Goode – Stroup 2015) that looks at the way construction of national identity can be influenced by unintended consequences of political measures or by civic initiatives that eventually become mainstreamed by a state or its society (Navaro-Yashin 2002; Polese – Horak 2015).

In spite of these premises, studies on nation branding have surprisingly had little influence on nation building literature. It is true that branding is *"concerned with a country's whole image on the international stage, covering political, economic and cultural dimensions"* (Fan 2010: 98). But it is also true that marketing can be used to communicate a diplomatic or strategic message (Potter 2009) to a variety of (not necessarily business) audiences. By conveying a certain message, we contribute to constructing our identity and the way others perceive us. Indeed, acceptance of our identity by others is a fundamental part of our identity so it is by convincing "others" about our identity that our very identity gets reshaped. By force of this, nation branding can be regarded as a nation building tool in that that an image of us is constructed, and conveyed to others, and we thus hope that they will keep on "reminding us" about it; the image is a thing that should eventually "get back to us" so we can be convinced that the image other people have of us is the correct one and adopt it.

These reflections have grounded the approach and goal of this paper, which is two-fold. Informed by Harvey's (1989) idea of practices that are lived, reproduced and transformed through everyday interaction between actors and objects (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1995; Ozolina-Fitzgerald 2016), we examine three major loci of nation branding in Estonia: the evolving campaigns of Enterprise Estonia in order to position Estonia firmly as part of "Europe" and "Scandinavia", the leveraging of its e-Residency programme to attract foreign investment, and the presenting of a uniquely "Estonian" culinary tradition. We draw from these areas to comprehensively explain not only the diversity of Estonia's branding activities – pertaining to geographic orientation, economic development, and cultural uniqueness. We also use them to illustrate how Estonia has been able to develop a relatively consistent nation branding strategy, especially compared to other post-Soviet countries. The empirical material illustrated is used to suggest not only that the country is unique in its approach and resource use for nation branding purposes. Even more importantly, Estonia – where nation branding has collected an unprecedented amount of resources and efforts, can be used to illustrate a further function of nation branding. Initially conceived as a channel for economic development and diplomatic dialogue, nation branding in Estonia has been used with the second goal of gaining international support for a particular view on the country and, in turn, promoting a certain version of "Estonianess".

Supported by this evidence, we then move on to our theoretical point. We argue that nation branding can be used to promote an official narrative and propose new identity markers that can be received and accepted by the local population as "signs of Estonianess" (or any other nationhood). We borrow here from the idea of civic nation building used by Kuzio (2001) when challenging Brubaker's "nationalising the state" framework (1996).

While nation building leveraging on ethnic markers emphasizes ethnicity, blood ties and (perceived) history, features that are (allegedly) delivered at birth and cannot change (Smith 1986), civic nation building relies on creation, spreading and acceptance of values such as devotion to the state, and contributions to its political and economic development. But this is the category of markers that nation branding may contribute to creating. In line with what Nakano (2004) has called "economic nationalism", in the case of Estonia, branding praises Estonian successes and achievements, while promoting a perception of the country that rotates around certain civic values of which any citizen can be proud regardless of their ethnic origins (victories in international song contests, being the first e-governance country in the world, innovative cuisine and healthy eating). These messages are directed at international publics but end up affecting the self-perception of domestic ones. We start from an understanding of nation branding as selling a given image of a country to external actors to acknowledge that in the Estonian case, it has been widely used to support a national identity construction narrative. In other words, we suggest that in Estonia nation branding has been used as a boomerang. By sending a message to the world about several features of the Estonian society and convincing international actors of the truth of the message, the county has attempted to "convince itself" about it.

The article begins with background information on the broader literature of nation branding, including its history, purposes, and application, as well as providing a brief overview of nation branding in the post-socialist spaces generally, and in Estonia in particular. The following section outlines the methodological approach that we have been using to conduct three case studies of Estonian nation branding efforts. The first one documents the nation branding efforts of the country starting from the victory in the Eurovision festival that brought the country under the spotlight. The section is informed by an analysis of government websites and tourist brochures, and informal discussions with marketing specialists contributing to the strategy. The following section analyses the solid march of the country to the digitalization of all services and has been informed by a textual analysis of documents such as official publications and, in particular, those grounding the preparatory work for what has then become the e-Residence programme (for both internal use and external purposes). The following one offers a discussion on the relationship between the revisited Estonian cuisine and nation branding. Finally, the last section has also been informed by an analysis of government sources and a government-informed market strategy.

FROM BUILDING TO BRANDING

Since its very first uses (Deutsch – Foltz 2010 [1966]; Pye 1962), nation-building has taken many different meanings and applications ranging from measures to create political unity in a post-colonial sovereign state to efforts to create ethnic and cultural cohesion in what have been considered modern nation-states (e.g. France, Germany) to identity construction in the post-communist world (see Kolstø 2016; Polese 2011). What all these views have in common, and the present article is intended to challenge, are two main features. First, nation-building is predominantly regarded as an elite or state-driven process. The very term "building" and its use seem to point at some degree of consistency and the state's capacity to make long-term plans since "there was no nation here, so we build it through a social engineering project". Second, identity construction is often represented as an intended consequence of an allegedly coherent set of measures called a nation building process. This is not always the case. As Scott (1998) has vividly illustrated, state-led projects attempting homogenization in whatever form are destined to fail, or at least not produce the initially expected results. A state needs to standardize, find a one-size-fits-all approach which is not always suitable to all (or even the majority of) its citizens. Lawmaking and its application is not a smooth process going from intention

to implementation with no distortion and leading to the expected results (Kasza 2002). Instead, much gets lost on the way, namely in the translation of a political will into laws and technical instructions, in the way middle actors understand and put into practice state-led instructions and in the way the target citizens receive and accept state instructions (Polese 2009). We make this claim, of course, labouring under the assumption that the above-mentioned "political will" had correctly understood the relative societal needs and had proposed adequate measures to meet them, which is not always the case either. This idea has been supported by views that both institutions and non-state actors may contribute to the construction of the political life of a state (Navaro-Yashin 2002).

National identity construction literature has been receptive of the above critiques, and authors have suggested several possible avenues through which national identity construction might travel with only marginal, or unaware, influence from state-led actors. Authors have explored the unintended consequences of state support to sectors such as cinema and music (Isaacs 2018; Strzemżalska 2017) in the redefinition of a national identity. Although not state-led, funding for artistic projects sometimes comes from the state, which can prioritize a project or an approach over another, thus giving emphasis to a given interpretation of history (Isaacs 2016). The same can be said for the way national heritage, national food or other national features is/are promoted through advertising (Gavrilova 2018; Fabrykant 2018). Megaprojects and megaevents have been another object of inquiry in a similar way. In such cases, what is relevant is not so much what the elites were trying to say but what transpires from the synergy between state-led instructions and their perception at the bottom level (Menga 2015; Militz 2016). What these informal nation building tools have in common is their "indirectness" feature. Nation building has traditionally been studied as originating among the elites, state structures and institutions to be passed off to the citizens and the society. However, the above works, and their connection with the everyday literature have come to influence studies of nationalism by showing that national identity construction is not necessarily a linear process (Edensor 2002). What is more important is that in a number of cases, identity markers are not directly coming from the state but from non-state or even nonpolitical actors, or are unintended side consequences of political decisions (Polese – Horak 2015: 2).

In our view, identity markers can be introduced by actors other than the state, or by the state itself (but with different intentions) and go "all the way up" so as to affect national identity construction in either of the following two ways: 1) the state purchases the practice and adopts a tool that had been conceived outside of the state structure; 2) the state suggests a direction or a marker without being willing to do so, or aware of doing so. Nation branding fits nicely into this framework.

Since the word emerged in academic debates (Anholt 2007), nation branding has widely been considered an economic and market-driven element. Indeed, nation branding may be regarded as distinct from nation-building in that it mostly targets an international audience and (re)focuses national narratives on a pre-selected set of values and features that a society, or its elites, would like the world to notice (Gudjonsson 2005; Volcic – Andrejevic 2011; Dinnie 2008; Fan 2006, 2010; Kaneva 2011). It basically consists of selling an "image" of the country to external actors. As such, while nation-building is subject to negotiation, since the proposed identities and values need to be accepted by the population (Polese 2011; Isaacs – Polese 2016), nation branding de facto bypasses this step by talking directly to international publics that are less sensitive to certain issues and are less likely to criticize, and challenge, the narrative constructed by the given country. By force of its heterogeneity, it can serve several purposes. First, nation branding can act as a supplement to interstate diplomacy to establish a state's legitimacy or lead the state to position itself geopolitically (Browning – de Oliveira 2017: 490). In the European context, this was often done by presenting the state as "European" in order to achieve

integration into regional institutions like NATO and the European Union. For example, the Czech Republic repeatedly noted that Prague was geographically further west than Vienna as part of its "return to Europe" narrative (Radio Praha 1998). Second, nation branding is designed to advance the economic goals of the country by promoting trade, tourism, and foreign investment, and therefore economic development. This is especially important in the current competitive global marketplace where states need to enhance their international visibility, differentiate themselves from other states, find their economic niche, and build a state "brand" (van Ham 2001: 129). Third, nation branding can be used more reactively to compensate for or overcome something negative. This can come in the form of repairing a state's negative image due to long-standing perceptions of it or in response to more immediate events which have proven harmful to the state's reputation (Jansen 2008: 124). Aronczyk (2013: 16) also mentioned a final purpose which connects back to a form of nation-building: generating *"positive foreign public opinion that will 'boomerang' back home, fostering both domestic consensus or approbation of [the nation's] actions as well as pride and patriotism within the nation's borders"*.

Nation branding can be regarded as a set of efforts intended to influence a country's reputation in the international arena for mainly economic and business purposes. In other words, the country in question wants to promote its image and "sell" one or several of its features to attract tourists, investors, workers, or companies or to simply gain visibility through a nation branding campaign. This very campaign is built in a proper and convincing way so that the country gains an international reputation or changes its branding in some parts. Inasmuch as the country can convince external actors that the message of the campaign reflects how the country "really" is, the more actors catch the message and repeat it, the more it becomes likely that people on the domestic level will listen to the message being delivered not by national authorities but by international actors. One thing is to listen to your government, which may already deliver a sufficiently convincing message. Another one is to hear other authoritative voices or even faraway countries speaking highly about your country and possibly convincing you that what your country was advocating is "true" since it is confirmed by so many other voices outside the country. When this happens, we are moving "from branding to building" and it may eventually affect the self-perception of the population of that very country.

OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The above arguments, and the overall study, rest on the results of a five-year research project employing a wide and diverse methodology that we need to illustrate to make the reader familiar with our approach. The project was intended to look at informal loci of identity building in Estonia. This meant, from one side, to study the way institutions, pushed by the elites, had attempted to develop a consistent narrative on who the Estonians are, and what Estonia is. The narrative was then developed in two different directions: that of a nation-building project trying to redefine the post-Soviet Estonian identity, and that of a branding strategy trying to sell a certain image of Estonia to the world. Our project compared the results from these top forces to the way Estonian inhabitants (i.e. citizens and stateless people living on the Estonian territory) live these narratives.

As a result, the "top" components of the research were gathered through text analysis and informal interviews with key informants. We looked at the way Estonian narratives are constructed by state actors through political channels (party politics, political discourses) and commercial ones (e.g. creation of food narratives, support for certain kinds of enterprises proposing innovations but in a somehow national key). We turned to state-led companies and actors intended to foster commercial and cultural initiatives such as the collective singing festivals, the decoration and branding of the national airport, and tourist brochures to look at the way two kinds of people received, perceived and possibly accepted

these "instructions". First, we looked at the commercial sector and how the companies tried (or did not try) to develop their businesses in line with the national(istic) guidelines provided by the state. To what extent were the marketing strategies evocative (at the conscious or subconscious level) of national narratives? Second, we looked at ordinary people, and their agency, when they negotiated, questioned or opposed national narratives.

NATION BRANDING IN POST-SOCIALISM

The economic, social, and political baggage of the socialist era weighed heavily upon the states of Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union following the fall of communism. Following the 1989/1991 events, these states had to also (re)introduce themselves as independent countries in the face of external perceptions which often saw them as backward, not worthy of foreign investment, and not prepared for membership in the "West" – perceptions which were already overburdened with the legacies of Euro-Orientalism, Balkanism, and "othering" (Neumann 1999; Said 1985; Todorova 2009). Compounding this process is the fact that their own attempts to reframe their histories have been interrupted by external "alternative narrators" which *"often thoughtlessly besmirch the 'brand' of the post-Soviet world through their [...] works of popular culture and artistic imagination"* (Saunders 2016: 3). Consequently, many of these states realized very early on that they needed to actively engage in nation branding efforts in order to *"redefine relationships with the Western world, overcome the negative image of socialism, and, often, further support European integration"* (Pawlusz – Polese 2017: 876; Kaneva 2011).

Central and East European countries, such as Poland (Aronczyk 2013: 82–106), the Czech Republic (Cabada – Waisová 2016), and Romania and Bulgaria (Kaneva – Popescu 2011), had the advantage of being geographically or culturally closer to West European markets and having established pre-socialist state identities that they could effectively market. This proved more difficult for the post-Soviet republics which are, for obvious reasons, closely tied to their Soviet pasts – a past which had even more negative connotations. In the case of Ukraine, its positive efforts in nation branding have been undermined by a series of political and geopolitical upheavals (Bolin – Ståhlberg 2015), as even noted by the government itself. The states of the Caucasus have had similar problems (Harris-Brandts 2018). Russia's efforts in this regard have been mixed with its on-again/off-again attempt to present itself as a "European" country, on the one hand, coming into direct conflict with its desire to project an image of Russia as a 'great power', as well as its glorification of the USSR-era Great Patriotic War, Russia's aggressive foreign policy, and the rehabilitation of Josef Stalin, on the other (Szostek 2017; Miazhevich 2018). This can create a negative dynamic in which *"Russian and 'Western' currents feed into, off, and through each other"* in a negative way (Saunders – Strukov 2017). Central Asian states remain particularly disadvantaged in their nation branding efforts because of their geographic and cultural distance from these markets, as well as their weaker economic foundations or status as rentier states. Consequently, they have had to go about this in a different way (Saunders 2008; Marat 2009; Fauve 2015). As for Belarus, its official embrace of its Soviet past under President Alexander Lukashenko has largely rejected such efforts (Bekus 2010).

For their part, the Baltic States fell between the Central/Eastern countries and the former Soviet republics, with their ability to exploit their greater cultural and historical ties to Western Europe and their pre-Soviet statehood during the interwar period (Andersson 2007). Of these, Estonia was particularly aggressive in its nation branding activities, even going as far as to position itself as separate from the other Baltic States (Bolin – Stahlberg 2015; Jansen 2008; Jordan 2014a, 2014b; Pawlusz – Polese 2017). This was particularly important because of its small population, its troubled Soviet past, its history of being squeezed by larger forces, the potential for ethnic strife given its large number of ethnic Russians, and

its difficult relationship with Russia, with which it shares a substantial border. Estonia has done this by building a narrative of the country as firmly westward-oriented and possessing a nimbler and more diverse economic base than the other Baltic States and a commitment to technological innovation and connectivity – in short, as decisively 'European', and more specifically 'Scandinavian', and definitely not 'Soviet' (Kerikmäe – Chochia – Mölder 2019). As the following case studies illustrate, this has been expressed in nation branding campaigns in the realms of geographic orientation, economic development, and cultural uniqueness.

"BRAND ESTONIA": (RE)POSITIONING ESTONIA'S REGIONAL IDENTITY

The Estonian nation branding and communication strategy has benefited from the capacity of domestic actors to take advantage of the limited opportunities the country had and capitalize on the few occasions to make the country visible on the international arena. The key of the strategy has rotated around positioning the country as firmly European in a geographic/conceptual sense and separating it from its Soviet past. This was done by taking advantage of several components largely driven by Enterprise Estonia, a government inducted project to promote the image of Estonia across the world.

Since its inception in 2000 Enterprise Estonia (EE) promotes the development of business and regional policy in the country through support for entrepreneurship in a wide sense. It provides financial support, advice and training as well as networking between sectors, regions and countries to boost Estonia's competitiveness worldwide. With a budget of over €81 million for 2019 and an unquestionably ambitious vision to be achieved by 2023,[1] the agency is currently endorsed with the goal of making Estonia one of the most competitive countries in the world. The work performed by Enterprise Estonia had been going on since independence but it was formalized under the EE umbrella from 2000 to better capitalize on the first years of branding and systematize the related efforts. Since 2001, most of the nation branding elements were systematized and taken up by a single entity. Key to this process, and speeding up the process of creation of the agency, was the country's victory in the 2001 Eurovision Song Contest that implied that it would host the 2002 competition. This opportunity encouraged the government to redouble its efforts in this regard. Estonia had been participating in the contest since 1994 as a virtually unknown contestant to the European public (it was classified 24th out of 25 participants). However, with the song "Everybody" performed by Tanel Padar and Dave Benton, accompanied by the group 2XL, the country won the chance to host the 2002 Eurovision Song Contest.

When preparing to host the 2002 event, the country not only invested into and developed its infrastructure. It also invested in promotion and advertising to make the country attractive to Eurovision-tourists, fascinate them enough to stay longer and, on this wave, change its image in the eyes of the world. Beyond the debates deliberating on the boundaries and definition of Estonian identity, the nation branding of the country started in the early 2000s. Developed by Enterprise Estonia, the promotion and branding campaign held the slogan "Welcome to Estonia" and envisioned Estonia as a quickly and peacefully transformed country. It also attempted to construct an image of the country as quiet and friendly, which became a priority of the tourism promotion. To do this, tourists had to feel "safe" in the country, which would need to be, at the same time, "exotic but not too much" since it would then be perceived as dangerous. This was done by emphasizing both the multicultural and European nature of the country, which could be regarded as a hub where German, Nordic, Russian and Baltic cultures meet. Indeed, the "Introduce Estonia" brochure's section on the marketing concept for tourism, reads:

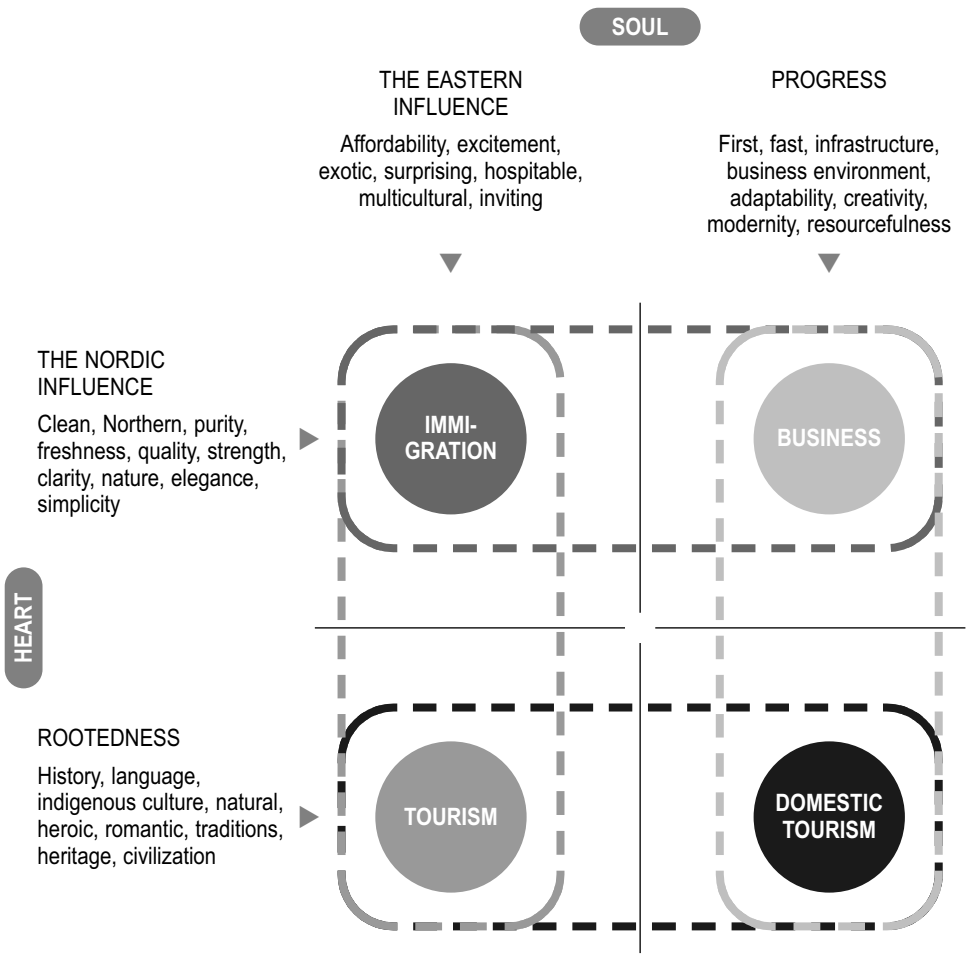
> *"By geographic location, we belong in the Baltic region. By language, we belong in Scandinavia. By allies, we belong in Europe. By the prevailing religion, we belong*

in Germany. By history, we belong in Sweden, Denmark, Livonia and Russia. By climate, we belong in the North" (Enterprise Estonia 2012: 3).

The country has also sought to present itself as "the best-kept secret of Scandinavia" (Enterprise Estonia 2012) to go against visions placing it in Eastern Europe or, worse, seeing it as a post-Soviet republic. The trauma of the occupation of Estonia, which today is reminisced about in the context of a loud anti-Soviet (a term now sometimes translated as "anti-Russia") narrative, is a constant reminder of top Estonian officials who, since the late nineties, have sought to separate the country from the other two Baltic states with various political goals such as faster European integration (Mole 2012). In this respect, the adopted strategy tended to highlight four "cornerstones of Estonia" to use them as basic tools for marketing communication: the Nordic influence, rootedness, the Eastern influence and progress, as shown in the figure below.

The figure above identifies four target audiences: those interested in immigration, tourism, business and domestic tourism, respectively. To each of these audiences the

Figure 1
Enterprise Estonia, the "Introduce Estonia" marketing concept for tourism (Enterprise Estonia 2012: p. 5).



message about Estonia's desirability is conveyed in a different way. The Nordic and Eastern dimension should produce a picture making the country familiar to people willing to settle there. Emphasizing Estonia's capacity to innovate, be progressive, and deliver "Nordic" quality at a fraction of the price one would pay in Scandinavia is intended to attract investors and entrepreneurs. Estonia is further depicted as a Nordic country (elegant, clean, simple) with an Eastern soul (hospitable, exotic, spontaneous), thus echoing the juxtaposition of the modern and sophisticated West with some kind of Slavic soul (Pawlusz – Polese 2017: 6).

From this viewpoint, the launch of the first Estonia marketing concept in the period immediately prior to the hosting of the competition is meaningful not only per se as an identity construction exercise but also as a message to be conveyed to the world. Commissioned by Enterprise Estonia, the campaign had as its goal to increase foreign investments and tourism bases while broadening the scope of Estonia's export market (Dinnie 2008: 230). To this end, the project benefited from the help of Interbrand, a British-based consultancy that was also responsible for the Cool Britannia project in the UK (Jordan 2014a).

The main slogan "Welcome to Estonia: Positively Transforming" had two main components. The first part of the sentence was made into a logo highlighting that everyone was welcome. Besides this, the combination of "positively" with "transforming" was intended to emphasize the country's rapid moving away from its Soviet past as a *"revolutionary, positive and welcome change against all odds"* (Dinnie 2008: 233). The approach could somehow be linked to Poland's "creative tensions" or Romania's "simply surprising" slogans. In such promotions, surprise, tension and contrasts are intended to feed a narrative locating the given country (Estonia, but also Poland and Romania) on an imaginary crossroads of "East" and "West" where the fascination with "eastern cultures" meets with the familiarity of the Western world to make the audience feel comfortable or at home.

The very "Return to Europe" narrative, which can be found to a varying extent in all of the three Baltic Republics, was meant to bring the country back to its "natural path" to a supposed European family (Lauristin 2009; Lauristin – Vihalemm 2009) that got disrupted by Soviet domination. The fact that the country was incorporated into the USSR against its will, which would unanimously be to "stay in Europe," was also highlighted by the opening of the Estonian Museum of Soviet Occupation in 2003. The museum was later renamed, to offer a more positive note, the "Museum of Occupation and Freedom" with the main goal of establishing a *lieu de memoire* (Nora – Erll 1997), and learning about the country's past to understand its present. The museum's statement states that it is to *"tell touching stories about Estonia's recent history that make people think about the value and fragility of freedom"*, which is in line with the policies of other occupation museums (particularly those in Latvia and Georgia). It is nonetheless a clear statement on the trauma of the Soviet annexation that can reinforce official narratives about the Estonian Republic emphasizing its existence since 1918, as one such narrative can be found on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> *"The Estonian Republic was declared on 24 February 1918. During World War II, Estonia lost its independence and was occupied for several decades until Estonian independence was re-established on 20 August 1991. After Estonia's independence was restored, its foreign policy goal was to join the European Union and NATO"* (Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2014).

Eventually, the state narratives were completed through a message that was both positive and negative: the widespread use of the word "Nordic" instead of "Baltic" in an attempt to relocate the country in the imaginary "the people", and the association of normality

with anything which was "not Soviet" or "not Communist" (Eglitis 2002: 8). It was in this context that Enterprise Estonia launched the Welcome to Estonia campaign, which, amongst other things, served to promote Estonia's Nordic temperament (Jordan 2014a: 290).

"Nordic" here is used with several meanings. On the one hand, it can be regarded as a way to continue the "Nordic vis-a-vis Europe" discourse introduced by Wæver (1992; see also Hansen – Wæver 2003), where "Nordic" has been used with some implications of being "above" (and thus implicitly superior to) Europe or "the old Europe". As Estonia is geographically close to Scandinavia, this could be regarded as a shortcut for it to move from being a new EU member to being a functional and effective EU member. On the other hand, this would also cut short(er) generalizations about the Baltic states and their Soviet past. Given its proximity to Finland, Estonia has often been regarded as the most progressive and liberal of the Soviet republics. Thanks to its linguistic and cultural ties, it has also managed to receive more assistance than the other Soviet republics and import a great deal of governance tools that it has then transformed and sometimes improved. This was further confirmed by Taavi Rõivas' words *"We do not need a tunnel between Helsinki and Tallinn to show the connection between the two countries"* (Estonian World 2016). The Nordic dimension thus looks like a perfect chance to rebrand Estonia and for it to leave post-socialism quicker than its neighbours.

The "Nordic" concept was intended to give a broader view of Estonia, which in this view was promoted as a real hub of civilizations, as romantically described by the statist Lennart Meri (2016 [1976]) in his book *Silver White* (Hõbevalge). This view also informed the Brand Estonia campaign:

> *"Our bones are from the East and our flesh from the West, but this is as difficult to describe as the splitting of a personality after the separation of the two hemispheres of the brain. There were no people in Central Sweden when we landed on these shores to fish and set traps. We spoke our own language, of which we have retained about a thousand words, and these are still understood along the banks of the Volga and Pechora and beyond the Ural Mountains. A thousand words is not much in terms of modern vocabulary but during the Stone Age? As you can see, it was enough for us..."* (Brand Estonia 2012c).

The message was reinforced by the publication of the then Prime Minister Mart Laar's (2002) book *Estonia: The Little Country That Could*. Receiving wide media coverage, the book was used to draw attention to the solid and successful reforms the country had managed to complete so as to present Estonia as stable and investment-friendly. This was just in time for the country's accession into the EU in May 2004 and the Schengen zone in 2007, thanks to which investments started to regularly, but timidly, flow into the country (OECD 2017).

Since 2008, however, this "transforming" image of the country was judged not enough to attract international attention. Accordingly, the country sought to move beyond the identity of a country in transition and toward that of one that had completed its journey and arrived as fully European. Guided by this, the Brand Estonia campaign was re-defined in 2008. The idea now was to convince audiences that the country had now consolidated its position and was now ready to surprise the world through its open thinking, innovation and development. The resulting orientation and platform to promote Estonia, was branded "Positively Surprising". The new slogan was thus intended to reflect a growing tendency. In the words of some of the authors of the campaign, people usually came to Estonia with low expectations and were, instead, positively surprised by the country's qualities (Brand Estonia 2012a). Accordingly, the corresponding redefinition of the Estonian character was centred on some core ideas, namely: the Nordic influence (the idea that Estonians are

rational and prudent); a sense of place (the fact that Estonians feel a strong attachment to their land and culture); the Eastern Influence (Estonians are "Nordic" but they come from the East and are thus at ease when encountering both Western and Eastern cultures); and progress (Estonians love nature but also technology and are one of the most innovative peoples in the world).[2] Such an approach was intended to consolidate the country's position at the international level but also to move it towards a further branding component: the digitalization of the country and the construction of its reputation as a paper-free and effective bureaucracy, as illustrated in the next section.

A (DIGITAL) MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE FOR INVESTORS

As early as in 2011, the European Parliament and the European Council decided to base in Estonia the headquarters of the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA). The task was formally handed over to it in 2018 but Estonia had been long preparing for such an opportunity through a three-fold strategy for attracting new technologies, companies and know-how for further digitalization of services. Indeed, the website Invest in Estonia (2020) defines the country as *"northern Europe's hub for knowledge and digital business"*. Since investments and companies need a workforce, a sister website titled "Work in Estonia" (Work in Estonia 2020) was created to help attract foreign workers to *"Northern Europe's knowledge hub in tech"*; the website states that if you are an innovative worker you should *"come work in Estonia to accelerate your career"*.

Although geographically questionable, the "Nordic" strategy had at least two *raisons d'etre*, each of which was connected to promoting Estonia as a place where one could/should do business. First, Estonia tried to connect its attempts to position itself as "Nordic" or "Scandinavian" by, in essence, 'trading' on the already-existing positive views of the business climate of Nordic/Scandinavian countries. Second, the country tried to separate itself from other East European, and especially other former Soviet, countries by emphasizing its 'digital' assets and e-Residency programme. Indeed, perceptions of Estonia as post-Soviet, Eastern Europe or even Baltic could make investors frown or at least wonder to what extent a country bordering Russia and under Moscow's influence for nearly five decades, would be able to meet potential investors' needs (Kerikmäe – Vallikivi 2000). To slowly "move" Estonia geographically from Eastern to Northern Europe was a cunning and subtle action that possibly influenced the perception of the country in the eyes of thousands of potential investors. This "Nordic" narrative, perpetuated through state-sponsored campaigns, was replicated through a myriad of everyday activities such as the innovation and business center MEKTORY, where, among other things, a written description of a heating project states that *for Nordic countries, heating capacity is vital for their populations* (i.e., leaving the reader to understand that Estonia is one of these Nordic countries). Branding changes the way public space is lived: Tallinn Airport is self-named *the coziest airport in the world*; its seats are covered with fabrics resembling the traditional patterns of the Muhu Islands and each square meter of the airport is either sponsored by an Estonian company or decorated (and regularly renewed) with cultural or historical references (Pawlusz – Polese 2017).

Inasmuch as Scandinavia and the Nordic countries are associated with effective administrations, honesty and good conditions for business, the Nordic narrative could be used to convince potential investors and businessmen that Estonia is worth their attention. As Estonian IT companies are small, fast, and innovative, and Estonia is no stranger to cutting edge companies such as Skype and Transferwise, the role of Estonian IT companies is well promoted by the idea of Estonia as an "internet country", where all aspects of public life can be managed online. In the pre-smartphone era, and before Skype was bought by Microsoft, Tallinn Airport had a Skype booth, from which passengers could log into their

account and call their friends across the world. Many of them might not know where the country is, but they were using its technological products. This makes it possible to brand the country as reliable, fast and digitally up to the expectations that a modern nation might generate. The narrative, and the strategic sequence of events and innovations leading to its definition, come from a long march allegedly started in 1997. By then, Estonia had already formed a vision of moving to e-Governance and as early as in 2000, its transition to e-taxation had started. According to the official e-Estonia government website, nowadays 99% of tax declarations in the country are filed electronically. The country further progressed in 2002 with the idea to provide all citizens with a digital ID and the launching of the e-Health project in 2008. Thanks to the e-Health technologies, doctors can access patients' data online, and issue certificates and exchange information via the internet when necessary. A particular place in the official narrative is occupied by how Estonia survived the 2007 cyberattacks in such a way that it paved the way to its becoming possibly the most cyber-secure country on the planet (BBC 2017).

Grounded in all these improvements, in 2014 Estonia introduced the e-Residency programme, which is defined on the official e-Residency website as *"Estonia's gift to the world"* (E-Residency 2020). In practice, any individual, regardless of their residency or nationality, can apply for a virtual residency card through this programme. The card gives its holder no rights to enter the Estonian territory and thus cannot be considered a fast track for a visa or residence permit for non-EU nationals. However, it gives the holder access to a broad series of services of which the most important is the national company register. There are some formal limitations to entering a company in the register such as the need to provide a physical address in Estonia for the company and the need to demonstrate that its business activity is somehow linked to Estonia.[3] But virtually anyone can register a company in the country, manage it through the highly-effective e-bureaucracy,[4] pay taxes and salaries for it and perform any kind of operation related to it, with the exception of opening a bank account, for which physical presence is required.

Estonian e-Residency currently counts over 50.000 beneficiaries, of which over ten percent are Finland residents but over 20 percent come from Germany, Japan, the UK and the US (between 5–6 percent per each country) (Xolo 2017). The largest number (725) of companies established through the programme are owned by Ukrainian residents. However, Germany is second in this respect with 630 companies, and it is followed by Russia, Finland and France, whose residents have also been very active in the programme (with 603, 423, and 421 companies, respectively). If, on the one hand, the interest of businessmen from more unstable environments (e.g. Russia, Ukraine) in the programme can look normal somehow, on the other hand, the attention from countries that allegedly have liberal and investment-friendly business environments can be used as a proxy for the importance the programme and the country are gaining.

By force of these figures, Estonia has been able to claim credit for its accessibility and readiness to be part of the globalized world. Its promotional campaign has officially engaged with most of the issues major world actors have been dealing with: business, immigration (especially of a highly qualified skilled workforce), and domestic and international tourism, the latter of which was possibly considered to be the most important area of application (as well as being the main focus of our research), given its large potential. Informing people of the existence of the country is already an achievement, given its size, location and population. However, convincing a growing number of people to participate in the programme (the e-Residency programme receives 200–300 applications per week) was only possible thanks to a targeted and aggressive campaign emphasizing the major role technology has at the daily level in Estonia. The Estonian nation branding has been making use of words like "cosy" and "homy" and embedded the concept of technology and nature within itself, thus uniquely mixing modernity and tradition. Estonia's

message to the world can be regarded as sufficiently loud and convincing given the number of people investing there and moving their businesses there from allegedly stable and friendly environments. As a result, not only has the campaign received attention from market actors, but it has also conveyed a sense of security, eventually enhancing the diplomatic status of the country at the European level. In other words, the EU has nurtured a growing confidence in the country to the point of granting it the task of managing the EU IT Agency. In addition, a growing number of countries and personalities from all over the world have been praising Estonia for its digital innovation capacity.

GENUINE AND NATURAL: NATIONAL(ISTIC) RECIPES

If "you are what you eat" is a widely recognized statement across cultures worldwide, it would not be too inaccurate to say that Estonia and Estonians are (partly) made of marketing. Estonian official narratives, like those of Latvia and Lithuania, have been explicitly premised on the notion of a rupture with the Soviet past (Eglitis 2004), with the Soviet period considered as an unnaturally bleak one that overruled the "natural" course of history of an otherwise splendid and flourishing nation.

But Estonian food narratives are trapped in a major ambiguity. On the one hand, certain kinds of food can easily be associated with the Soviet period because they were traditionally prepared for special celebrations (e.g. the new year) in Soviet times, so they might be worth "forgetting". On the other, some foods that were consumed in Soviet times were widely popular in Estonia even prior to the Soviet annexation and are still considered as part of the "Estonian everyday". Estonian national narratives have quickly liquidated a number of references to the past through actions that have sometimes been widely contested, such as the removal of the Bronze Soldier statue (Ehala 2009). But removing a statue is not as difficult as removing food and cultural references to the Soviet culinary past. Attempts have been made to take distance from Soviet-style cooking but not necessarily its ingredients by diverting attention to their nutritional qualities, their natural preparation or their production on a small scale in a chain that goes from the producer to the consumer (Polese – Seliverstova 2019). Modes of re-inventing Estonian cuisine have ranged from "nationalizing" to "modernizing" a product or an ingredient to a "change in the intentions" behind that very ingredient, or the related recipe or lifestyle. In the first group, one can find the use of soups such as *solyanka* or *borshch* but also dishes like pelmeni. These foods have not necessarily been imported during Soviet times (foods know no administrative borders) but they may be regarded as reminders of the period so one might want to be careful about their use. A recent exhibition titled "Soviet Estonia" interestingly and methodically collected memorabilia of the Soviet past to show them to new generations and curious tourists. As the displayed items ranged from home-made automobiles to models of Soviet shops and Soviet apartments, Estonia-made films and curiosities related to music, the visitor could learn a lot about the past. However, in the same exhibition, marinated vegetables and a number of other items present in modern day kitchens, were somehow presented as belonging to the past (Polese 2019). This reminds one somehow of the observations in the seminal work *Cultural Intimacy* (Herzfeld 2014), which has been found to have application in IR theory (Subotic – Zarakol 2013). In this work, Herzfeld discussed the discourse he encountered amongst Greeks surrounding the way in which they repudiated the tradition of breaking dishes at weddings. He was told that this practice was something obsolete, anachronistic, or, simply, unmodern and that its very persistence denied the thirst for modernity his interlocutors wished for their country. What is important to note, though, is that they did not deny the tradition or its reality. Rather, they tried to modify or distort the way in which this tradition was perceived by outsiders. In this way, Herzfeld's interlocutors could claim to have an attachment to parts of their tradition when they viewed them positively, while also denying them, in part,

when they wished to promote a perception by others that would confirm their modernity. In other words, they tried to construct a narrative that would help others believe what they desired them to believe.

The Estonian modernization of recipes has benefited from the momentum of the healthy food industry, in which buckwheat (in Estonian, *tatar*), which is widely used in Estonian cuisine, has been widely praised as good for one's body. Estonian cuisine has thus maintained an ingredient whose use dates back farther than Soviet times, though it was widely used during that period but embellished with a mishmash of ingredients to reach creations such as "buckwheat risotto", which is an elaboration of the Soviet *"grechka"*. Another attempt to display a higher degree of modernity is visible in the associations of Estonia with Nordic cuisine and the way that Estonian food products and food habits are promoted in official national media sources and incorporated in the phenomenon of Estonia's nation branding as a Nordic nation (Jordan 2014a).

Another interesting change in the domestic narratives can be named "change of intentions": we do the same thing we used to do in Soviet times but we ascribe it to different intentions. Use of hand-picked ingredients such as berries and mushrooms was relatively common for home cooking in Soviet times, sometimes due to lack of availability of goods in the shops. This habit is still performed nowadays but the act is justified through a different logic. In state-printed tourist brochures, Estonians are depicted as nature lovers that love to go skiing in winter and take long walks to collect berries and mushrooms in the woods; *"... these selected everyday activities (which have economic potential) create a national hyper-reality [...] the perception that there is something like 'Estonianness' that binds the population"* (Pawlusz – Polese 2017: 9). The act of picking food this way, by force of this association, becomes a marker of Estonianness. It is no longer a necessity dictated by the political and economic situation but an individual choice. Cooking hand-picked ingredients thus becomes rather the natural consequence of an individual performing Estonianness by paying a tribute to its nature.

All the above ideas converge into the suggestive narrative behind the creation of the website Estonian Food, which pertains to Estonian national cuisine and products, and was launched by the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs. The site defines Estonian food as *"a tasty reflection of thousand-year-old traditions, pure nature and smart producers"* (Eesti toit 2020), contributing to the imagination of national food ingredients, symbols and practices with which Estonian citizens might associate themselves and through which the imagination of the Estonian nation might be facilitated. In contrast to Soviet practices of mass-production and industrialization, in this case, Estonia is depicted as a country of small family businesses producing high-quality products. Food goes from the (Estonian) people to the (Estonian) people via the (Estonian) land; it is natural and healthy. According to the website, Estonian food is seasonal and significantly varies across seasons throughout the year. If this can be seen as a natural consequence of the fact that the difference in temperature between summer and winter is significant, it is also a way to align with the latest tendencies of healthy eating and construct the narrative of a smart nation and people (e.g. eat seasonal, eat local, eat bio, the Zero Kilometer trend). In line with this, the section on ingredients also emphasizes the care of the people for each single animal, their produces, and the products of nature in the country. For one thing, the vegetable section reads:

> *Estonians have always loved to grow different kinds of roots, tubers, vegetables, fruit and berries. As most of the population lives in urban areas with little space for garden plots, then options such as growing fruit trees in the backyards of apartment block buildings, little urban greenhouses and growing simpler vegetables on windowsills are gaining popularity* (Eesti toit 2020).

The country, it seems, has found some kind of balance between large and small producers, thus leaving room for initiatives such as large and economically-effective factories with modern production means while finding a way to value and maintain its traditions. For instance, the section on bread explains that:

> *The first Estonian bread industries were established already in the 19th century and Estonia's oldest bread industry, Leibur, is already more than 250 years old. The industries today manufacture around 90% of the entire Estonian bread production, however, the number of small bakeries and farms whose produce ends up on supermarket shelves is also on the rise, as they offer variety* (Eesti toit 2020).

The website indeed puts an accent on the fact that Estonian food is produced both industrially (but by producers that are strictly controlled and devoted to delivering the best possible quality) and by small farms that allow Estonians to remain in touch with nature, express their individuality and perpetuate their traditions. All these points are endorsed by famous personalities in the food and restaurant industry, and by the sections on recipes and culinary roads of Estonia. What is even more important, however, is the website's visual aspect with carefully edited high-quality pictures to give the visitor a visual experience that they can almost feel, smell and touch. The pictures are inviting and all the foods look extremely delicious and tempting.

Beyond state-driven narratives, and surfing on the wave of these deep efforts, private and market actors have started expanding the scope and the role of food in Estonia. Not only was an Estonian food museum opened in 2017 but many companies have started encouraging what has been called "patriotic consumption" (Polese – Seliverstova 2019) to appeal to people who feel proud to reproduce state narratives on their kitchen table. The local food industry often promotes its products by using national symbols in two main ways. One is to decorate the package with national patterns or colours. The other approach is using catchy and evocative words when describing the product. Words and phrases like "authentic", 'ecologically pure', 'with no preservatives', or 'real' and 'native' (used when describing the flavour) are widely used. This strategy gives continuity to the attempts to create associations between Estonia and its inhabitants by labelling the country as technological but committed to nature and confirming the special relationship that Estonians allegedly have with nature (Polese – Pawlusz 2017b). This construction of patriotic food can be regarded as something started by entrepreneurs using elements of national folklore to make their products more attractive to customers. It originates within the business sector but matches state-led attempts to create a relationship with food, its production and its marketing, thus opening the door to "de-exclusivizing Estonianness". If for nation-building, language and ethnic belonging can make the Estonian identity restricted to a circle of people who can flag it by displaying it at social occasions, and limit the rights of others to feel Estonian, consumption enlarges the circle of people showing support for Estonia. Estonianness and support for a national project thus become more inclusive and it is possible to feel a bit more Estonian by force of the fact that one buys certain categories of products perceived as genuine, local or representative of national values.

CONCLUSION: QUO VADIS, ESTONIA

"We are what we pretend to be," wrote Kurt Vonnegut on the cover page of his novel *Mother Night* (1999). This is not only a leitmotiv of human life, but also of nations, states, and societies. States have always sought to project an image for outsiders to achieve their policy goals. One only needs to think of Versailles and Louis XIV's desire to promote the grandeur of France and its importance and centrality in Europe. In more modern times,

world fairs and other such events were used to construct narratives about the nation and its identity for global consumption (Smits – Jansen 2012). After the Second World War, state leaders and corporate marketing forces first conceived of what has become known as the nation branding industry as they reimagined *"the space of the nation as a valuable resource in the growing competition for global investment, trade, and tourism"* and began to utilize *"national culture and territory […] as marketable and monetizable entities"* (Aronczyk 2013: 3).

The countries which have emerged from the post-socialist spaces of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have, to varying degrees, sought to present themselves in a similar manner – to shed their Soviet-era pasts for external consumption and be what they pretend to be. A key way in which this has been done is through the act of *nation branding*, which uses corporate marketing techniques to increase a state's *"national visibility and legitimacy"* or, to put it more prosaically, *"to make the nation matter,"* in an increasingly competitive global environment (Aronczyk 2013: 3). It is largely undertaken by governments and industries in order for them to more effectively compete internationally for marketing purposes, such as boosting trade and tourism or attracting foreign investment. This contrasts with the official nation-building process, which is primarily about creating domestic solidarity through identity formation and value promotion, through which the identities and values are internalized within the state's population.

In this respect, nation branding has been particularly important for post-socialist spaces which *"have massive image problems"* connected to their communist pasts (van Ham 2001: 5) which paint them as economically backward and socially retrograde, and as poor investments. Consequently, they have had difficulty competing with and in Western markets. The mix of tools and approaches used to produce a winning image of the country in Estonia is admirable. In a comparative perspective, Estonia seems to be much more advanced than its Baltic counterparts in promoting its image, let alone its post-Soviet neighbours. In many respects, this is a unique case – a country of a little more than a million people going to explain to Germany or Argentina how digitalization of governance has worked for it and how the same tools it used might improve the other country's quality of life.

From a scholarly perspective, the present article opens at least two new avenues of research. First, although the most visible cases of nation branding have been documented, an academic article cannot possibly document the full complexity and variety of tools and approaches used in it. In previous studies, attention has been put on the way consumption (Seliverstova 2017), collective singing (Pawlusz 2017) and tourism brochures have been used to convey a message and a perception of the given country. But the variety of places where elements of nation branding can be found is broader. Accordingly, this paper is an invitation to look for messages and images of a country in places that are not necessarily obvious or have not been explored so far. Since Billig's banal nationalism, scholars have attempted to look at the way identity and perceptions of a country can be deduced from a large array of elements that are not always immediately visible. We invite researchers interested in the issue to look in this direction. Second, inasmuch as history and geography matter, what is the role of a given people's history and geographical position regarding the kinds of tools and messages that their country decides to deliver? Is the nation branding/building strategy of Estonia replicable elsewhere? Would any other country be willing to take it as an example, or can messages and tools of nation branding only work, to a fair extent, in the context where these messages were originally conceived?

[1] For instance there is the target added value of 2.1 bn euros to be created by EE clients by 2023, and 1.5 bn in foreign investments should be reached by the same year (Enterprise Estonia 2020).

[2] The value matrix is also repeated in a separate domestic marketing strategy (titled "I love Estonia") and is officially available in the Marketing Concept for Tourism leaflet (Enterprise Estonia 2012).
[3] The programme description clearly highlights that this is not just a way to take advantage of the Estonian tax regime, as the company should have a real reason to be established in the country. Theoretically, one is not allowed to register a company in Estonia to export, say, German machines to Congo since there is no formal reason for such a company to be based in Estonia.
[4] As an indicator, one could consider the average time needed to register a company once one is in possession of an e-Residency card: eighteen minutes.

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Trapped in False Antitheses: Timothy Snyder's Analyses of the Global Authoritarian Turn Are Crippled by His Anti-totalitarian Framework

A Discussion Article on the topic of Timothy Snyder's book The Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America.

London: The Bodley Head, Vintage, 2018, 359 pages, ISBN 978-1-84792-527-5.

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Abstract: This paper critically scrutinizes Timothy Snyder's book *The Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America* (The Bodley Head, Vintage, London 2018). It claims that the main reason for his failure to present a convincing account of the current neo-nationalist and authoritarian turn and outline an adequate intellectual and political response to it is his clinging to an anti-totalitarian framework which he had applied to Eastern Europe in some of his previous historical works (Snyder 2003, 2010). The framework reduces three main ideological alternatives that fought with each other in the last century into two: liberalism was supposedly challenged by totalitarianism. Since Snyder reduces the present crisis to the threat of the return of totalitarianism, he sees an appropriate response in the revival of the human and civic solidarity associated with the anti-totalitarian movements of the last century. The essay outlines an alternative view: it links the present crisis of democracy to the ravaging effects of neo-liberal globalization and, accordingly, suggests combining anti-authoritarianism with anti-capitalism – or human and civic solidarity with social solidarity.

Keywords: crisis of democracy, totalitarian paradigm, false dichotomies, neoliberal globalization, the new and old social movements.

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"He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby becomes a monster."
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Aphorism 146

Until the 2000s, the tone of the global debate was set by the discourses of globalization, human rights, liberal democracy, supra-national integration and humanitarian solidarity

across national borders. Since the 2010s, however, these discourses and actions based on them have been challenged. To use the terms to which Donald Trump, the leading protagonist of this change, had recourse in his speech at the General Assembly of the UN in September 2018, "globalism" has been displaced by "patriotism". The universalistic and future oriented narratives of solidarity "without borders" (in the world) and of "ever closer union" (in Europe) have been eroded by particularistic narratives of national sovereignty and self-reliance rooted in the heroic past.

In his book *The Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America* (Snyder 2018) Timothy Snyder conceives the switch from a universalist and future-oriented legitimation to a particularistic and past-based one as a drift from the "politics of inevitability" to a "politics of eternity". The automatic forward march of human history – driven either by the development of forces of production and class struggles in the case of Soviet communism, or by self-regulating markets in the case of American liberalism – has been replaced by the eternal return of threats and enemies and the perennial struggles for national survival. Snyder's point indeed captures one of the crucial aspects of the ideological change we have been experiencing: the liberal utopia which had replaced the communist one in the early 1990s has begun to fail. The milestone that marked the beginning of this process was the financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009.

Having correctly identified one aspect of the ideological predicament of the last decade, Snyder errs, however, both in the further elaboration of his diagnosis, and in the proposed cure. In this essay, I critically scrutinize Snyder's book in terms of its interpretive framework. I claim that the main reason for his failure to present a convincing account of the current neo-nationalist and authoritarian turn and outline an adequate intellectual and political response is his clinging to an anti-totalitarian paradigm which he applied to Eastern Europe in some of his historical works (Snyder 2003, 2010). He inherited it from the Cold War liberalism in its last version, which was brought about by the human rights revolution of "the long 1970s" (Moyn 2010, 2014; Eckel – Moyn 2014). This framework reduces the three main ideological alternatives that fought with each other in the last century (Mazower 2000: x) into two: liberalism was allegedly challenged by one enemy that showed either a nationalist or a socialist face, if not a mixture of both.

This association, if not identification, of radical nationalism with radical socialism, since he views them as merely two manifestations of one oppressive state collectivism, makes Snyder see in the current neo-nationalist wave a return of the same evil which the West fended off in the 20th century. He thereby inadvertently reproduces the same cyclical time framework which he rightly places at the core of the politics of current neo-nationalisms, as if the 20th century never ended and the enemy of the past kept coming back. If Jarosław Kaczyński and Vladimir Putin re-enact in their ideological posture the Second World War, Snyder re-enacts the Cold War. In both cases, an obsession with the past supersedes the novel features of the present. By claiming that Western democracies are basically fighting the same ideological and geo-political enemy today as they fought between the 1930s and the late 1980s Snyder obscures the main underlying structural cause of the current crisis – the globalized capitalism of the last forty years. Its ravaging social and political effects have prepared the ground for the recent successes of authoritarian and populist demagogues.

The main purpose of this review is to bring attention to the philosophical and methodological reasons of this obfuscation and – on the basis of this critique – outline an alternative view of our present crisis. In *the first section*, I bring out the two main assumptions of the anti-totalitarian paradigm as they can be read off from Snyder's interpretation of Putin's Russia: individualism, which he presents as the "good" antithesis of the "bad" Hegelian holism, and methodological idealism – the belief in the magical power of ideas to translate directly into political reality without contextual interpretations of the actors

which change their concrete meanings. Both assumptions lead him to a Popperian rejection of the Hegelian and Marxist intellectual heritage since its collectivist ideas have supposedly brought about mass graves of the last century. A typically anti-totalitarian staging of individual freedom and collective solidarity as two mutually exclusive values hinders Snyder from looking for the ways they can and must be combined if we are to face both the effects of globalized capitalism, and authoritarian threats of anti-globalist neo-nationalism.

In *the second section* I show that Snyder inherited the sterile antithesis of individualism and collectivism from the anti-totalitarian movements of the 1970s and 1980s. With their defence of human rights against the state and preference of human and civic over social solidarity these movements prepared the ground for the liberal hegemony of the 1990s and 2000s in which the cult of individual freedom went hand in hand with the neo-liberal dismantlement of the limits to global flows of money and capital. Despite his acknowledgment of social inequality as one of the sources of the present crisis, Snyder sees the main danger in the return of totalitarianism, which, in his eyes, has already regained its foothold in Russia and threatens to spill over to Europe and the US. If the enemy is the same as in the last century, the response should be the same as well. Accordingly, Snyder tries to revive the spirit of the anti-totalitarian movements of the 1970s and 1980s.

In *the third section* I deem it a completely inappropriate response by pointing out that we are faced with a different challenge than in the last decades of the Cold War: then, the state was too powerful and overwhelming vis-à-vis the civil society (at least on the Eastern side the Iron Curtain); today it is too weak and powerless vis-à-vis global forces of capitalism. Dissident movements in the Eastern Europe of the 1980s contributed to this current predicament since the civic revolutions which they brought about were compatible with if not conducive to the dismantlement of the welfare state. Instead of appropriating their legacy uncritically we have to reflect upon their hidden assumptions and blind spots that made them, at worst, obedient assistants of the neo-liberal project or, at best, its passive on-lookers. This does not amount to a wholesale rejection of their legacy. Rather, their human and civic solidarity should be combined with social solidarity and its project of re-invention of the welfare state for the 21st century. This is also the lesson from the dashed hopes of the Arab Spring of 2011–2013. One of the causes of its failure was precisely that its liberal-democratic protagonists followed too closely the script of the Eastern European anti-communist revolutions and, consequently, they were not able to combine the two kinds of solidarity.

The fourth section starts with the assumption that whereas civic solidarity (associated with the "new social movements") cultivates "thin ties" between people and can, therefore, dispense with formalized and hierarchical structures, for social solidarity, which cultivates "thick ties" (associated with the "old social movements"), such structures are indispensable. Accordingly, movements of social (as opposed to merely civic) solidarity have to build strong and formalized institutions which transcend the whims of individual choice. Although Snyder does not use this terminology, his individualist bias makes him prefer the "new" over the "old" social movements. As a result, he is able to theorize an action "from below" merely as an endeavour to *limit* structures or *interrupt* their automatic functioning, but never as an effort to *build* or *transform* them. In Snyder's historical writings such a transformative effect is reserved only for an action "from above". His analyses of the clash of Stalin's and Hitler's empires in the 1940s (Snyder 2010) and the transition to democracy in East-Central Europe at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s (Snyder 2003: Part III) focus exclusively on the ideas and decisions of the political elite (including a counter-elite of Eastern European dissidents) and pay almost no attention to the weight of extant structures. (His account of the Holocaust in *Black Earth* is a partial exception to this rule [Snyder 2015].)

The fifth section points to Snyder's mischaracterization of the prevailing strategic posture of America in the post-Cold War era as a passive "politics of inevitability". The belief of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in the historical possibility of a global spread of human rights and democracy, however, did not spawn their passivity, but rather boosted their readiness to intervene. Barack Obama's anti-interventionist posture did not stem from a belief in an "inevitable" progress either. While the pro-democratic *activism* of his two predecessors might have been driven by the idea of a pre-established harmony between American values and the direction of history, his restraint in terms of action followed from a more sceptical view of history and human nature (Obama 2009). Here again, by pitting a "good" voluntarist belief in agency against a "bad" deterministic reliance on structures, Snyder presents us with a false choice. The matter is not whether idealistically minded politicians or citizens are willing to act or whether they passively rely on historical providence but rather whether they are able to make choices that will transform structures they did not choose.

In the last section, I deal with yet another of Snyder's dichotomies: an intergovernmental integration (such as the EU) is pitted against an imperialist expansion (such as the annexation of the Crimea by Russia). Snyder's inability to include hegemony as the third form of international power is a major flaw of Snyder's framework. Unless one takes into account the waning of American hegemony and the transformation of the Western-centric world into a poly-centric one, one can propose neither a valid analysis of the present global backlash against human solidarity and democracy, nor an adequate response to it.

PUTIN'S RUSSIA AND ASSUMPTIONS OF ANTI-TOTALITARIANISM

Snyder argues convincingly that in the Soviet Union, the ideological switch from the politics of "inevitability" (based on Marxist historical predictions) to that of "eternity" (invoking the return of the same) first took place under Brezhnev (Snyder 2018: 134). It was he who replaced the project of the radiant communist future with the memory of the Great Patriotic War as the main ideological anchor for the justification of the Soviet Union's intransigent Cold War posture, as if it had to brace itself against a comeback of the same fascist enemy which it had beaten in 1945. Once Putin had taken up a hostile attitude towards the West in the early 2010s, he fell back on this Brezhnevian position, which he combined with a Eurasianist discourse. Given the overlaps, both historical and ideological, between Eurasianism and fascism, the official doctrine of Putin's Russia could therefore be conceived as an "anti-fascist fascism" (Snyder 2018: 175). Snyder gives innumerable examples of how this paradoxical creature manifested itself in the official Russian discourse justifying the intervention in Ukraine in spring and summer 2014.

The easiness with which Brezhnevism or, in Snyder's words, neo-Stalinism could be combined with fascism and anti-Semitism serves him as a confirmation of the general approach that informs his book, and which we might call the anti-totalitarian paradigm. This framework rests on the opposition between liberal democracy on the one hand and its far-right and far-left challengers on the other. Two mutually supporting elements of the totalitarian paradigm are salient in both this work and Snyder's previous work, characteristically entitled *On Tyranny. Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (2017). *On the one hand*, the differences between the enemies of liberal democracy are levelled so that they all fit into one homogenous category. The far right and the far left are reduced to their alleged common denominator. The same process of homogenization pertains to the differences between various positions or currents within each camp. Different movements within Marxism and revolutionary socialism are presented as merely different faces of one identity. Similarly, the differences between Nazism, fascism and ideologically less aggressive authoritarianisms, such as Salazarism, are minimized. *On*

the other hand, and in order to buttress this homogenization, the opposition between liberal democracy and totalitarianism is traced back to its alleged philosophical roots.

The founding fathers of the anti-totalitarian paradigm, Karl R. Popper and Friedrich Hayek (to whose *Road to Serfdom* the title of Snyder's book alludes), identified the philosophical source of totalitarian evil (which was supposedly shared by all totalitarian ideologies from Left to Right) in its holistic approach to the world and social reality. Snyder follows in their footsteps when he identifies the roots of totalitarian danger in Hegel's philosophy, which was used as the point of departure by both Karl Marx and some fascists. Hegel also provided the common anchoring point that allowed Brezhnevism to be merged with Eurasianism. Ivan Ilyin, of late Putin's main philosophical reference, wrote his dissertation on Hegel and used his idea of the Objective Spirit (i.e., the Spirit descended into an inner-worldly collective identity) to make Russia a sacred organic entity that would be profaned if any part of it (such as Ukraine or the Caucasus) was cut off (Snyder 2018: 30–31). Ilyin was an anti-Bolshevik who, after a brief flirtation with Nazism in the 1930s, ended up subscribing to Franco and Salazar's authoritarianism after WWII (he died in 1954). Ilyin's defence of the integral nature of the Russian empire went hand in hand with his fear that it would decline and fragment as a result of the end of Bolshevik rule and the overspill of liberal values such as individualism, parliamentarianism and cosmopolitanism from the West to Russia. The overlap between Brezhnev's and Ilyin's anti-Western xenophobia facilitated Putin's merger of the ideology of late Soviet socialism with the legacy of White anti-communism. This seems to substantiate the assumption that the far right and far left are morally and politically equivalent. According to the anti-totalitarian paradigm, they are identical in their ideal essence while remaining distinct in their empirical existence. Putin's hybridization of Brezhnevism with fascism would make those two extremes identical empirically.

As has been already mentioned, the levelling of differences between and within the far right and the far left is buttressed by the identification of the philosophical substratum of the far right and the far left with Hegel's holistic transcendentalism. Snyder understands it as the absolute opposite of individualistic empiricism, which he presents as the philosophical core of liberal democracy. In his view, behind the clash of Putin's regime and his Eurasianist allies with the West is a clash of two epistemologies. Their attack on the West is an attack on "factuality" itself. Empirical facts, which can be rationally ascertained (tested or falsified), are replaced by fictional stories, which can be only believed or disbelieved. Their strategy is not so much to promote their truth compared to the untruth of their enemy, but rather to replace factual truth as such with a proliferation of narratives (Snyder 2018: 159–160). The place of factual truth is occupied by faith in a Russia that has been victimized by the West and is, therefore, innocent. A holistic epistemology that makes reference to transcendental and, therefore, unverifiable claims is pitted against an epistemology of verifiable facts which are, by definition, individual. One epistemology corresponds to totalitarian rule, and the other to liberal democracy.

Inadvertently replicating the Hegelian idealistic approach to history Snyder gives the clash of Putin's Russia with the West a philosophical content, as if it has not been primarily the result of contingent processes, events and decisions but had its core in the struggle of ideas. In other words, Putin's ideological and political posture has not resulted from a series of decisions and moves motivated by momentary opportunities and weaknesses of the West, as for instance Mark Galeotti has shown (Galeotti 2019), but rather from a resurrection of the totalitarian philosophical programme formulated by a Russian maverick one hundred years ago. In the eyes of Snyder, Putin is not only re-asserting Russia's power vis-à-vis the West and strengthening his power in Russia but waging a full-scale crusade against the Western values and way of life. In this rendering, ideas and discourses are not the tools of the will to power but, rather, the driving force behind

it. Notwithstanding the brilliance of some of Snyder's insights into the ideological configuration of today's Russia, his attempt to make of it a philosophically coherent system lacks any plausibility. Snyder defends his approach by stating that *"ideas matter"* (Snyder 2018: 19). They certainly do, but often in an unpredictable and contingent manner. Ilyin and some other Russian nationalist intellectuals of the last century (such as Lev Gumilev) that Snyder refers to (Snyder 2018: 87–89), have been certainly used by Putin's propaganda machine. To make of their ideas the source and core of today's tension between Russia and the West is to mistake a history of ideas for history *tout court* – a mistake which Snyder shares with his Hegelian enemies.

Such a methodological idealism ignores a plethora of ways in which ideas are used and misused, re-interpreted and twisted, given new meanings and re-functionalized for new tasks by concrete actors in concrete situations. An idea does not have a fixed meaning at its core which could be grasped behind the veils of its different interpretations; rather, its meaning is always one of its possible uses and interpretations. If the meaning of an idea is, therefore, not accessible in itself, without an interpretation linked to a concrete application, then we cannot know the political effects ideas have unless we study their uses in concrete contexts. Snyder starts with the opposite assumption. His analyses imply that one can infer from an epistemological and/or moral (un)soundness of an idea its (un)sound political consequences, as if the nature of a political action could be directly inferred from the nature of the ideas invoked by its protagonist.

Such a straightforward relationship between ideas and their political consequences, however, cannot be empirically substantiated. This is because ideas do not have the magical power to translate into reality by themselves. In order to have an impact they have to be interpreted by human actors, who use them for their own particular purposes in particular circumstances. According to its different appropriations, one idea can have different meanings and political consequences at different times and in different places (which does not mean that it can have any meaning in any place and time). Moreover, there is no direct and unproblematic relationship between an intention and its realization or operationalization in a given context: even an apparently good idea can have disastrous consequences.

Snyder imputes his idealistic approach also to Marxists when he claims that Lenin was *"the most important Marxist since he led a revolution in the name of philosophy"* (Snyder 2018: 31). Marx, who claimed that philosophy as such should be overcome (*aufgehoben*) by emancipatory practice, would be certainly surprised by this argument. If we replace Snyder's "realist" approach (in a scholastic sense) with a "nominalist" one, we can claim to the contrary that Karl Kautsky, defending the necessary correlation between democracy and socialism in the face of the dictatorial methods of the Bolsheviks in 1918, was as important a Marxist as Lenin was: he simply deployed a pro-democratic (one might even say "anti-totalitarian") interpretation or use of Marx (Kautsky 1918).

To reject the whole intellectual heritage of Hegelianism and Marxism is not only philosophically wrong to the extent that it is based on faith in the transcendental existence of ideas beyond their interpretative use and their magical power to translate themselves into reality. It is also politically self-defeating: it deprives us of intellectual weapons that are of vital importance in the face of our present challenges. Snyder buries these traditions because they are holistic and, therefore, supposedly lead to the establishment of regimes which suppress individual liberty. By rejecting holism in the name of individualism, however, he lets himself be caught in the sterile dichotomy. This would be fine if he were a Friedmanite neo-liberal, but he claims to be the opposite – he defends a strong welfare state that puts limits on the inequalities brought about by an unregulated capitalism (Snyder 2018: 267–268). In Western Europe, however, such states were built after WWII by political parties (both Christian and Social Democratic) under pressure from – or in

concert with – strongly institutionalized trade unions (within the context of ideological competition with the Soviet Bloc). In other words, those welfare states would not have been possible without the deployment of a strong collectivist emphasis on social and national solidarity. Thus, instead of reviving the sterile dichotomy between individualism and collectivism, it would be advisable to re-think the relationship between individual freedom and collective solidarity and look for the ways they could be mutually supportive rather than mutually exclusive. In this effort, we may learn a great deal both from practical experiences of Marxist and non-Marxist socialist movements and from the theoretical attempts to overcome this dichotomy.

THE LAST UTOPIA AND AN ANTI-STATE GLOBALISM

Snyder cannot take this road, however, because of his fidelity to the anti-totalitarian paradigm which absolutizes the opposition between the individual freedom ensured by the liberal order and the collectivist solidarity promised by the far right and the far left. He has inherited the legacy of the ideological transformation of the 1970s and 1980s, in which the anti-totalitarian paradigm played a crucial role by expressing reasons for the rejection of all collectivist utopias. Since fascism had been defeated on the global level in 1945, the favoured target became the utopias of revolutionary socialism.

Samuel Moyn called the human rights globalism that arose in the 1970s and 1980s the "last utopia" – a minimal utopia that came after the maximalist utopia of the far left had supposedly shown its true face in the Gulag (Moyn 2010). Instead of a political vision of human self-fulfilment, the last utopia laid down a negative vision of what man should not do to other men. Basic human rights were supposed to create a sacred space around every individual which should not be transgressed. Human rights internationalists of the 1970s and 1980s replaced *social solidarity*, incarnated in the constraints and redistributive schemes through which the national states had limited and harnessed capitalism, with *human* and *civic solidarity*, expressed by support for the human rights of individuals against national states. A similar transformation of solidarity could be detected in the new humanitarianism of the 1970s and 1980s, the paradigm of which was represented by the French "Doctors Without Borders".

The modus operandi and values of these new social movements were much more individualistic than those of the old social movements, such as the movement of the working class incarnated in trade unions and socialist political parties. The Central European dissident networks of the post-68 decades can be conceived of as one of the new social movements. These dissidents defended human and civil rights *against the state* rather than the re-distribution of goods and opportunities *by the state*. They replaced social solidarity with human and civic solidarity and, by the same token, traditional political parties with civil society associations.

On both sides of the Iron Curtain there was a shift from positive projects of state transformation to negative projects of state limitation, from political programmes to moral principles that put constraints on what any political programme could do. These anti-totalitarian movements operated in the vacuum brought about by the demise of the hopes which had driven the movements of social and national emancipation. Even if their protagonists were sometimes critical of economic neo-liberalism, they could not really stand up against it because they, too, believed that there was no alternative to capitalism.

Just as the utopia of the Czechoslovak reform communists of 1968 was socialism with a human face, the last utopia of the above-mentioned new social movements of the final decades of the 20th century was capitalism with a human face. Despite this vision and will to *constrain* capitalism, however, in actual fact they took part in the process of the gradual *dismantlement* of the constraints which had countered capitalism's asocial and anti-egalitarian consequences (Moyn 2018: 180–186). Instead of the humanization of

capitalism they contributed to its dehumanization. They thus provided yet another historical example that disproves the methodological idealism criticized above: it showed that good intentions can indeed pave the road to hell. The collapse of Soviet socialism in the late 1980s served their neo-liberal allies as the final proof that any robust state regulation of capitalism was destined to end up in poverty and unfreedom. The last ideological barrier had fallen away – capitalism did not have to prove its social superiority (by self-limiting welfare institutions), as during the Cold War, since everybody agreed that there was no alternative to it.

Snyder agrees that the kind of capitalism which has prevailed since the 1980s and 1990s undermines the social bases of democracy, but he does not see that the anti-totalitarian paradigm and movements based on it were complicit in its establishment. In Chapter Six, entitled *Equality or Oligarchy*, he rightly claims that extreme social inequality paved the way for Trump's victory (Snyder 2018: 260). Despite this acknowledgment, however, his insistence that Putin *"escorted [...] Trump [...] to power"* (Snyder 2018: 16, 219) puts an emphasis on the exogenous nature of the danger – its source is in the Kremlin, which has invented a new kind of authoritarianism and wants to spread it to the West. This idea figures on the cover of some versions of his book, where "the road to unfreedom" is represented by arrows leading from "Russia" through "Europe" to "America". This emphasis on a mono-causal explanation distracts the reader from the endogenous and structural causes elaborated on by Snyder himself in Chapter Six. It also implies that – to the extent that Putinism represents a (sort of) post-modern synthesis of neo-Stalinism and fascism – one can fight Trump and his ilk with the same tools with which the dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s fought communism.

THE RISE AND FALL OF AN ERA OF CIVIC REVOLUTIONS

Both in his last and in his previous book (Snyder 2017), Snyder conjures up hope for the rebirth of the spirit of anti-totalitarian movements. If my analysis above is correct, however, the revival of the new social movements associated with the liberal utopia of the last quarter of the 20th century cannot bring a solution to the present predicament because these movements were, however inadvertently, part of the neo-liberal transformation in which capitalist accumulation was liberated from the constraints of the welfare nation-states. The new social movements introduced flexible networks in place of the rigidly structured trade unions and parties, diverted attention from parliaments and governments to civil society and acted on moral principles instead of according to political programmes; rather than replacing established political powers they preferred to oversee, limit and judge them. They often took the form of transnational networks which were supposed to rate national governments according to universal normative standards. The international human rights movement, of which East European dissident networks were part, was a case in point. Its "negative politics" (Rosanvallon 2008: 181–182) or "anti-politics" (Konrád 1984) expressed and was based on human and civic solidarity which thrived on the ruins of the social solidarity associated with the "old social movements" that built social-democratic parties, trade-unions and welfare states.

As part of the wave of the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, emerging East European civil society networks helped to shape an era that replaced revolutionary and collectivist utopias with post-revolutionary and individualist alternatives that were compatible with the unfettering of capitalism. Therefore, their spirit and *modus operandi* cannot represent an adequate response to the socially disruptive effects of the neo-liberal globalization of the last forty years. Some of those who took part in those networks or helped them from across the Iron Curtain have recognized this in the wake of the financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009 (which functioned for many as an eye opener). Tony Judt – Snyder's mentor and a leading representative of the last version of the Cold War

liberalism – for instance conceded that the switch from nationally-based party politics towards morally grounded human rights or humanitarian activism in the international arena, which East European dissident were part of and which they, in turn, inspired in the West, was part of the process of the dismantlement of the Western welfare-state. Hence, it cannot be conjured up as an answer to it:

> *"Indeed, the example of the 'antipolitics' of the '70s, together with the emphasis on human rights, has perhaps misled a generation of young activists into believing that, conventional avenues of change being hopelessly clogged, they should forsake political organization for single-issue, non-governmental groups unsullied by compromise. Consequently, the first thought that occurs to a young person seeking a way to 'get involved' is to sign up with Amnesty International or Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch or Doctors Without Borders. The moral impulse is unimpeachable. But republics and democracies exist only by virtue of the engagement of their citizens in the management of public affairs"* (Judt 2010: 163–164).

The shift of activism from the substantive project of societal transformation to the defence of human rights, as they are ensured by the liberal-democratic procedures, was part and parcel of the coming of the post-revolutionary era. Politically speaking, this era started with the dismantlement of authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe (in Greece, Spain and Portugal) in the mid-1970s and sang its swan song in the Arab and Ukrainian revolutions (2011–2014). The era reached its peak in the revolutions of 1989–1990 in Eastern Europe that played an inspirational role in the subsequent processes of democratization in Africa and Latin America. The most important feature of those revolutions was that they did not have any programme other than the establishment of liberal democracy as it already existed in the West. Their focus was on human and civic rights, rule of law, a parliamentary regime, "checks and balances" and, last but not least, the restoration of the system of private accumulation of capital. Although some dissidents would have preferred Keynesian regulation and a strong welfare state, they were crushed by the victorious crusade of their monetarist allies. As has been shown by Ivan Szelényi and Gil Eyal, the human and civil rights liberalism of Central European dissidents had its counterpart in the economic neo-liberalism of Central European technocrats (Eyal – Szelenyi – Townsley 2001; Eyal 2003). At the beginning of the anti-communist revolutions, the relationship of these two wings of liberalism was complementary – they reinforced one another in their shared drive to liberate *both* the spontaneous self-organization of civic associations *and* the private accumulation of profits from the burden of the state interference.

The defence of liberal democracy by former dissidents was based on procedural and moral principles. It lacked any substantive political or social project. For this reason, their movements may be called "civic" rather than "political". Their "self-limiting revolutions" corresponded perfectly to the spirit of a post-revolutionary age. Their programme was to ensure that citizens were allowed to determine the future of their lives on their own, without interference from the arbitrary power of the state. Their programme, that is, was not a political programme proper but a project to establish the procedural framework within which autonomous individuals could choose among political programmes. *Prima facie*, the idea of such a framework evokes a connotation of political and ideological neutrality, but in actual fact, it leans heavily towards the liberal ideology and its individualistic worldview. Rather than proposing a distinct idea of the *good society*, dissident civic movements stressed fair procedures which would ensure the equal right of every individual to seek his or her *good life*. Accordingly, their revolutions were not carried out by parties promoting political projects but by civic associations defending (what they

thought were) universalistic moral principles on which a (procedurally) just polity should be based.

Unlike the revolutions of the "short 20th century" (E. Hobsbawm) – from the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 via the de-colonizing revolutions of the post-war decades through the revolts of 1968 in the West – the civic revolutions of 1989 were not driven by the idea of substantive societal transformation. Their only programme was the re-constitution of the framework of basic human, civil and political rights within which substantive programmes could be formulated and promoted. The political emptiness of these civic revolutions went hand in hand with their short life span. They interrupted the normal time with an abnormal task of the reconstitution of a political body and had no lasting political legacy beyond the rights and democratic procedures that they instituted.

To the extent that today's neo-nationalists – from Trump and Bolsonaro to Orban and Kaczyński – threaten to undermine the procedural framework of civil and political liberties, the anti-totalitarian civic movements can indeed serve as an inspiration for those who want to stand up against them. However, to the extent that their victories have been symptoms of a crisis caused by the neo-liberal globalization of the last forty years, those movements should be critically scrutinized as part of the problem rather than its solution. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s they unwittingly strengthened the triumph of globalizing capitalism as allegedly the only alternative to the state-controlled economies of Soviet regimes. This statement amounts to a retrospective self-criticism on my part. I was a signatory of the founding manifesto of the Czechoslovak Movement for Civic Solidarity in October 1988, whose programme was to a large extent taken over by the Civic Forum during the Velvet Revolution in the fall of 1989. I still think that participating in *civic emancipation* from the authoritarian communist regime was the right thing to do. In retrospect I recognize, however, that its long-term consequences went against *social emancipation*. My lesson is that rather than replacing one kind of emancipation with another we should look for ways in which they could be combined.

As has been said, the era in which civic revolutions represented the paradigm of emancipation (replacing in that role the political - socialist and national – revolutions of the previous era) sang its swan songs in the Arab and Ukrainian revolutions of 2011–2014. For a brief moment, the hopes of 1989 were revived at Tahrir Square in 2011, only to be crushed by the Syrian civil war and the Egyptian military coup in summer 2013. When the Maidan civic revolution in the winter of 2013–2014 gave way to a protracted national conflict between Ukraine and Russia, it seemed only to confirm the pessimistic lesson of the Arab Spring. Instead of the rule of law that civic activists in both countries craved, the rule of the military was restored in Egypt, and the rule of the oligarchs in Ukraine.

Other hurdles aside, the Arab and Ukrainian revolutions foundered on the problem of the articulation of civic emancipation with the transformation of political institutions. Indeed, the anti-communist revolutions of 1989–1990 in Central Europe might have become bogged down in the same problem. In contrast to the Tahrir and Maidan movements, however, they were helped by an opportune geopolitical and ideological conjuncture. They happened against the background of – indeed, as part of – the demise of the Soviet Bloc and of the establishment of a unipolar world of American/Western hegemony that put their proceduralist and individualistic values on its banner. The Tahrir and Maidan revolutions, by contrast, took place in the 2010s when this unipolar world of the Western hegemony (both geopolitical and ideological) was waning. The symptoms of this change were numerous: the (re)emergence of illiberal regional hegemons such as China and Russia, the mainstreaming of illiberal discourses and movements in the Western world and the rise of neo-nationalist and/or authoritarian leaders in non-European democracies (e.g., Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines or Norendra Modi in India), not to mention the authoritarian turn of Recep T. Erdogan in Turkey. In contrast to what Snyder

claims, Putin's embrace of neoimperialism and his meddling in European and American affairs were merely part of this global change, not its source. He might have helped Brexiteers and Trump to win but was certainly not the main cause of their victories.

AGENCY VS. STRUCTURE

The anti-totalitarian paradigm provides too narrow a framework for an adequate intellectual and political response to the global neo-authoritarian turn for two main reasons. One is its exclusive focus on politics (as opposed to economy); another is its exclusive focus on civic emancipation. This kind of emancipation is good at destroying oppressive structures but insufficient to build new structures that are able to connect civil rights with social solidarity.

To combine civic with social solidarity requires transforming *civic* resistance against an authoritarian state into the *political* will to construct a constitutional welfare state. An action limiting the state power has to be transfigured into an action appropriating it for its own societal project. A civic movement has to become a political one.

In order to theorize such a transformation, we have to be able to transcend the dichotomy between individual agency, which thrives in loose civic associations and movements, and social and political structures (including political parties) that suppress and encumber agency by institutionalized collectivism. The Manichean antithesis between individualism and collectivism must be overcome. As the title of Chapter One of the *Road to Unfreedom: Individualism or Totalitarianism* (Snyder 2018: 16) announces, Snyder does the exact opposite. He invokes agency and history proper (as opposed to the pseudo-historical myths of inevitability or eternity) as a way of halting or transcending automatic functioning of structures: *"To think historically is to see the limits of structures, the spaces of indeterminacy, the possibilities of freedom"* (Snyder 2018: 112).

History, that is, should point to the moments of free action that interrupt an allegedly inevitable progress or eternal return of the same; *"it opens an aperture between inevitability and eternity, preventing us from drifting from the one to the other, helping us see the moment when we might make a difference"* (Snyder 2018: 12–13). Snyder conjures up agency that affirms itself outside structures, but he never shows how it could positively transform them, as if the main obstacles and limits of our actions were not real structures "out there", but mere mythical structures in our heads. His task, then, is to unmask them as ideological constructions so that we see history as it is made by our deeds, as if it was enough to clear our mind from the false consciousness of inevitability or eternity to find ourselves in a free space where only our choices decide what our future will be: *"Inevitability and eternity are not history but ideas within history, ways of experiencing our time that accelerate its trends while slowing our thoughts. To see, we must set aside the dark glass, and see as we are seen, ideas for what they are, history as what we make."* Only then can we *"exit the road to unfreedom"* and *"begin a politics of responsibility"* (Snyder 2018: 277–279). The one-sided celebration of individual agency as independent of and able to subdue extant structures in *The Road to Unfreedom* and *On Tyranny* is in line with the "great men history" of the *Bloodlands* (2010). Snyder, however, deviated temporarily from his methodological individualism in *Black Earth. The Holocaust as History and Warning* (2015) by his emphasis on the territorialized structures of the nation-states as the main bulwark against the genocidal policies of the de-territorializing empires of Hitler and Stalin.

As we have seen from the above quoted passages, he renews his anti-structural bias in *The Road to Unfreedom* (2018). He conjures up virtuous action that would interrupt the swing of the pendulum from the politics of inevitability to a politics of eternity. Both types of politics are grounded in reference to structures that supposedly direct history independently of human action: one relies on the automatic development of anonymous

forces leading humankind to a better future, and the other points to the eternal return of the enemy whose aggression makes "us" innocent victims of "them" and thus whitewashes any crimes we commit in our defence: if the enemy is evil and we are fighting for sheer survival, all means are allowed.

Snyder is undoubtedly right when he places the cult of innocent victimhood at the centre of today's neo-nationalism. Its leading representatives follow in the footsteps of the Israeli right, which made this cult the core of neo-Zionist ideology in the 1970s. This was when the reactionary Zionism of Menachem Begin was able, for the first time in Israeli history, to win politically over the progressive Zionism of the political heirs of David Ben Gurion (Zertal 2010; Gorny 2003; Segev 2000). This Israeli shift corresponds perfectly to Snyder's idea of the point at which a linear and optimistic vision of history reverses itself into a cyclical and fatalistic one. It is no wonder, then, that most neo-nationalist and neo-authoritarian leaders across the world – from Orbán and Zeman through Trump to Jair Bolsonaro and Norendra Modi – love today's Israel, where the neo-Zionist right reigns supreme.

If the model of politics of eternity is adequate to express an important feature of the current neo-nationalist wave, then the model of politics of inevitability is too broad and, therefore, too indeterminate to do the work which Snyder needs from it. It comprises (this time in breach of the anti-totalitarian paradigm) both revolutionary collectivism (Marxism or progressive nationalism) and evolutionary liberalism. Snyder rejects both of them for one reason – they assume a pre-established harmony between historical necessity and moral ideals and, therefore, minimize the weight of virtuous action. In their reliance on structure, which transcends and determines agency, they resemble their cyclical opposite – the politics of eternity. Thus, despite a *prima facie* triad, Snyder once again ends up in a dichotomy: agency *interrupts* structure (be it linear or cyclical), which *threatens* agency.

This zero-sum game relationship between freedom and necessity corresponds to *the modus operandi* of the civic revolutions. It correlates with the above-mentioned difficulty which they have in translating their emancipatory energies into social-democratic institutions. Their main obstacle in this is the inertia of the socio-economic, geopolitical and cultural structures. The liberal politics of inevitability believed that history itself prepared the structural conditions for emancipation. Snyder rejects this belief as illusory and places the onus of change squarely and exclusively on the responsible action of free agents. These are able to suspend the self-reproduction of structures and begin a new world from scratch. Through this new beginning they interrupt the eternal return of the past and open up the future. Hence the title of Chapter Four of his book: *Novelty or Eternity* (Snyder 2018: 111).

The paradigmatic philosophical elaboration of action as a new beginning which transcends automatic processes, was provided by Hannah Arendt in *On Revolution* (Arendt 1963). She stressed the paradox of revolutionary beginnings that always point to the desired future, whereas in actual fact they reach their main goal in the present – by starting something new they actualize human freedom as such. According to Arendt, the political institutions which are to be built by revolutionaries have to ensure a stable space for the action of those who are able to begin, whereas other, non-political questions are relegated to outside this political space. Snyder is not an aristocratic republican like Arendt, but a liberal democrat with social-democratic leanings. Hence he shifts the centre of gravity from the political conditions of action to the social condition of (democratic) representation, which is, in his view, equality (Snyder 2018: 260–261). He does not reflect, however, upon other structural conditions such as the distribution of international power (unipolarity/multipolarity) and the place which a given society occupies within it (core/periphery). Neither does he reflect upon other historically contingent features of

a society such as its ethno-national and class composition, the level of economic (under) development or previous experience (or lack of it) of democratic rule.

A good example of Snyder's underestimation of these structural factors is provided by his – in other respects ground-breaking – book *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999* (2003). There, he presents as one of his research problems the question of why the collapse of communism led on the one hand to bloody conflicts among Yugoslav nationalities, and on the other to the establishment of co-operative relations among Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Belarussians, albeit that the latter may have inherited just as many mutual grievances from the past as the former (Snyder 2003: 2–3). His answer is that unlike the Yugoslav intellectual elite, the Polish intellectual elite had in the 1970s already drawn up a plan for the peaceful settlement of national conflicts, and the post-communist political elite immediately started to carry it out once the Soviet bloc began to crumble (Snyder 2003: 217–255). The chance of sliding back into the diplomatic or ethnic warfare which marked the Polish-Lithuanian and Polish-Ukrainian relations between 1918 and 1945 was thus pre-empted.

Despite his own detailed depiction of the process which led to the creation of an ethnically and religiously (almost) homogenized Poland after WWII (as opposed to the pre-war Poland, where one third of the population belonged to religious and ethnic minorities) Snyder's enthusiasm at the virtuous *action* of Polish intellectuals and politicians makes him forget the deep *structural* difference between Poland and Yugoslavia. The latter was burdened by an ethno-religious heterogeneity which was entrenched in and reified by the institutions of communist ethno-federalism (Brubaker 1996: 23–77). This situation severely limited what even the most virtuous politician could have done at a time of collapsing communist rule.

POLITICS OF INEVITABILITY? REALLY?

This brings us to the question of what the outside world and the hegemonic West could do for the establishment of democracy in Yugoslavia. Did, for instance, the intervention of NATO forces and the Dayton agreement, engineered by the Clinton administration in 1995, usher in a liberal-democratic future for Bosnia? Does the rule of law really function in today's Kosovo, which was liberated from Serbian rule by NATO in 1999? It seems that the caution and restraint of Obama's foreign policy was not the result of his belief in the "inevitability" of progress, as Snyder seems to suggest, but rather the result of an opposite attitude – the acknowledgement that there are limits as to what any outside intervention can do as far as the establishment of the rule of law and democracy is concerned (Dueck 2015).

Still, if Obama's policy of America's retrenchment does not fall under "the politics of inevitability", then Bill Clinton and George W. Bush's interventionism does not fit it either. Their belief in pre-established harmony between history and liberal democracy did not make them passive, as Snyder implies, but active. Their assumption that history is on their side – that there is a synergy between their foreign interventions invoking liberal-democratic values and anonymous structural forces – was supported by the victorious end of the Cold War and the establishment of American hegemony on the global level. It is no wonder, then, that this belief began to lose its credibility once this hegemony started to wane in the wake of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Not only the disastrous consequences of this action, but also the outcomes of the Clinton interventions of the 1990s proved the limits of what military intervention is able to do for the establishment of the rule of law and democracy. After the Russian intervention in Ukraine, Snyder waged a vigorous one-man campaign for clear Western backing to be given to Ukraine against Russia. More recently, he concluded that the West had failed Ukraine. What exactly would it take to not fail Ukraine? To liberate Crimea militarily in order to help

the Ukrainian oligarchical regime transform itself into one supporting the rule of law and democracy? Did any intervention of this kind in the post-Cold War period have a hope of attaining such a goal?

The post-Cold War belief in the pre-established harmony between history and liberal democracy has allowed for the bridging of the philosophical gap between structure and agency, determinism and voluntarism. Snyder reacted to the breakdown of this belief by reducing it to the first of the poles of which it was a synthesis ("inevitability") and proposed to switch to the opposite pole: instead of on structure, we should rely on agency. The misconception of the post-Cold War attitude as passivity has led him to the conclusion that we should replace it by action. If I am right in claiming that the prevailing attitude of the previous era did not stem from a one-sided historic determinism but rather from its articulation with moral(istic) voluntarism, then the right answer to its crisis would not be to pit one pole against the other but to re-articulate them differently: even if there is no pre-established harmony between historical process and our moral ideals, we should continue our efforts to translate those ideals into action. The change in attitude entails the change in the nature of action. While historical providence minimized its properly political character, its absence brings it to the fore. Even if the harmony between structure and agency is no longer granted, we have to interconnect the two sides. In other words, political action has to work even with forces and trends that run counter to its moral motivations. It cannot hope to change the course of history, but nevertheless it has to try to curb it in such a way that – under the given circumstances – the worst outcome may be avoided and the best one possibly attained.

Despite the absence of pre-established harmony between structure and agency, their relationship should not be seen as a zero sum game. Agency should be able not only to interrupt, halt or limit structure, but also to transform or modify it. In more concrete terms, civic action should be connected to and make space for political action proper. To paraphrase a classic, whom Snyder deems hopelessly totalitarian, while people make their history through their choices, they should be able to take into account and work with conditions which they did not choose.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Snyder's reflection on European empires, nation-states and supra-national integration in Chapter Three of *The Road to Unfreedom* goes beyond the anti-totalitarian paradigm to the extent that it does not take for granted the idea that the democratic self-determination of different societies should automatically usher in peaceful relations between them (as the so-called "democratic peace thesis" claims). He argues convincingly that the idea of the just and stable co-existence of democratic nation-states is a mirage (Snyder 2018: 76–77). In actual fact, Western European nation-states were colonial empires, and when their overseas possessions began to crumble after WWII their metropoles found soft landings in the project of European integration. On the other hand, the national sovereignty of the ethno-linguistic groups that had lived in the Eastern European empires before WWI did not bring long-term peaceful co-existence. Rather, it ushered in yet another war, which ended up re-establishing an updated empire in the form of the Soviet Bloc. After its fall the most successful post-communist countries found safe haven in the European Union. In this they followed the southern European countries that joined the EU after they moved from authoritarianism to democracy in the mid-1970s. The lesson is that neither former empires nor the ethnic nations that liberated themselves from them can survive without supra-national integration.

On the general level I agree with the thesis. The problem is that, like Snyder's dichotomies between individualism and collectivism and agency and structure, the relationship between integration and empire is presented as an absolutized moral

opposition which does not allow us any other choice than joining the good side against the bad one. Whereas empire brings about exploitation and violence, integration establishes justice and peace. It would be very comfortable if we lived in a world in which our choices would be so clearly cut that they would become superfluous. Who would ever choose the evil against the good? Unfortunately, the real world is filled with moral ambiguity. Most of the roads we are to choose among are neither completely good, nor completely evil but rather lie somewhere in between.

In international politics, such a third road – which, in Snyder]s world, is an "excluded third" – filling the gap between supra-national *integration* and neo-nationalist *empire* is *hegemony*. Without it the world of the 20th and 21st centuries cannot be adequately described (Ikenberry 2014). Hegemony is a form of international power which influences and regulates the behaviour of other states without exerting direct and formalized imperial control over them; at most it uses merely intermittent punitive interventions against unruly ("rogue") states to dissuade others from their kind of behaviour. Hegemonic rule is a specific form of international power that has developed hand in hand with modern capitalism, in which the centre of gravity of social power has shifted from direct power of man over man to an indirect power mediated by wealth (Arrighi – Silver 1999; Wallerstein 2004). The hegemon combines coercion with consent, rules-based governance with arbitrary force, and direct with indirect means of influencing the lesser states.

As the global hegemon, America differentiated itself from its predecessors, who had combined hegemonic with imperial rule. Unlike them, America denounced empire and gave explicit primacy to indirect influence over direct command, consent over coercion, rules-based relations over arbitrary power, and multilateralism over unilateralism (Ikenberry 2013). In addition, America linked its hegemony not only to the promotion and spread of free trade but also – albeit often purely rhetorically – with the spread of freedom and democracy. After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the USA became the centre of global power. This unipolar moment represented the geopolitical context of the spread of freedom and democracy eastwards: from America and Western Europe to Eastern Europe and Russia. We cannot understand why the flow of political influence was suddenly reversed and began to go in the opposite direction in the last decade (as depicted on the cover of Snyder's book) without taking into account the weakening of American hegemony.

Snyder's silence about this geopolitical context is deafening. Only indirectly, through his indignation at Russian interference in domestic American affairs, does the reader learn what is at stake for him. As the global hegemon, America regularly and quite explicitly interfered in the domestic affairs of other countries – sometimes helping to change their regimes according to its own democratic values, at other times condoning or even buttressing their authoritarian character as the price for their cooperation (e.g., the countries of the Persian Gulf during the Arab Spring). America is now facing an effort by another great power – which, just recently, found itself in the American sphere of influence – to do the same to it. And, as if it were not enough that its hegemonic power is being challenged, its president has renounced the responsibilities which went hand in hand with it. Trump's slogan "America First" makes a nice parallel to Yeltsin's liberation of Russia from the burdens of the USSR. As the end of the Soviet state was announced from its Russian centre in 1991, so the end of Western hegemony was announced from its American centre in 2017. In both cases, the centre signalled that from now on it will care only about itself. In Trump's terms, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, American "patriotism" triumphed over American "globalism".

After four years of Trump's presidency, we know that the surrender of America's responsibilities has not entailed a halt in the use of its asymmetrical position vis-à-vis others to its own advantage, or in its asserting itself against its peripheries. Trump's

isolationism, that is, has not made America stop being a super-power which is militarily, economically and politically present – directly or indirectly – in all major world regions. It has merely made it use its global preponderance to further its narrowly defined interests much more recklessly and aggressively than previously, that is, without any regard (or at least a pretense of it) for the interests of lesser powers or less developed and wealthy societies. The liberal globalism of Bill Clinton and the neoconservative globalism of George W. Bush could always be accused of hypocrisy – veiling the egoism of the global hegemon in the rhetoric of universalistic concerns. Their claims to care about the interests of others, however, allowed their detractors to take them at their word. Some sort of discussion or negotiation was possible. If a global great power drops the claim that it uses its preponderance to create a better future for humankind as a whole, and instead starts to ground its policies exclusively in its particular interests, then it becomes dangerous not only to itself but to others, since, by definition, its power reaches to all the regions of the world. Because it has dropped any pretense to standing for the universal interest and values, arguing with it becomes superfluous, and the only possible way of countering its ambition is by ruse or force.

Since Snyder avoided the very concept of hegemonic power in favour of the Manichean dichotomy between (nationalist) empire and (supra-national) integration, he became blind to the possibility that America could become a global threat to the world's stability and peace. Thus, in the last chapter of *Black Earth*, he points to the dangers which may arise from the neo-colonialist policies of Russia and China (Snyder 2015: 329–333), but there is no hint of the dangers that could come from the misguided policies of the USA (although he mentions a dangerous domestic lobby of apocalyptic Evangelicals who support occupation policies of Israel and deny climate change [Snyder 2015: 229–333]). By leaving out hegemony as the third form of international integration (besides empire and confederation) in *The Road to Unfreedom*, Snyder avoids naming the place from which he as an American academic speaks. Since the mid-20th century, the USA has been neither a nation-state like the others, nor an empire like GB in the 19th century, but a hegemonic world-power that has systematically intervened (ideologically or otherwise) in the domestic affairs of the states within its sphere of influence.

Because he refused to take into account American power in the world (i.e., hegemony), the idea of America as the major threat to the world was beyond his imagination. Once this idea got materialized in the person of the current American president, no other options were left to Snyder than to look for an external enemy to be blamed for it. Thus, Trump had to be depicted as a manifestation and product of Russian neo-imperialism rather than of American neo-nationalism. Insofar as the mono-causal explanation (as it figures on the cover of *The Road to Unfreedom*) amounts to the main message of the book, Trump's America is presented as a victim of Putin and not as a rogue global power that has put the world in danger.

Let us sum up. The conceptual opposition between a neo-nationalist *empire* as represented by Putin's Russia and a post-nationalist *confederation* as represented by the EU is a hopelessly flawed tool for grasping our present dilemmas since it leaves the most important aspect of the post-communist times out of the picture: American *hegemony* defined the basic global parameters of the last era, and its unravelling defines the times of its passing – our times, that is. Snyder's blindness to this major background condition of our present predicament invalidates his diagnosis and cure. Leaving out the concept and reality of American hegemony while attacking real or alleged ways in which Russia has been recently interfering in the domestic affairs of Western Europe and America, Snyder slides inadvertently into the posture of innocent victimhood that he so aptly attacks in his analysis of Putin's Russia. Claiming that it was an external enemy who escorted Donald Trump to the White House, instead of looking for domestic

contradictions that fuelled Trump's victory, makes him resemble the monster he is fighting with. Behind the façade of his liberal internationalism a spectre of American nationalism is lurking.

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Note

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Richard Baldwin: The Globotics Upheaval: Globalisation, Robotics, and the Future of Work.

1st edition. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2019, 292 pages, ISBN 978-1-4746-0901-2.

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Meet Amelia. She works at the online and phone-in help desk at the Swedish bank SEB. As one might expect, she is blond and blue-eyed, and she has a confident bearing softened by a slightly self-conscious smile. Interestingly, Amelia also works in London for the Borough of Enfield, and in Zurich for UBS. Actually, she works for more than twenty of the world's leading banks, insurers, telecom providers, media companies, and health care firms. Oh, and by the way, Amelia can learn a three-hundred-page manual in thirty seconds, can speak twenty languages and can handle thousands of calls simultaneously. Amelia is a "white-collar robot", essentially a piece of software, which, according to Richard Baldwin, will radically transform our (global) economy.

Richard Baldwin is a professor of international economics at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and over the past thirty years he has written extensively on topics related to globalization, international trade, economic geography and development. His book *The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization* (2016) was listed among the best books of 2016 by *The Financial Times* and *The Economist*. Baldwin also worked as an economist at the Council of Economic Advisors to President George Bush and he is the founder of VoxEU.org.

Baldwin's last book *The Globotics Upheaval: Globalisation, Robotics and the Future of Work* (2019) focuses on digital technology, telemigration and automation and their effects on work and (global) economy. The main idea of the book can be summarized as follows: A new form of globalization is taking place, namely telemigration, which allows hiring people on the other side of the planet, who can work from their homes and are willing to work for much smaller salaries than their domestic counterparts. Baldwin calls them "remote intelligence" (RI). In addition, the enormous progress in digital technologies, automation and robotics leads to a massive employment of "artificial intelligence" (AI). This combination of RI and AI, or, in other words, the combination of globalization and robotics – globotics – is something qualitatively new. While automation and globalization themselves are nothing particularly new, their combination, globotics, is different for at least three reasons: it is coming inhumanly fast, it will seem unbelievably unfair and it will mostly affect people working in the service sector, who have so far been sheltered from the effects of globalization and automation. And as Baldwin points out, these people are not ready for it.

What may seem as an alarmist call is actually anything but. Baldwin is optimistic about the future (perhaps even too optimistic) and according to his view, service sector automation and telemigration are inevitable and even welcome in the long run. What he is concerned about is the transformation period. As he says: *"When millions of jobs are displaced and communities are disrupted, we won't see a stay-calm-and-carry-on attitude"* (p. 8).

The book starts with a quick overview of the main argument. The first 16 pages (Introduction), therefore, give the reader the general understanding of the issue and outline

Baldwin's argumentation. If you just want to get the main message of the book in a condensed form, this is the part you should read.

The following first part of the book consists of chapters two and three and looks at history. The first chapter discusses the Great Transformation (roughly from the 18th to the 19th century) and the second chapter the Services Transformation (starting in the last third of the 20th century). Baldwin analyses them through a perspective according to which a technological impulse launches a four-step process of 1) transformation, 2) upheaval, 3) backlash, and 4) resolution. For instance, the Great Transformation was enabled by steam power, which ultimately led to a shift of workers from agriculture to manufacturing. It also produced a backlash in the forms of fascism, communism and "New Deal"-like social welfare programmes. Once these governmental programmes were introduced, the Great Transformation started to be a great thing for the majority of people and the income inequality declined. The starting input for the Services Transformation was the miniaturization of computers, and the following ICT revolution led to the deindustrialization of the advanced economies and a shift of workers from manufactures to offices. However, deindustrialization has destroyed communities and people started reacting not as individuals but rather as members of threatened communities. There has not been a big backlash to this as in the case of the Great Transformation, although smaller backlashes appeared. Baldwin mentions the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit victory as examples and he warns that these 2016 backlashes did not produce a resolution and we do not yet know where the anger is heading.

Even though these two chapters are insightful and perhaps help to illustrate the processes of large-scale economic transformations, they are not truly linked to the main focus of the book. The main purpose of these chapters could have been fulfilled in a much more concise form (it accounts for 70 pages from the total of 276), especially given Baldwin's ability to summarize a great variety of information. Furthermore, Baldwin presented a much more detailed analysis of these events in his *The Great Convergence* and could have simply referred to it instead of repeating similar information here.

The second part of the book contains seven chapters (chapters four through ten of the book) which deal with the Globotics Transformation. The fourth chapter focuses on the digital technology driving the Globotics Transformation. Baldwin first discusses the massive improvement of computer processing speed[1] and then introduces four "laws" that explain the nature of the new digital technology. Moore's law says that computer processing speed grows exponentially, doubling every 18 months or so. Gilder's law predicts that data transmission rates would grow three times faster than computer power. Metcalf's law claims that being connected to a network gets more valuable as the network grows, even as the cost of joining falls. Finally, Varian's law says that since digital components are free and digital products are highly valuable, innovation explodes as people try to get rich by combining the components in search of valuable products. With the help of these "laws", Baldwin presents the technological impulse that started the four-step process of the Globotics Transformation described above. Moreover, Baldwin mentions some curiosities and interesting details about the digital technology, which provide a better understanding of the impact of the digital technology and the digital world we live in.[2]

The fifth chapter deals with telemigration as being one of the aspects of the Globotics Transformation. Telemigration will effectively bring a wage competition from international workers to domestic markets. From the perspective of the advanced economies, the RI is ready to work for a lower amount of money (see Table 1) and since the type of work, which is easily transferable, is usually office type work, the RI will compete with the service workers, who simply cannot afford to earn the low amount the RI is happy to earn. Telemigration is not a new phenomenon; however, thus far it was significantly

limited mostly due to the language barrier as every successful telemigrant had to have "good enough" English. Nevertheless, with the massive advance of machine translation, there are millions of people who have "good enough" English and although the quality of their work may not be as high as that of the domestic office workers, they are significantly cheaper and that is often decisive. This is why there has been a boom in recent years of various freelancer platforms and Baldwin presents several examples of companies like American Express, Dell, Xerox, CBS Radio, Oracle and Hilton offshoring significant amounts of office jobs to telemigrants. In addition, new types of technologies such as augmented reality, telepresence robots and holographic presence make it easier for telemigrants to do their job. It may seem like a sci-fi movie, but these technologies are already used quite extensively. For instance, Baldwin mentions the prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, who used holographic presence in 2014 to be at far more campaign rallies than he could have otherwise attended in person.

Table 1
Net Monthly Income, in 2005 US Dollars (source: Baldwin, 2019, p. 117).

	Accountant	Computer programmer	Engineer	Professional nurse
US	3,370	4,141	4,710	3,168
UK	3,867	3,476	4,225	2,782
Poland	617	892	664	563
China	165	252	252	187

The sixth chapter focuses on automation and white-collar robots like the above-introduced Amelia. Baldwin presents many of these robots and discusses all the things they can do and what they are good at. Baldwin's main point here is that these white-collar robots will eliminate many jobs but few occupations, just like a tractor, for instance, eliminated many jobs in agriculture but did not eliminate the occupation of farmer itself. Baldwin then presents some studies and predictions about the number and nature of the jobs which will be replaced by AI. He states: *"Over the next few years, the number of jobs displaced by white-collar robots will be somewhere between big and enormous. 'Big' means one in every ten jobs is automated; 'enormous' dials that up to six out of ten"* (p. 161). The sectors most threatened by AI are office and administration, retail, construction jobs, food preparation, transportation, medical jobs, pharmacies, journalism, legal works, and finances. However, there will be some new jobs created by the digital technology, and new and better jobs that do not exist today will emerge. In the long run, Baldwin claims, we will all be better off. The thing we should worry about is the transformation period.

The seventh chapter presents the factors that are moving the transformation step of the Globotics Transformation to the upheaval step. As mentioned above, the Globotics Transformation is coming inhumanly fast (Baldwin even tries to explain why our brains are not capable of fully apprehending the speed of the change) and it will seem unbelievably unfair. Furthermore, the job displacement will infiltrate our societies in a similar way as the smartphones did. Baldwin writes: *"[Smartphones] snuck into our daily routines without us realizing how much they were changing our lives because the advantages seduced us little by little"* (p. 196). The same thing will happen with the

Globotics Transformation and it is reasonable to expect that there will be a backlash of a certain sort because the governments *"are either unaware of how fast the changes are coming or [are] living in denial about their implications for middle-class prosperity"* (p. 208).

The eighth chapter discusses the possible forms and shapes the backlash can take. Baldwin is sceptical that the backlash would be a violent one. It will most likely be some sort of shelterism; in other words, the groups and communities most affected by the Globotics Transformation will try to convince their governments to protect their jobs and shelter them from the RI and AI competition. Such shelterism and reactionary regulation may slow down the changes; however, Baldwin notes that *"things could get out of hand if globots cast hundreds of millions of lives into disarray"* (p. 232). Moreover, reactionary regulation and even a possible violent uprising can slow down the trend, but they will not postpone it indefinitely.

The ninth chapter focuses on the resolution and on what the future will look like. Based on the analysis of RI and AI in the previous chapters, Baldwin concludes that the new form of globalization will – perhaps paradoxically – bring a future that will be more local and more human. In other words, we will have jobs that cannot be telemigrated and that robots will be bad at, which basically means all the types of jobs that need social intelligence, creativity, innovations, personal contacts, "thinking outside of the box", etc. Finally, the tenth chapter offers some recommendations about how to prepare for such a future. First, Baldwin claims that we should not seek jobs that directly compete with RI and AI. These jobs will most likely be telemigrated or done by robots. Second, we should invest in developing soft skills like being able to work in a group, and being creative, socially aware, empathic and ethical. Third, we should realize that humanity is an edge, not a handicap. Baldwin concludes: *"In the future, having a good heart may be as important to economic success as having a good head was in the twentieth century, and a strong hand was in the nineteenth century"* (p. 268).

One of the best aspects of the book is that it is very well-written and easily understandable although it deals with the rather difficult topic of digital technology. This is not a book for IT experts only; it was clearly written for a broader audience. Baldwin makes a joke here and there, refers to pop culture and, in one case, even quotes a *Game of Thrones* character. The book excels in connecting the microlevel – such as concrete technologies, individual companies, and workers – with the macrolevel, such as processes of globalization, labour offshoring and possible responses from governments. The only aspect I find a bit bothersome is that Baldwin repeats the main arguments quite often throughout the book, and it may be tedious from the reader's point of view. Furthermore, the author only looks at the Globotics Transformation from the perspective of the advanced Western economies. For instance, telemigration will certainly have different effects on the Western economies and on those economies that will supply telemigrants; however, Baldwin only discusses the former. I understand that this was Baldwin's choice; however, it would be interesting to analyse the situation also from the perspective of the developing world and perhaps even from a more global political/economic perspective. Finally, although Baldwin's optimism about the future is contagious, maybe he is too optimistic and overlooks all the things that could go wrong. Perhaps Baldwin is right and in the long run, we will all be better off. But as John Maynard Keynes famously said, in the long run, we are all dead.

To conclude, Richard Baldwin's *The Globotics Upheaval: Globalisation, Robotics and the Future of Work* is a well-written book about a very important topic which provides a valuable insight into the new digital economy. Everyone dealing with globalization, technology, economic organization of society and migration of labour will find useful information in it. Most of all, I would especially recommend this book to policymakers,

who will have to deal with the Globotics Transformation and its consequences in the upcoming years.

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[1] Baldwin gives the example of the iPhone 6s, which was released in 2015, and which processes information about 120 million times faster than the mainframe computer that, in 1969, guided Apollo 11 to the moon. However, the iPhone X, which was released in 2017, is about three times faster than the iPhone 6s. In other words, the increment in processing speed between 2015 and 2017 was 240 million times the speed of the Apollo 11 computer.

[2] For example, Baldwin discusses the amount of data being transmitted online: *"In a single typical minute of 2017, a half million Tweets were sent, over four million YouTube videos were watched, 47 million Instagram posts and 4 million Facebook likes went up, and 15 million text messages were sent. […] Cisco estimates that global internet traffic was 1.2 zettabytes in 2016"* (p. 95). He then states that storing all the catalogued books in the world in all languages would fill about 480 million million (this is not a typo) bytes, which would fit onto about 20 thousand DVDs. If we stacked all these DVDs, we would get a pile that would be about 24 meters high. Storing 2016's internet traffic on DVDs would produce a pile which would be 24 billion kilometres high. It would reach from the earth to the sun and back 80 times.

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Mirek Tobiáš Hošman is a student of Economic Policy and International Relations at Masaryk University. He served as a member of the scientific committee at the XVI AISPE Conference in Bologna and conducted research internships in Estonia, Italy and Japan. Moreover, he has published academic articles in Czech as well as international journals. His current research focuses on social network analysis and international development. He is also interested in international trade regulations and philosophy of (social) science.

Alynna J. Lyon, Christine A. Gustafson and Paul Christopher Manuel: Pope Francis as a Global Actor: Where Politics and Theology Meet.

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Since his election to the papal office in 2013, Pope Francis (born as Jorge Mario Bergoglio) has drawn the attention of the whole world. His simple life and prolific work regarding help to the underprivileged and ostracized have been praised by the media and the public. Moreover, the Pope actively warns against climate change and emphasizes the importance of dialogue and solidarity. *Pope Francis as a Global Actor: Where Politics and Theology Meet* aims to examine the theological influences on his thinking and papal agenda.

The publication is a collection of 13 works on Bergoglio's papacy edited by the American scholars Alynna J. Lyon, Christine A. Gustafson, and Paul Christopher Manuel of universities in New Hampshire and Washington, D.C. The remaining 11 authors are mostly based in the United States (ranging from California to Vermont), with one contributor residing in India. A result of four authorial meetings, the volume is presented as a product of their engagement, one of a communitarian nature.

The three editors open the book by presenting the current discourse on Pope Francis. They divide the existing publications into three distinct groups – a biographical one with a focus on his life, a hagiographical one dealing with his religious writings, and scholarship dedicated to the analysis of the Pope's policies. This book identifies with the last category; however, it borrows themes from all three.

The volume is divided into two parts. The first one traces down Francis's origins and theological influences which have formed his opinions and led him to become the man we know today. The first three chapters in this part deal with his four theological priorities, examine his Jesuit heritage, and evaluate the influence of teachings of Thomas Aquinas upon Francis's approach to the environment, respectively. The fourth chapter challenges the American binary perspective on the War of Drugs with the Pope's opinions on it. The final contribution in this section analyses his portrayal in prominent American newspapers.

The second part builds on his theological background to show Francis's individual approaches to selected world regions and current affairs. The authors gradually explore the Pope's stances on climate change and the refugee crisis, and his involvement in the regions of Western Europe, the United States, the People's Republic of China, India, and his native Latin America.

The book is, for the most part, straightforward and does not require readers to have a deeper understanding of international relations. Still, having prior knowledge of the Catholic Church and theological concepts is advised. The reader should not be misled by the title – this volume primarily traces down the ideological roots of and inspirations for the Pope's actions as a global actor. Thus it may be appreciated more by those interested in Francis's thinking than by those seeking an analysis of international affairs.

"To understand the Pope, one must follow him home." Alynna J. Lyon and her fellow colleagues use this suggestion of one of Bergoglio's associates as they embark on a journey to trace down his theological inspirations and their echoes in his contemporary actions. Throughout the volume, we can find numerous recurring themes, either prominent ones in Francis's past or essential pillars of his papal agenda.

Almost all of the contributors highlight the Pope's Latin American, or more specifically Argentinian, origin and his time with the Society of Jesus. Thomas Massaro, Elizabeth Carter and Christine A. Gustafson agree that his exposure to local poverty, his experience with the Dirty War and the principles of Jesuit teaching would later affect his exclusive focus on the poor and marginalized. Furthermore, the Argentinian roots are important for his association with the *theology of people*, a response of the Latin American bishops to pending social issues and liberation theology. The legacy of the 1968 Medellín Conference and the 2007 document *Aparecida* echoes in Francis's works *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato si'*.

The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas is listed among the major influences upon Francis's mindset and pops up throughout the book, most prominently in James T. McHugh's Chapter 4. It suggests that the Thomistic concept of eternal law could be linked to the Pope's efforts regarding climate change, as demonstrated in *Laudato si'*. This encyclical features Francis's endeavour to reconcile science and religion and abandon the belief they are in competition and mutually contradictory. In addition, Thomas Aquinas's notions of just war and structural injustice are featured later on in the book.

Supposedly, Francis uses these influences in his agenda – one that is built on four priorities: time over space, realities over ideas, the whole being greater than individual parts, and the most frequently referenced one, unity over conflict. Their execution can be seen in the Pope's words and actions as he stands by the poor, refugees and ostracized and stresses the importance of dialogue and environmental protection.

Building on his teaching, the authors offer their own portrayal of Pope Francis. They recognize three distinct levels of his authority: firstly, his authority as a teacher of the church and a supervisor of priests; secondly, his authority as the head of a sovereign state; and thirdly, his authority as a head of a transnational entity with members around the world. They point out that despite the privileges of his status, Francis opts for leading a simple, humble life. He is depicted as a man of dialogue, one who builds bridges and brings people together. To find a common language, he might draw from his experience with authoritarian regimes in Latin America – being kind yet willing to exert his papal authority. In the book, the Pope's thinking is said to be exceptional if perceived from the authors' native perspectives. They stress that from the U.S. point of view, he stands neither on the progressive nor the conservative side. He is innovative, yet without changing key teachings of the Catholic Church. With his views and actions, he challenges the binary optics of American society.

The work often compares Francis's papacy with those of his immediate predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It juxtaposes their efforts in international relations and uses available data to evaluate their popularity and media coverage. Francis is shown as a policy entrepreneur with his own agenda, offering solutions to particular issues of his interest. The authors argue that he can pursue his goals through numerous diplomatic means – in his case, addresses, publications, social media and highly publicized visits abroad. He is portrayed as a rare spokesman for the whole world, one who represents the interests of humankind. The Pope's leadership skills combined with his charismatic approach and his will to help those in need present him in a good light – as a promising partner in social changes, a mediator, and the one who brings together religion and science in his effort to save the environment.

Due to the nature of this volume, it seems more appropriate to judge the ups and downs of individual contributions than the publication as a whole. While most of them are generally well-structured and argument-driven, some move away from the persona of Pope Francis to explore other themes instead. That is the case with McHugh's Chapter 4. It provides extensive insight into the teachings of Thomas Aquinas and his thoughts on the eternal law but slightly neglects the Pope in the process.

John Chathanatt's Chapter 12 on Francis's involvement in India is a demonstration of faulty argumentation. He paraphrases the Pope's Easter prayer for the victims of natural disasters in Iran, China, Argentina and the United States, which did not contain any mention of India. The author, however, adds that *"[we can] assume that his mindset includes India too, though he may not have specifically mentioned it."* Chathanatt continues to build his case on this belief. There are other instances of this very problem throughout the chapter. It gives the reader the impression that given his Indian origin, the author opted for unconvincing evidence only to have a contribution on Francis's attitude towards India.

Chathanatt is not the only author in the book to have such problems. Other authors, especially in the first part of the book, work with the recollections of Bergoglio's friends and contemporaries to find his theological influences. While these assumptions might be correct, the authors do not support their claims with evidence from Francis's own statements or writings. In addition, some of his secular inspirations (e.g. his scientific career, Peronism) are mentioned but barely touched upon. It would have been interesting to see an evaluation of the varying importance of his theological and worldly influences in order to get a more well-rounded study of the Pope's background.

The structure of this volume is generally clear and neat. However, two important aspects are missing from this publication. Firstly, since the book is supposed to focus on the Pope being a global actor, the foreword should have featured at least a basic introduction to how the authors understand the concept and how they used it in their respective works. Secondly, there is the lack of an overall conclusion. Since some of the contributors provided claims that contradicted other authors' claims (e.g. the Pope being strongly against populism yet possibly being a populist himself), that could have been reflected upon by the editors at the end of the book.

Still, there are many parts to applaud. The authors decided to draw inspiration from Pope Francis himself. Focusing on his four priorities of time, reality, the whole and unity, they managed to cover their respective origins in Bergoglio's life and his theological influences. Moreover, they built on papal priorities to provide a well-rounded portrayal of Francis – a global leader yet a person of humility and solidarity, a compassionate man of dialogue who focuses on the now.

Despite its proper title, the volume does not primarily define the Pope's power as a global actor, nor does it extensively analyse his actions in various world regions. Instead, the subtitle seems to be a more appropriate description. The book follows Francis into his past to find the roots of his beliefs, the theological influences which have shaped him into the man he is today. It suggests that if we understand Francis's origin, we will be better able to make sense of his actions as a global actor, one who is both a man of politics and a man of theology.

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Julien Chaisse (ed.): China's International Investment Strategy: Bilateral, Regional, and Global Law and Policy.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 517 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-882745-0.

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Alongside its accession to the World Trade Organization in 2005 China has also solidified its position in the international investment system since its embrace of the "open door" policy in 1978. It expanded its international investment treaty programme that reflects today's China's exponential growth as both the leading source and recipient of foreign investment. Currently, China is well-positioned to be the world's greatest single source of foreign outbound investment. On the other hand, the backlash against Chinese investments is noticeable as more countries and regional economic international organisations are starting to employ mechanisms to review or limit investments coming from China.[1] In connection with the consequences of emerging economic and tech rivalries and the US-China trade war, Chinese investments abroad have dropped significantly recently. Under the conditions of these complex developments, Julien Chaisse, a Professor at the City University of Hong Kong, brought together a group of 35 experts with different professional backgrounds in order to analyse China's developing investment strategy and its particular policy ramifications. In this respect, the added value of the resulting edited book is a diverse group of distinguished contributors from academia, government, international organisations and the private sector who attended the 2016 Asia FDI Forum held in Hong Kong on November 29–30, an event jointly organised by the Faculty of Law of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Columbia University Centre for Sustainable Investment.

The collection under review consists of an introduction that sets the scene and 27 contributions. The chapters cover a wide range of topics, from broader issues and challenges such as globalisation of Chinese enterprises and the influence of tax policy on Chinese investments to the addressing of sustainable development concerns in Chinese investment agreements. Together, they create a harmonious narrative of the growing and multifaceted role of China as a major economic power in the international economic arena. Correspondingly, the structure of the book subtly reflects its main thesis – that China is deploying an ambitious triple-track international investment strategy at bilateral, regional and global levels.

At bilateral and regional level, China has recently concluded 150 bilateral investment treaties (BITs) or other treaties containing investment provisions. This makes China the most active participant in the investment treaty system outside Europe. In addition, its investment treaty negotiations with the United States and the European Union have the potential to considerably change the future direction of the system. It is therefore more than welcome that the contributions in this volume, mainly those by Kyle Dylan Dickson-Smith, Flavia Marisi, Amokura Kawharu, Luke Nottage, Qian Wang and Heng Wang, address both of these types of negotiations in detail. A similar Chinese activity is observed in its regional and plurilateral negotiations. This is particularly the case with the China-led initiative of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a trade and investment agreement envisaged among the ten member countries of the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and five other Asian and Pacific countries (Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and India), which is currently coming to its conclusion. The negotiations are analysed in a number of chapters. The contents of the respective treaties and their proposals are compared in order to closely examine the question whether China is a rule-follower, rule-shaker or rule-maker.

To provide a comprehensive view on the implications of such international arrangements, it is essential to analyse investment disputes, too. In this regard, China's presence in investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) has been slowly rising as well, with claims initiated by Chinese investors[2] in host countries around the globe as well as by foreign investors against China.[3] A number of contributors, particularly Matthew Hodgson, Adam Bryan, Jane Willems and Claire Wilson, scrutinise the arbitration cases involving Chinese parties, evaluating the practical implications of investment protection.

At the global level, the main global initiatives spearheaded by China are the 2016 presidency of the G20 (with related G20 initiatives in this field such as the G20 Guiding Principles for Global Investment Policymaking) and also the already enormously influential Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road Initiative, BRI). The commencement of infrastructure projects under the BRI throughout 70 countries around the world will make for a direct investment of between US$ 1 trillion to US$ 8 trillion (Desierto 2018). Accordingly, in 2018 the Chinese government announced plans to set up its own dispute settlement mechanisms to deal with investor-state claims based on existing arbitral institutions to provide a broader range of ISDS services; in connection with this, the Supreme People's Court will establish "international commercial courts" in Xi'an, Shenzhen, and Beijing. The contributors Ka Zeng and Manzoor Ahmad, who are focused on the BRI, highlight different aspects of the initiative, provide an empirically rich analysis of investments made within this framework while looking at China's interests in several regions under the BRI. This reviewer finds that there perhaps still might be one important aspect overlooked by the authors of China's International Investment Strategy with respect to that global dimension. It is the current multilateral reform of investor-state dispute settlement efforts at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), where China also participates and may soon become a crucial actor between the competing views of the European Union and the United States. Against this background, the book's conclusion about the emerging China's role as a global architect of international investment law policy is undeniable.

Additionally, the attention of several contributors, particularly Sophie Meunier and Susan Finder, among others, is fittingly devoted to the issue of state-owned enterprises which play a significant part in China's economic reform programme and investing abroad. Their enhanced role as foreign investors could be anticipated as state-owned enterprises have enjoyed an international expansion during the last decade. Currently, 18 per cent of all state-owned enterprises are from China, and the list of the top 100 global multinational enterprises includes five Chinese state-owned enterprises (UNCTAD 2019: 6). Given the China's economic model, many Chinese homegrown industry champions have become global players rivalling long-time corporate business entities from the US or Europe. Indeed, the rise of state-owned enterprises goes beyond mere economic considerations. With the number of countries that operate investment review mechanisms growing (OECD 2019) and the current heated debate over the participation of the Chinese companies Huawei and ZTE in 5G networks, national security concerns over investment flows in specific sectors and heightened sensitivity over the control of assets that constitute critical infrastructure are emerging serious obstacles for state-owned enterprises operating abroad.

In sum, it is easy to conclude that China's presence as a power in the international investment regime is expected to grow and deepen. The reviewed compilation convincingly presents China as an active investment policy-maker pursuing various interests while balancing between underpinning and challenging the system. In addition, thanks to presenting a multitude of perspectives, the book sheds light on various institutional, political and economic aspects of China's investment policy, many of them unexplored until now. For instance, the chapters discussing China's increasing presence on the global stage are particularly novel as they explore recent achievements of the Chinese G20 presidency. Despite their soft law nature, they slowly draw more attention because they provided a political stimulus for the structured discussions on a multilateral framework for investment facilitation for development. This topic, in regard to which China plays a leading role in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), has evolved into one of the scarce evidences that the WTO is still able to negotiate new rules for international trade and investment. Similarly, the book provides insightful commentaries on recent arbitration cases, which were frequently complicated by the nature of China's constitutional system, which leads to a specific phenomenon of jurisdictional disputes involving Hong Kong and Macao.

As a whole, in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the subject, the volume combines legal and international relations perspectives. As such it serves as an excellent source for legal and IR scholars, policymakers and practitioners alike, as well as others who are interested in international economic governance and contemporary China's commercial policy in times of the growing use of economic tools for geopolitical purposes[4] and the U.S.-China competition over vital economic interests.

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[1] See the Regulation (EU) 2019/452 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a framework for the screening of foreign direct investments into the Union; or the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act of 2018 (FIRRMA) in the United States.

[2] E.g. Tza Yap Shum v. Peru (ICSID Case No. ARB/07/6); China Heilongjiang v. Mongolia (PCA Case No. 2010-20); Ping An Life Insurance v. Belgium (ICSID Case No. ARB/12/29); Beijing Urban Construction v. Yemen (ICSID Case No. ARB/14/30).

[3] E.g. Ansung Housing v. People's Republic of China (ICSID Case No. ARB/14/25); Hela Schwarz GmbH v. People's Republic of China (ICSID Case No. ARB/17/19).

[4] On the rise of geoeconomics see, e.g., Blackwill and Harris' *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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Michael Kelly, Hilary Footitt, Myriam Salama-Carr (eds.): The Palgrave Handbook of Languages and Conflict.

1st edition, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 527 pages, ISBN: 978-3-030-04824-1.

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The power and impact of language and languages within armed conflicts can probably be best described by Karol Janicki's quote stating that *"language can lead to peace-building, neutrality and indifference, or to destruction, conflict building, and warmongering"* (Janicki 2017: 189). *The Palgrave Handbook of Languages and Conflict,* a book edited by Michael Kelly, Hilary Footit and Myriam Salama-Carr, is a part of Palgrave's series *Language and War*, which includes more than 15 books dealing with the role of language in conflicts, occupation, peace-enforcement and humanitarian action in war zones.

All the editors have a strong academic background and hold senior researcher positions at leading universities in the United Kingdom. Michael Kelly is an Emeritus Professor of French at the University of Southampton. He is a specialist in modern French culture and society and is also the author of several books focused on languages in war and conflict, e.g. *Interpreting the Peace: Peace Operations, Conflict and Language in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (2013). Kelly also edited the volume *Languages after Brexit* (2018). The second editor, Hilary Footitt, serves as a research fellow at the University of Reading. Footitt is a co-editor of the Palgrave series *Language and War*, and co-wrote the volumes *Languages at War* (2012) and *Languages and the Military* (2012). Finally, Myriam Salama Carr is an Honorary Research Fellow in the Centre for Translation and Interpreting at the University of Manchester. She is also the editor of *Translating and Interpreting Conflict* (2007) and *The Translator on Science in Translation* (2011).

These editors collaborated with 16 other well-educated contributors with various academic and non-academic backgrounds from around the world, namely: Louise Askew, a translator working for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; Catherine Baker, a Senior Lecturer in 20th-Century History at the University of Hull; Reem Bassiouney, a Professor of Linguistics at the American University in Cairo; Ellen Elias-Bursać, a translator of novels and non-fiction by Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian writers; María Manuela Fernández Sánchez, a Lecturer in Theories of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada; Linda Fitchett, a former president of the International Association of Conference Interpreters; Fabrizio Gallai, a Lecturer in Interpreting Studies at the University of Bologna; Zahera Harb, a Senior Lecturer in International Journalism at City University of London; Moira Inghilleri, an Associate Professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; Laura Johnson, a UK-based independent researcher; Pekka Kujamäki, a Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Graz; Joseph Lo Bianco, a Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne; Yonatan Mendel, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University; Patrick Porter, a Professor of International Security and Strategy at the University of Birmingham; Françoise Ugochukwu, the author of the first standard Igbo-French dictionary with reversed

lexicon, and Roberto A. Valdeón, a Professor of English Studies at the University of Oviedo.

The Palgrave Handbook of Languages and Conflict is divided into five main parts with more than two dozen contributions that create a comprehensive, brilliant study counting 527 pages. The main goal of the book is *"to map the contours of this new area of study through [...] different perspectives on the questions"* (p. 18). *The Palgrave Handbook* is *"setting out the range of conceptual and methodological approaches on which it typically draws, and examining contextualised case studies of the role of languages in specific wars, from medieval times through to engagements in the Middle East and Africa today."* (p. 2) Moreover, the "Introduction" includes the editors' position on *"how the sub-discipline of languages and conflict has emerged, where it is now located intellectually, and what specific ethical and technological issues it confronts"* (p. 2). There the authors (i.e. the editors) go back to the historical roots of language and touch on Foucault's *Surveiller et punir.* The authors also provide reflections on how research of language has been influenced by other approaches from linguists, critical discourse analysts, and sociolinguists, and how research of language has affected other related disciplines such a cultural studies, gender studies, war studies or transnational history. According to the editors, *"the growing interdisciplinarity of research in the humanities and social sciences provides a particularly helpful context for scholars to engage with issues of language and conflict"* (p. 6).

Part I, "Conceptual Spaces" (pp. 27–111), provides a very useful introduction to current conceptual approaches that have been developed to discuss languages and conflict. This part discusses current concepts based on findings from translational studies and language policy. On the other hand, the contributions written by Patrick Porter and Moira Inghilleri are particularly oriented toward the United States of America's war on terror, focusing particularly on the Vietnam War. In his essay *Good Anthropology, Bad History: America's Cultural Turn in the War on Terror*, Porter emphasizes the role of the anthropological approach, rather than the historical one, and gives five arguments *"that are relevant to the way that western powers are conducting the war on terror"* (pp. 30–32). In contrast to Porter, Inghilleri's contribution*, Ethics in the Vietnam War*, describes a different type of war-related encounter that is *"unmediated by interpreters and represented in fictional accounts written by American and Vietnamese veterans of the war in Vietnam"* (p. 51). Here, Inghilleri focuses on *"ethical and moral dilemmas and [their] examples taken from poetry, novels, and memoirs"* (p. 51).

Part II, entitled "Source, Documentation and Voices" (pp. 111–181), opens with a discussion between Hilary Footitt and Pekka Kujamäkki about the uneasy border between Translation Studies and Military History. Footitt focuses this contribution of her work on directing attention to the difficulty of finding relevant archival sources and documents. Afterwards, Catherine Baker, in her study *Interviewing for Research on Languages and War*, describes and recommends interviewing as *"the only method for getting as close as possible to [...] memories"* (p. 159). During her post-doctoral research, Baker conducted more than 50 interviews with ex-peacekeepers who served in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) during the 1992–1995 civil wars. Besides her brilliant methodological erudition when she focuses on the possible methodological problem of the making of an interview, Baker analyses the relationship between the military/civilian identities during the conflict in BiH.

Part III, "Institutions and Actors" (pp. 181–353) and their roles within conflicts and wars. This part contains seven different contributions. The topics dealt with include testing the boundaries of neutrality; the analysing of BBC monitoring; the covering of regional conflicts by Arab News; the depiction of the role of language within conflicts in the deep south of Thailand; and analysing the role of translators and interpreters during

the war tribunals in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Lebanon and former Yugoslavia. Moreover, there is also the contribution by Louise Askew analysing the language support for NATO operations. This contribution represents a very original issue in the current debate about NATO's role within the international environment (e.g. Bőller 2018, Shea 2015). Askew's study, *Providing Language Support for NATO Operations: Challenges and Solutions*, brings a valuable view of NATO's (lack of) ability to provide high-standard translation services during its founding and development, mainly after the end of the Cold War. Askew's approach is focused on all missions in which NATO participated. She analyses all the problems that were detected by the translator and other linguistics staff in the peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (IFOR), Kosovo (KFOR) and Afghanistan (ISAF). According to Askew, from all three missions *"NATO learned [...] and was captured in its doctrine for linguistic support for operations. If NATO ever launches a fourth such operation the doctrine provides a good on which to establish effective language support"* (p. 248).

Part IV, entitled Languages at War in History (pp. 353–479), shows how languages have been significant in ways that have not always been noticed by historians or commentators. This part of the *Handbook* provides the reader with reflections on post-colonial conflict and imperial rivalries in the Americas through the British language practices during the Second World War and also reflects on the cohabitation of the Nigerian and English language in Biafra, Nigeria. María Fernández Sánchez, in her study *Understanding Interpreting and Diplomacy: Reflections on the Early Cold War (1945–1963),* brings a very useful contribution about how *"Cold War diplomacy from the interpreter's viewpoint can provide valuable insights into this period"* (p. 397). Fernández Sánchez expands on her previous research and analyses the US and Soviet interpreters' meetings and how they managed their agency in making foreign policies, and depicts *"how diplomacy was shaped by interpreting practices and vice versa"* (Ibid.). Furthermore, another significant chapter in this part is the very current contribution that deals with language during the recent revolution in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya written by Reem Bassioney. In his contribution, Bassoney stresses that *"the role of standard Arabic, colloquial varieties of Arabic, and even Bedouin varieties in Libya, as well as foreign languages such as English and French, were utilized to cast doubt on the sincerity of revolutionaries and to attempt to fight back the wave of protests"* (p. 442).

Finally, the last chapter, entitled "Going Forward: Conclusion and Reflections" (pp. 479–519), provides valuable thoughts from the editors about how the role of languages is likely to be in the future. Michael Kelly depicts the role of languages in constantly changing warfare where new techniques (e.g. attacks by drones) and a new battlefield (cyber space) have a growing impact. Kelly states that *"language questions are becoming increasingly important in both the strategic and operational issues they raise"* (p. 482). A stronger kind of battle – the so-called "soft war" or "unarmed conflict" – is giving a heightened role to language and culture, and is likely to preoccupy academics and practitioners from a growing number of academic and professional backgrounds in the future (p. 500).

To sum up, the *Palgrave Handbook* offers an interdisciplinary approach drawing on applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, translation studies, intercultural communication, history, politics, international relations and cultural studies. Due to this fact, this book represents another great addition not only for academics but also for students and members of the wider public concerned about and interested in language and its relations to armed conflicts and civil wars. It is complementary to and follows other similar books published by Palgrave in recent times (e.g. Kershaw 2019; Laugesen – Gehrmann 2020; Laugesen – Fisher 2020). On one hand, the authors could be more ambitious in displays of their analysis results. However, I can imagine that some tables or photos could be disruptive in

the monolithic text. On the other hand, I suppose that this piece will not be the authors' last one, considering that there are further related topics which also deserve serious attention.

I suppose that in these unstable times when language is crooked, and in the era of fake news dramatically spreading in cyber space, the main thoughts in this book show how language could be a useful friend or an unfavourable opponent. Nowadays, it is a more relevant time than any other to (re)think what power languages and words hide.

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