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Research Articles

NATO between Exclusivity and Inclusivity: Measuring NATO's Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

Building on an original dataset, this article focuses on the interactions between NATO and its declared worldwide partners. It argues that the analysis of these interactions can reveal NATO's strategic approach to partnerships, but it can also provide a tool for its classification as an organisation that is either exclusive – defined by the focus on defence of its members, or inclusive – emphasising the global protection of democracies and human rights. The relationship between types of interactions and NATO categorisation is estimated using an unconditional negative binomial regression with fixed effects as well as a within-between (hybrid) model. Furthermore, they are illustrated on two brief case studies of Sweden and Japan. The results of the study suggest that NATO engages primarily with countries that are powerful relative to their neighbourhood, even though they are not the most powerful among the partners. The given country's level of democracy, integration into the international institutions, and stability, do not seem to play any overarching role here.

KEYWORDS	NATO, partnerships, international relations, regression analysis, power, democracy
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Historically, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established as an alliance with an accompanying political and military organisation focused on the defence of the member states' territories against the more or less explicit threat of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact. However, after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, NATO was faced with the dilemma of how to alter its role in the world now that it was lacking a counterbalancing force or a unifying adversary. In order to manage the novel situation, there were many calls for updates to the Alliance's tasks and structures. Several new elements were introduced in an attempt to manage the post-Soviet and post-Warsaw Pact space. These were the changes to the Command Structure, the reframed political communication towards the international community and former adversaries, and also the introduction of the concept of partnerships – first with nations in its immediate vicinity under the umbrella of the Partnership for Peace (GORDON 1996). With these demands and changes, the question of what role NATO should play in the transformed circumstances appeared for the first time since its creation and has been present, even dominant after NATO's expansions, in one way or another. Academically speaking, the demands and arguments have been framed as debates on the nature of the Alliance. There were several proposed labels – for example the debate about NATO transforming into a security organisation or remaining a defence organisation (HOLMBERG 2011), or the debate on NATO's change to global outreach versus remaining European (WIDERBERG 2015: 185–186). What the debates had in common was their general framing of NATO as moving between two different ideal poles, both with different challenges, command structures, communication, and partner interaction.

The first approach argued for the return to the roots of the Alliance, which it understood as the responsibility for the territorial defence of its member states. NATO in this regard was supposed to be focused on large Article–5 operations, communicate with regard to immediate vicinity challenges, and have a robust command structure. The partners were to be understood especially with regard to their geographic location and utility to the Alliance, and the capabilities they are able to provide – NATO's attempt to integrate Russia into a common missile defence against Iran can be an example of this (HOLMBERG 2011: 531). In general, the terms used to describe this pole – Europeanised or defensive organisation – might really

be better summed up by the term *exclusive* organisation, as the arguments in their support used member states' safety as the main reference point.

The opposite pole argued for a transformation of the Alliance into a global provider of security from personal to state level, especially in regard to the issues of human rights and democracy. Implicitly, this understanding of NATO called for a closer integration and networking with any willing democratic partners inside and outside of Europe, while engaging in operations designed to protect human rights, prevent terrorism, and support democracy. Exemplified by the suggestions of NATO becoming "a global alliance of democracies" as a solution to the balance of power issue in international relations (HALLAMS, 2009: 423), the pole was termed a security or global pole, but, as argued above, its essence lies in its *inclusiveness* towards the wide range of bearers of human rights and democratic ideals across the globe.

Over the course of the last thirty years, NATO has been described by researchers as *exclusive* (BURTON 2018; COTTEY 2018; MOORE 2017) or *inclusive* (BUNDE – NOETZEL 2010; EDSTRÖM 2011; NOETZEL – SCHREER 2012; ORFY 2010) based on the way it communicates, operates, and trains, and with whom it engages. According to these researchers, it appears that the latest breaking point for the transition from an *inclusive* to an *exclusive* NATO occurred in 2014 following the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the developments in the Middle East at the time. While the change is accompanied by variations in all the above-mentioned dimensions, be it a new deployment of forces, new exercises and so on, there is one dimension that necessarily stands out – partner engagement. NATO's partnerships, as cases of strategic partnership (TYUSHKA – CZECHOWSKA 2019), are in themselves designed to achieve policy objectives (BAĞBAŞHOĞLU 2014; COTTEY 2018; EDSTRÖM 2011; MOORE 2017) almost in real time. It is much easier to cancel the participation of a partner's officers in an exercise or cancel a meeting on a particular project with a partner's delegation than to re-frame the standards needed for exercising a different type of operation, withdraw from a mission abroad, or even formulate a summit declaration. Furthermore, interaction with partners is one of the most publicly reported aspects of NATO's outward policy and, unlike the text of summit declarations, it is not veiled in diplomatic language and is not part of a wider ranging compromise. Consequently, the question of who and how NATO engages, reveals in concrete and trackable terms

whether its policy goals are based around the *exclusive* protection of its member states' territories or on the *inclusive* global protection of human rights and democracies by showing which partners and on what grounds it decides to engage. NATO's engagement with partners is therefore used as a proxy variable for tracking NATO's focus on being *inclusive* or *exclusive*. Uncovering which of the two rationales lies behind NATO's interaction with partners over the last decade is the main intention of this article. In this way, it also provides a contribution to the debate on whether NATO behaves as an *exclusive* or an *inclusive* organisation. In addition, it also fills the gap in the academic literature, as shown below, by showing which partner feature plays the most important role in NATO's decisions on interaction.

The analysis in this article takes the form of a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the differing intensity in NATO's interaction with its partners, which puts longer-perspective empirical data behind one of the two reasons. As such, it is the first quantitative analysis done on NATO partnerships using an originally created dataset built from NATO's public messaging. Formulating the answer starts with contextualising NATO's partnerships historically and within the academic research to display how they changed and which indicators can be used to track the reason behind these changes. The quantitative methodology explaining the data gathering, creating a new interaction categorisation for NATO's partnerships, and distilling the indicators, is described afterwards in order to prepare a way to confirm the argument made based on the literature. Then the results are discussed by exploring the data and the outcomes of the regression analysis. Subsequently, the results are illustrated on two short case studies of Japan and Sweden, highlighting the logic behind the selected variables. Finally, the conclusions are drawn in the last section.

PARTNERSHIPS IN THE LITERATURE

Starting at the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has developed a web of various types of partnerships with countries all around the world (NATO 2018D). With the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) frameworks in the early 1990s, NATO embarked on a way of supporting the transformation of former Warsaw Pact members into working western-style democracies.

Many of the original partners from Central and Eastern Europe included in this framework became full-fledged members between 1997 and 2008. Other European states remain in various frameworks of partner cooperation until today. In 1994, in addition to the PfP, NATO established the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) in its southern flank with seven countries from Northern Africa and the Levant. Unlike in the case of the PfP, due to the restrictions inherent in the North Atlantic Treaty, none of these states could really seek to gain NATO membership. In 2004, following the events of 9/11 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Alliance's partnership portfolio was extended with the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) establishing a cooperation with four countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, excluding Saudi Arabia and Oman.

The key feature of the PfP, the MD, and the ICI is the multilateral format that interaction within these frameworks can take – NATO can engage countries bilaterally, but also in the 30+ framework. Finally, with the participation of several non-European countries in the Afghanistan and Kosovo operations, an informal and bilaterally based framework termed "Partners around the Globe" (PatG) was established with countries as far away from the Euro-Atlantic as Japan, Australia, or Colombia. Almost each consecutive NATO summit since the 1990s stressed the importance of working with partners in what was termed "cooperative security" (NATO 2009) in 2010.

The essence of these frameworks was, in various ways, to establish political dialogue on cooperation in the area of security and foster military-to-military cooperation and interoperability while engaging partners on a regional basis (with the exception of PatG). At the same time, any given framework limited the options for partner participation to a set of activities permitted by that framework. This changed in 2011 with the so-called "Berlin Package", in which all partners could pick and choose any activity open to one of the frameworks. The Berlin Package effectively blurred the lines between various frameworks and allowed for a flexible approach to any given partner on a bilateral basis. Consequently, while some NATO partnership formats continue to group countries in the same region under "one roof" – for example countries as different as Egypt and Israel are grouped under the auspices of the MD (NATO 2015) – these countries have equal access to NATO's activities as countries grouped in the

PfP or PatG frameworks. However, they are not necessarily being exploited equally. The latest development of NATO partnership policy came in 2014 with the establishment of the Partnership Interoperability Initiative and the Enhanced Opportunity Partners (EOP), which groups together countries across the frameworks in order to foster a military cooperation with the partners that make substantial contributions to Alliance operations.

One of the most important features of these partnerships is the fact that there are no guarantees of mutual defence as attested by both official summit declarations (NATO 2018A) and the publicly available Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programmes between NATO and Australia (NATO 2017), and NATO and Japan (NATO 2018B). It is clear that without the commitment to common defence between NATO and its partners, the partnership is not a case of a military alliance understood traditionally as an official and formalised obligation of allied states to defend each member's integrity against non-member states by means of military force (REITER – GÄRTNER 2001). Instead, NATO's partnerships are instances of so-called strategic partnerships, a new phenomenon that developed after the end of Cold War and is intended to help the actors involved cope with systemic and issue-specific international challenges (TYUSHKA – CZECHOWSKA 2019: 8), which are traditionally related to the issue of balance of power but in the context of globalization (PAUL 2018). They are, therefore, used as policy tools to achieve specific outcomes and, consequentially, provide a gauge of how NATO behaves.

Changes in NATO's use of partnerships have been noted for decades by the academia, and their descriptions can be widely grouped into two different periods. Based on the available literature, the first period, roughly between 1990 and 2014, is generally characterised as inclusive. At this time, it has been argued, NATO used partnerships as a tool for political inclusion and security-building, and to enhance the Alliance's ability to operate further afield (BUNDE – NOETZEL 2010; DOKOS 2012; EDSTRÖM 2011: 12; NOETZEL – SCHREER 2012). This inclusive approach was accompanied by a focus on shared democratic values (ORFY 2010) and institutions (COTTEY 2013: 467) in order to construct a support network for protection of the global liberal world order (MOORE 2014: 81; WEAVER 2014: 58–59). Through its partnerships, the Alliance arguably tried to create a system of partnerships that would ensure "plug and play" interoperability for partners in defence of the global commons

(CHRISTIANSSON 2014: 67–68). Partnerships with democratic states were thus used to establish wide-ranging general rules of engagement, while those with un-democratic states were limited to functional areas (FLOCKHART 2013: 279). The approach can be exemplified by NATO's engagement with the Central Asian countries, which has been driven by the needs of the International Security Assistance Force operations (BAĞBAŞHOĞLU 2014: 96), or the growing chasm in the engagement with Middle East and North Africa partners (REICHBORN-KJENNERUD 2014).

The second period, since 2014 onwards, tends to be described by pointing to a shift to the exclusive pole. As the Russian annexation of Crimea unfolded, the Alliance was reported to renew the focus on the collective defence in Europe (MOORE – COLETTA 2017: 13). The renewed requirement of countering Russia while managing threats from elsewhere pressed NATO to reportedly focus more on the military utility and geo-strategic importance a partner can bring rather than the values it shares (BURTON 2018; COTTEY 2018: 69; KO – PARK 2014; MOORE 2017: 183–184). Some European partners – such as Finland and Sweden – were even labelled "informal allies" at the time (WIESLANDER 2019: 197, 217). In essence, this meant that the coordination with key partners continued on political and strategic level issues, while ensuring the maintenance of achieved technical agreements (FRÜHLING 2019). Nevertheless, after the transformation, NATO's engagement with some partners has also been described as unclear due to a lack of an identifiable pattern of who it engages and who it does not (MARQUINA 2019: 229–230).

While the listed literature on the subject suggests that from the perspective of partnerships NATO's position on the *inclusive* versus *exclusive* scale shifted towards the former over the last decade, it is also not apparent what the decisive partner feature it uses in its decisions to engage is. In theory, if NATO is truly shifting towards *exclusivity*, it should mean that it seeks to maintain the highest level of intensity with powerful partners and those dominant in key regions, and that it does so with a sufficient military capacity that could be of use in a major (global) conflict. At the same time, the closest partners – the "informal Allies" duo – are also long-established and functioning democracies that are tightly integrated into the globalised world economy and the so-called liberal world order. Accordingly, the identification of the decisive feature(s) behind NATO's partnership engagement is the necessary next step that

serves to uncover NATO's motivation for engagement and, subsequently, its position on the *exclusive-inclusive* scale.

In order to take this step, it is necessary to specify a way of measuring the intensity of NATO's engagement with different partners and operationalise the different independent variables for the two different organisation types. The method that links these two types of variables – the measuring of NATO's engagement as a dependent variable and the independent variables as proxies for the organisation type – needs to be described as well.

MEASURING INTERACTIONS: DATA AND METHODS

In order to figure out the reasons behind NATO's level of interaction with different partners there must be a way to measure it. For this purpose, a dataset of NATO-partner interactions per year for the period between 2011 and 2018 was created. The dataset is built on entries found on the websites of the NATO HQ and all commands belonging to the NATO Command Structure (NCS) within the Allied Command Operations (SHAPE, JFC Naples, JFC Brunssum, the Land Command, the Air Command and the Maritime Command). The other part of the NCS – the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and its components (JWC Stavanger and JFTC Bydgoszcz) – was excluded because of the insufficient archival data available on their websites.[1] The unavailability of the data constitutes a loss of information, but one that can be considered offset by the fact that the bulk of operational activity is conducted by the ACO.

Using an automated programme, these websites were searched for various interactions consisting of both military and civilian low or high-level meetings, trainings, exercise participations or observations, technical cooperation and projects, with an emphasis on only NATO-Partner bilateral interactions. The term "NATO-Partner bilateral interaction" in this context means that the partner country interacted in a bilateral or regional setting (in cases of the MD and the ICI) with an official in a NATO role. The case is clear when it comes to NATO civilian officials, while a military interaction can be a bit more contentious. Therefore, a meeting with a French or an American general would be included in the analysis only if this general has a role in NATO structures. On the NATO HQ website the search was

done by using their advanced search tools, and the results were limited to event reports and press releases. For military commands, a basic search was used. Both searches used the partner's name as it is used officially by NATO. Following this procedure, the search results were exported from the websites to an Excel sheet with their names, links and dates. These were then manually reviewed and refined to ensure there was no duplicity and to remove entries that contained the searched term in a different than stated context. As a precaution, the results were briefly cross-checked with the websites of partner ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) and defence (MODs) as long as they were in English or French and had a search function. In general, the partner countries reported less interactions than NATO; those reported by the MFAs were at the political-strategic level, and those reported by the MODs were more military and covered only a shorter period of time.[2] There was no discrepancy found in the reporting. Then two ways of quantifying the results were used.

Before addressing these two ways, three comments on the data are needed. Firstly, the question of partners included in the dataset needs to be discussed. Normally, it would be ideal to include all of the NATO partners in this research, but there are two partners that provide a particular challenge. The first of them is Russia, with whom the Alliance decided to suspend all practical cooperation following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (NATO 2019A). It means that even if Russia was included, there would be no available data on it since 2014. The second one is Afghanistan, which, after the conclusion of the ISAF operations in 2014, could be regarded as an ordinary NATO partner. Although its inclusion would cause an issue similar to that of Russia, the analysis of the partnership interaction with Afghanistan would not be complete from the temporal perspective. Furthermore, even after 2014 there was still a major allied military presence in the country during the tracked period – more than 17,000 soldiers (NATO 2019B) – which problematises the inclusion even further as it would be possible to argue that NATO-Afghan interactions happen on a daily basis and are very hardly measurable in the way other partnerships might be. Because of these reasons, both Russia and Afghanistan are excluded from this research.

Secondly, with regard to the timeframe, the data is limited to the time period between 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2018 as the selected

starting date coincides with the aforementioned "equalisation" of NATO's partnerships through the Berlin Package. Furthermore, it also captures the events and changes following the Arab Spring and the Russian annexation of Crimea and can, therefore, show if either democratisation, changes in stability, or difference in growth of power has an impact on the partnership intensity.

Thirdly, as for the data limitations, one of the most obvious issues with the data is that they are gathered from the partnership interactions that NATO publishes on its websites. Nevertheless, as NATO is a primarily military organisation, it is reasonable to believe that there are many more NATO engagements taking place that are classified and therefore not published. It is, therefore, possible that the data presented here do not really reflect NATO's interactions, and are instead only reflection of what NATO wishes others to see, while in reality it follows a different course of action. There are two reasons, however, why it is reasonable to believe it is not so. First, as Holmberg (2011) argues, NATO requires legitimacy for its functioning. This legitimacy is acquired through fulfilling the desires of the member states' electorates, since NATO members are, for all intents and purposes, democratic nations. As Widerberg (2015) shows, the government representatives arguing for one or the other position are acting on behalf of the demands from their nations. Consequently, in order to acquire the legitimacy for one or the other position, NATO's public messaging must truthfully display the fulfilment of the goals set up for it by the government representatives, while these are also checking the classified parts through the committee work. In this way, the national electorates see whether NATO is fulfilling what they asked their representatives to implement. A discrepancy on this side would result in a situation where representatives would have to publicly admit at home that NATO is doing other things than those it is communicating in order to appease their electorate regarding the issues in question, which would be in and of itself counterproductive and almost absurd. Second, NATO's public messaging is also directed towards its potential adversaries. Assuming that these adversaries do not have access to the classified materials that describe NATO's engagement with its partners, the publications also create a clear image of where NATO is engaged and what is it doing, and therefore serve also as a form of deterrence that informs the adversary's decision-making calculus. However, if this would not result in an on-the-ground change,

NATO would lose credibility in the eyes of its adversaries and therefore its deterrence would also suffer. Furthermore, any major cooperation of NATO with a partner that is not publicly reported would most likely be noticed and exploited by one of the adversaries or independent media, which would result in anti-NATO narratives, and claims of aggression and lack of transparency. As was discussed above, this is most likely the reason why NATO reports more engagements with its partners than the partners themselves – it is specifically trying to avoid being painted as an aggressive and secretive organisation doing things outside of public scrutiny. In combination, these two arguments show that the gathered data are a reliable depiction of NATO's engagement with its partners. It is so because if NATO portrayed itself as engaging partners other than those that it actually engages, its image at home would be suffering for its not fulfilling the demands of the electorates, and its deterrence would suffer because its adversaries would see that there is no action behind the words, which would also allow for painting the Alliance as scheming. It does not necessarily mean that the data are a perfect or an all-encompassing representation of NATO's engagement with its partners, but only that they provide an adequate picture of who NATO is engaging at least in terms of the ratio of interactions. Implicitly, it can be assumed that the ratio of interactions with partners that is reported publicly is approximately the same as the ratio that would be if all the classified interactions were reported as well.

Having these qualifications in mind, it is possible to move on to quantifying the results from the search. In general, these two quantifications establish the two dependent variables included in the research. Specifically, they differ in the amount of details they give about a specific partnership in a given year. But both of them provide the first systematic collection of data for the analysis of NATO-partner interaction.

Firstly, a simple count of events per year for each partner, termed Frequency, was created to give a basic quantitative picture of how many times the given partner and NATO interacted in various settings. It is based on the logic that any sort of interaction with NATO requires a certain amount of resources spent and a certain amount of policy commitment made; however these amounts are not differentiated for different types of interactions.

Secondly, a more nuanced variable, Intensity, is established by ranking each interaction on a scale from 1 to 4 depending on the type of the given interaction and then making a sum of all the ranked interactions per year and per partner. This scale and interaction categorisation, inspired by those developed by Goldstein (1992) and Schrodt (2012), contains two axes – a military/civilian and a representative/technical axis – as seen in Table 1. This second approach is based on the same logic as that mentioned above, that any interaction with NATO bears some "costs" for the interacting partner. Yet, here the costs are higher for different types of interactions:

→ *Political-technical*. Every civilian interaction that was not conducted at a ministerial or vice-ministerial level was placed in this category, including public-diplomacy events organised by NATO in the given country. It is argued that the lowest level of commitment and resources is expended by a partner on a civilian-technical level meeting about mutually-relevant issues or on allowing a NATO public diplomacy event on its territory. This is due to the generally low levels of decision-making powers that lower-ranking civilian staff have in their given institutions.

→ *Military-technical*. Every military interaction that did not include a flag officer level (OF–6 or higher) was included in this category, including exercise observations and participation. While it is similar to the previous type in the fact that the decision-making powers of staff officers are generally low, the argument is that the military-technical type of interaction bears higher costs than a civilian one because it demonstrates a willingness to at least partly align the armed forces and to allow for the option of creating new channels of communication between the given non-flag officers.

→ *Military-representative*. Every military interaction that involved a flag officer (OF–6) or higher was included in this category. Interactions of this type, for example meetings of Chiefs

of Defence, involve the same logic as the previous type, but furthermore show that the partner nation is willing to coordinate and cooperate militarily on a higher level. Furthermore, meetings involving flag level officers imply a higher level of commitment than mere staff meetings as generals have a higher degree of decision-making powers across the board.

→ *Political-representative*. Finally, any meeting that involved ministerial or vice-ministerial level officials or higher is considered in this category. Interactions of this kind generally involve people with the highest degree of decision-making power within their national administration and therefore showcase the partner's commitment to its partnership with NATO.

TABLE 1: INTERACTION CATEGORISATION

Representative – Technical \ Military – Political		
	Military-representative (3)	Political-representative (4)
	Military-technical (2)	Political-technical (1)

Obviously, the presented categories are not exhaustive in their typology of interactions and only serve as a conceptual tool for making a better sense of the interaction levels between NATO and its partners. As a final note, counts per year for individual interaction categories are also used as additional dependent variables for further details.

Whether NATO is behaving as an *exclusive* or an *inclusive* organisation should be identifiable by several key variables and how well they describe NATO's frequency and intensity of engaging each partner. Considering the debates about these two types of organisations mentioned before, the most important variables should be the partner's level of

power, in general and in its region, and its level of democracy. Supporting variables should include the partner nation's stability, integration into the liberal world order, and relations with NATO countries.

Starting with questions of power, it would be expected of NATO as an exclusive organisation to be engaging with more powerful partners, in general or regionally, in order to derive military utility in case of a major conflict. However, if it is an inclusive organisation, power considerations should not play a role. For this purpose, each partner's power was measured using the measurement suggested by Michael Beckley (2018). This measurement is made by multiplying the given country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GDP per capita (GDP*GDPpC). As this produces very large numbers, for the purposes of this article, a logarithm of the result is taken. According to Beckley's research, this way of measuring state power explains the results of wars and militarised international disputes better (8% and 6% increases in the explanatory power of the results, respectively) than other available indices (e.g. CINC). The data for GDP and GDP per capita are drawn from World Bank's World Development Indicators database (THE WORLD BAN 2019). For measuring general power, the result of the equation GDP*GDPpC was used. For measuring regional power, the difference in power between the partner and its strongest non-NATO neighbour (incl. sea borders) was computed (i.e. a negative difference implies the partner is stronger). At the same time, it needs to be noted that power measured in this way is a multiplicative interaction term. Consequently, based on the recommendations of Braumoeller (2004) and Brambor et al.(2006), the issue of the multiplicative interaction term is addressed by the inclusion of constitutive variables (GDPpC and GDP) in the regression, and the reporting of incidence rate ratios and marginal effects at different levels of the two newly included variables.

For measuring stability, the World Bank's Political Stability Index was used. It is sourced from the aforementioned World Development Indicators (KAUFMAN – KRAAY – MASTRUZZI 2019). The index measures *"perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically-motivated violence, including terrorism"*, and is therefore useful for explaining the interactions from both sides of the equation. If NATO is acting as an *inclusive* organisation, it should engage countries with lower political stability in order to assist with their stabilization. If NATO is acting as an *exclusive* organisation,

similarly to the power argument, it is expected to engage more stable countries that are able to contribute capabilities and offer infrastructure in case of conflict rather than receive assistance.

The level of democracy is measured by using the Varieties of Democracy dataset developed by Coppedge et al. (2021). The dataset contains five different indices for various ideal types of democracy, combining together several indicators, from factual to expert opinions, and ranking each country for each year on a scale of 0 to 1. All five indices (participatory, electoral, liberal, deliberative and egalitarian democracy) are averaged for the result in order to acquire the variable. The level of democracy should play a vital role in explaining the partnership frequency and intensity if NATO is behaving as an *inclusive* organisation. It should have no impact, however, if NATO acts as an *exclusive* organisation.

For measuring each partner's level of integration within the liberal world order at the cultural, economic, interpersonal, and political levels, the Swiss Economic Institute's Political Globalisation Index was used (GYGLI ET AL. 2019). The index integrates several components (trade, financial, interpersonal, cultural, informational, and political globalisation) to track the given country's overall integration into global flows. A generally high level of integration into the international system implies a stronger identification with established norms. From the *exclusive* behaviour perspective, this variable should not have any major impact on NATO's engagement with its partners. However, an *inclusive* NATO should engage more with those partners that are more and better involved in the international system without regard for their power. In this regard, this variable stretches the argument about the "alliance of democracies" as the basis for an inclusive NATO further, claiming that an *inclusive* NATO would engage even partners that are not necessarily democratic, as long as they are strongly integrated into the international order and behave accordingly.

Finally, when its *exclusive* mindset is pushed further, NATO might be willing not only to protect its members, but also to engage with countries that are closely tied to them. In this way, an alternative explanation for NATO's engagement with partners can be offered, where partners are engaged because they are included in one or more member states' "sphere of interest". As a proxy variable for this the total percentage of trade between

a partner and NATO member states is used. The trade volume is measured by summing up the export and import data from the International Monetary Fund's Direction of Trade Statistics (INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND 2019). Volumes of the given partner country's trade with NATO countries are added and then made into a percentage of the total volume of its trade per year. It is assumed that if NATO acts as an *exclusive* organisation, it will engage more with partners that have a higher trade volume with its member states. Otherwise, trade volume should not play a role in determining the interactions.

The relations between the thus-gathered dependent and independent variables are evaluated using a generalised linear model. Due to the count distribution of the data (Chart 1 for Frequency and Chart 2 for Intensity), the two options for the linear model are a Poisson regression and a negative binomial regression. In the present case, running a Poisson regression and the associated goodness of fit tests (deviance and Pearson) returns significant p-values, implying a strong over-dispersion of the data. Therefore, a negative binomial regression was selected for the study. Furthermore, since the data are gathered per year and per country they must be treated as panel data, which allows for controlling the individuum's unobserved sources of heterogeneity in the regression model by assuming its fixed or random nature. While there are several more advanced models available for this type of regression, the fixed and random effects models are, arguably, the two most commonly used. In general, the decision between one and the other should be based on the combination of assumptions about the type of heterogeneity and the conceptual nature of the data taken at theoretical level and the results of parametric tests (such as Hausman's specification test). In particular, the heterogeneity type assumption is related to whether the unobserved group-invariant variables are uncorrelated with the independent variables used in the model. If they are assumed to be correlated, then the fixed effects model is recommended; otherwise, the random effects model is to be used. From the perspective of political science, and especially international relations dealing with country-level panel data, it is reasonable to believe that any unobserved variables are correlated with the independent variables normally measured at this level – whether one uses GDP per capita, trade volumes, political party membership, or military spending as the independent variable, the geography, population, international organisation

membership, historical relations, religion, and many more invariant and relevant variables are going to normally be excluded from these models. For these reasons and others, it has been generally argued that the fixed effects models should be used on panel data (SHIN – RAUDENBUSH 2010; VAISEY – MILES 2017) – it was termed as the recommended or even "golden standard" model. In this regard, the fixed effects model seems to be the reasonable choice for the presented data. Nevertheless, the application of Hausman's specification test to the random and fixed effects on the full data produced a negative χ^2 and thus failed to meet the asymptotic assumptions of the test. The comparison of models with dropped outliers (namely Ukraine), however, produced significant results ($\chi^2 = 32.51$, p-value = 0), which also implies the use of a fixed effects model. While the results of the Hausman test for full data can signify some problems with the use of the fixed effects model, the common practice in the field, along with the results of the data without outliers, justifies the use of fixed effects for the presented data. In this regard, the effects are considered fixed across countries and across years. The decision to fix effects by country is common due to the aforementioned reasons. However, the decision to fix effects by year is based on the assumption that there are unobserved variables for each year that affect all the observed countries. In particular, this means that individual years in the tracked time-scale are correlated with independent variables and are non-variant across all the considered countries. This should include effects such as NATO summits, disturbances within the international system, or, in theory, even planetary level variables such as the global temperature increase that occurred within the given year.

With both the negative binomial and fixed effects models selected, it is important to note that the commonly used conditional negative binomial regression there has been identified as problematic due to its inability to control for all stable covariates (ALLISON 2005; ALLISON – WATERMAN 2002). Instead, either the unconditional fixed effects model or the so-called hybrid (the within-between RE model) is recommended. The issue with the first model is that it is affected by a problem with incidental parameters and can yield inconsistent estimators. Nevertheless, the results offered by Allison – Waterman (2002: 264) and Greene (2011). encourage optimism regarding their consistency, especially when combined with the use of robust standard errors. Furthermore, as Michalopoulos – Papaioannou (2016) report, this method is becoming more and more used in the academic

literature dealing with panel data. The second option has been described as the most robust option available for panel data (BELL – FAIRBROTHER – JONES 2010), and it is achieved through expressing the time-variant covariates as deviations from the individuum-specific mean. Because of this, estimates from both models are reported for the full data, while the additional models (using individual interaction categories as dependent variables, and 2014 as the breaking point, as discussed below) are estimated using the negative binomial fixed effects.

While the thus-provided results are the basis for the conclusions in this paper, they can be rather abstract. Consequently, the comparison of the two cases with high variability in the level of interaction over the tracked period is provided as an illustration of how the identified variables work in practice. The independent variables are described first, followed by the description of how NATO's interaction frequency and intensity changed through the years for each of the pair. Then a short qualitative comparison of the nature of the interaction events is provided to highlight these changes.

RESULTS

Data exploration

TABLE 2: SUMMARY STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Frequency	7.58	7.47	0	50
Intensity	19.10	19.33	0	132
Political-Technical	.73	1.19	0	7
Military-Technical	3.57	4.05	0	23
Military-Representative	1.80	1.97	0	12
Political-Representative	1.47	2.21	0	17
Power (log)	14.89	1.19	12.66	17.48
Power difference	1.20	1.21	−1.18	4.05
Stability	-.14	1.00	−2.81	1.59
Democracy	.40	.25	.07	.87
Trade	.43	.21	.08	.82
Globalisation	69.26	12.35	41.12	92.10

Considering the fact that the presented data on NATO-partner interaction is the first of its kind, it is reasonable to explore it for any additional

insights before delving into the regression analysis itself. Table 2 provides the summary statistics for all the used variables, with the dependent variable in italics. Both the Frequency and Intensity statistics, along with the distribution plot (Figures 1 and 2; see the electronic attachment to the article), display a wide range between the different observations. This is confirmed by the boxplots for both the Intensity and Frequency variables grouped by countries (Figures 5 and 6; see the electronic attachment to the article). They show that the most varied interactions, in terms of both Intensity and Frequency, were observed in the cases of Georgia, Finland, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine. At the same time, as noted before, Ukraine is shown to be the clear outlier in the data. In terms of total numbers categorised by year and country (Figures 3, 4 and 13; see the electronic attachment to the article), it is firstly possible to say that there is a clear growing trend in NATO's interactions with its partners since 2011, with the most marked rise after 2014, drops in 2013 and 2017, and the maximum (417 interactions) in 2016. According to the categorisation by interaction type, this rise can mostly be attributed to the major increase in military technical cooperation.

Looking at Figures 1 and 2, and Tables 4 and 5, (see the electronic attachment to the article) this framing seems to be confirmed. Between 2011 and 2018 there was a major change in the preferred partners' geographic locations. Overall, the partners that were further afield and were prominent in 2011 saw a major decrease in interaction, while interaction with European partners reached new highs. A breaking point for the changes is the year 2015, when almost all European countries ranked highly above their previous ranks – as the most important examples, Sweden went from 12th place to 2nd, and Austria from 27th to 11th in the frequency ranking. The engagement with Europeans was also accompanied by an increase in NATO's interactions with Iraq and Israel, which dwindled until 2015. This means that the partners NATO interacted the most with changed. Countries such as Japan, Pakistan, and Australia, which were originally very prominent, and countries such as the Central Asian republics, which were originally moderately prominent, exchanged places with others, for example Iraq and Tunisia. Notably, in the frequency ranking, Japan and Pakistan went from the 4th place they shared in 2011 to the 18th and 30th place in 2018, respectively. Finally, it is interesting to note that North Macedonia, a partner that became a member state in 2019 (effective

2020), has drifted in and out of the top 5 during the tracked period, but it was never the most-interacted-with partner.

What does this basic description of the data suggest? Firstly, it appears that throughout the last decade the importance of NATO partnerships increased as the Alliance interacted more frequently and more intensely with its partners. Secondly, the geographic variation and refocus to partners closer to Europe would appear to be related to NATO's attempts at reinforcement of its vicinity rather than its building of ties with likeminded countries around the world. While they have not been used as variables in the previous debate, the contextualisation of this change in the framework of the renewed tensions with Russia and the creation of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq can certainly come to mind, especially due to the temporal co-occurrence of these events after 2014. At the same time, the change could have been also related to the change of the ISAF operation to the NATO mission Resolute Support at approximately the same time, as nations away from Europe lost importance. More importantly, the change after 2014 presents an interesting option for the regression analysis. Based on the presented variation it would be interesting to see whether this period has a significant impact on the estimates if it is included as a dummy variable.

Regression analysis results

The estimates of the different models can be found in Table 3 (model specifications are addressed in the note below the table; see the electronic attachment to the article). There are four values relevant for the interpretation – firstly, the coefficient; secondly, the p-value, or the statistical significance of the independent variable; thirdly, the marginal effects (dy/dx in the table); and fourthly, the incidence rate ratio (IRR). As for the coefficients, it is important to remember that since a negative binomial model has been used the coefficient represents the difference in the logs of expected count for one unit change in the given independent variable *ceteris paribus*. The p-values are interpreted using the traditional 0.05 level of significance. With regard to the marginal effects, the reported values represent the average marginal effects for all covariates. In general, they signify the response of the dependent variable to a single unit increase in the independent variable.[3] Finally, the incidence rate ratio provides a

similar parameter as the marginal effects, but unlike them it shows how, *ceteris paribus*, a one unit increase in the independent variable would influence the dependent variable by a factor.

Looking at the results, it is apparent that across the models using the full data there are only two significant variables – power and power difference. Together, they are not significant only for models 7 and 8, which use political and military technical interactions as dependent variables, with power difference by itself also not being significant for model 10, which deals with political representative interactions. Their marginal effects and incidence rate ratios are also very high, which shows a very strong impact on the Intensity and Frequency variables. For power difference, this implies that NATO interacts more and with higher intensity with partners whose power difference with their strongest neighbour is in their favour. However, in terms of simple power measurement the data confirm that NATO engages countries based on their power but in the opposite direction to that which was expected. This suggests that NATO interacts more with partners that have a lower overall power. And this holds true for both frequency and intensity, meaning that both the quantity and quality of interaction are higher for less powerful partners. The results indicate that no other variable is significant, with some of them even operating in the opposite direction to that which was expected. For example, democracy is reported to have a negative impact on interactions rather than a positive impact, as was originally assumed. Thirdly, neither democracy, stability, trade, nor globalisation play a role in explaining NATO's interactions with its partners in the full data. Interestingly, stability explains the military technical type of interaction with a rather strong incidence rate ratio, albeit at a lower level of significance. Furthermore, negative stability is significant for the political representative dimension of the interactions, but it does not have a very strong impact on the final count according to the marginal effects and the IRR. Finally, the assumption of the change in 2014 seems to be proved correct, as the 2014 dummy in models 5 and 6 scored very significantly in terms of p-value, as well as in marginal effects and IRR. This means that the simple fact of the given year being after 2014 increases the frequency by 10 and the intensity by 27.

There are several implications arising from the results. First and foremost, NATO seems to be interacting with partners that are powerful in

their regions, which implies it is behaving as an *exclusive* organisation. The implication is supported by both the changes in the partner prominence in terms of geography relative to NATO, and the fact that the acquired data highlight the importance of contextualised regional power (negative power difference) in explaining both the quantity and the quality of NATO's interactions with its partners. The significance of negative power difference underpins the argument further, since it was expected that if NATO behaved as an exclusive organisation, it would seek to protect its member states' borders by engaging powerful regional partners to ensure their support in case of conflict. It is also supported by the importance of trade for military technical cooperation, as it shows that countries that are economically tied to NATO members are those deemed important for military engagement at the working level. At the same time, this implies a nodal structure of NATO engagement, as was discussed by Moore and Coletta (2017) – meaning that NATO engages with partners that are powerful in their immediate neighbourhood in order to counter relevant threats.

However, they need not be relatively powerful with regard to the roster of NATO partners. This suggests that while NATO seeks utility through engagement with regionally important actors, it does not seek only majorly powerful partners and is also willing to support those economically close to it through military technical engagement. In short, NATO interacts more and better with partners that are relatively powerful in their region, but are not powerful relative to other NATO partners. This can mean that overly powerful nations might be less easy to "rein in" into NATO's strategy, whereas the weaker nations that have a regional utility might seek to bandwagon with NATO to maintain their regional edge and acquire a larger patron that would support them. At the same time, the political representative engagement without any other dimension with unstable countries suggests that NATO tends to engage unstable countries more on the political-strategic level than by offering actual aid, while focusing more on the question of regional dominance overall.

Nevertheless, there are two countries with major interactions with NATO that lie outside of this logic – Ukraine and Georgia. For Ukraine, as can be seen in figures 14 and 15, while the relation of lower power and higher Frequency and Intensity holds, the power difference works in the opposite direction. For Georgia, it is the reverse – as figures 16 and 17 show (see the

electronic attachment to the article) – the increase in power difference works as it should (i.e. a higher power difference means lower Frequency and Intensity), but the increase in power increases Frequency and Intensity (see the electronic attachment to the article). Arguably, both Georgia and Ukraine are special cases as partners because they were both invaded by Russia in the last two decades; they are treated uniquely by the Alliance – Ukraine with the NATO Ukraine Commission and Georgia with the NATO-Georgia Commission, a framework under which no other partner operates; and both are very keen to join the Alliance despite the extreme geopolitical complexity of their situation.

Subsequently, it would be reasonable to run the models again but without these countries to see what effect dropping these two countries would have on the estimates. The results of doing so can be seen in figures 18 (Frequency) and 19 (Intensity), which re-confirm the previous results and mean that the general approach of NATO towards its partners still holds even in this case, with the cases of Georgia and Ukraine being different due to their unique situation (see the electronic attachment to the article).

Finally, the question of the developments before and after 2014 seems important based on the data. While the inclusion of the dummy variable does not change the coefficients of the other variables, it still shows that the temporal aspect is important. Because of this, it was of interest to run the regression with frequency on the data for the period before 2014 and those for the period after 2014 (the results are reported in Figures 5–8) to see whether there are different variables explaining the frequency and intensity before and after 2014 (see the electronic attachment to the article). The results indicate that before 2014 none of the tracked independent variables are significant, whereas power becomes relative after 2014. In theory, this could suggest that between 2011 and 2014 the partnership policy along with the nature of NATO's behaviour was in transition, while after 2014, with the developments in the international arena (Russia, the IS) the behaviour became clearer.

All in all, while it seems apparent from the description of the impact of the variables on the data that NATO interacts more with countries powerful in their region but not very powerful in absolute terms, it might still be rather abstract. It would serve better to show how they work in

particular cases, especially those that were identified as varying in their intensity over the tracked period. As discussed in the methodology section, the two case studies provide a short comparison of Sweden and Japan – as two countries with high variation in their levels of interaction with NATO throughout the period – and a description of their respective data and how they interact with their position on NATO's interactions.

Case studies: Sweden and Japan

The cases of Sweden and Japan should illustrate the shift and the logic behind the significant variables identified above. Both countries score high on democracy (second and eighth on average), stability (sixth and seventh), and trade with NATO (fourth and third). In terms of power difference with their strongest neighbour – Russia in both cases – Japan has a strongly negative score (implying a major advantage for Japan), and Sweden scores mildly positively. A similar difference can be found in their power potential, where Japan is the strongest partner by a large margin difference (around 1).

Now looking at their individual interactions with NATO (Figures 9 and 10), there are several observations that are relevant (see the electronic attachment to the article). Firstly, Sweden's major increase in interactions between 2014 and 2015 is caused by the military technical cooperation, which has always been predominant in interactions with this country.

However, Japan's military representative interaction, which was dominant in the interactions with it between 2011 and 2014, went down over the following period. Similarly, the political technical cooperation with Sweden was almost non-existent before 2014, whereas it picked up afterwards.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Independent					
Power	−3.29***	−5.17***	−1.12**	−1.51***	−3.29***
(ST. ERROR)	(1.05)	(1.20)	(0.44)	(0.5)	(1.05)
DY/DX	−24.95	−99.74	-	-	−24.95
IrR	0.04	0.04	0.32	0.25	0.03
Power	−1.76**	−1.97**	−0.63*	−0.83**	−1.76**
Difference	(0.73)	(0.86)	(0.33)	(0.37)	(0.73)
	−13.39	−38.02	-	-	−13.39
	0.17	0.17	0.53	0.46	0.17
Democracy	−0.69	0.08	−0.21	0.39	−0.69
	(0.75)	(0.93)	(0.70)	(0.87)	(0.75)
	−5.26	1.52	-	-	−5.26
	0.50	0.49	0.81	1.47	0.49
Stability	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.04	0.11
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.12)
	0.90	1.85	-	-	0.90
	1.12	1.12	1.07	1.04	1.12
Trade	−0.71	−0.64	1.35	1.72*	−0.71
	(1.04)	(1.17)	(0.87)	(1.02)	(1.04)
	−5.42	−12.49	-	-	−5.42
	0.48	0.48	3.88	4.88	0.48
Globalisation	−0.02	−0.01	−0.01	0.01	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.022)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
	−0.11	−0.04	-	-	−0.11
	0.98	0.98	0.99	1.01	0.98
(GDPpC)	0.01	0.01**	0.01	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
(GDP)	$-2.45e^{-12}$***	$-2.18e^{-12}$**	$8.52e^{-13}$	$9.87e^{-13}$	$-2.45e^{-12}$***
	($6.05e^{-13}$)	($8.49e^{-13}$)	($7.14e^{-13}$)	($8.96e^{-13}$)	($6.05e^{-13}$)
2014 Dummy					1.48***
					(0.18)
					11.25
					4.41
LOG likelihood	−703.37	−1020.31	−794.01	−1109.77	−703.37

	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Independent					
Power	−5.17***	−5.01	−0.14	−4.77***	−4.58**
(ST. ERROR)	(1.20)	(3.22)	(1.30)	(1.42)	(2.10)
DY/DX	−99.74	−3.66	−0.50	−8.60	−5.98
IrR	0.01	0.01	0.86	0.01	0.02
Power	−1.97**	−0.92	−0.20	−2.13*	−3.23
Difference	(0.86)	(2.23)	(0.95)	(1.08)	(2.05)
	−38.02	−0.67	−0.73	−3.85	−5.28
	0.13	0.39	0.81	0.11	0.02
Democracy	0.08	−1.47	−0.04	0.31	−2.27
	(0.93)	(1.76)	(0.94)	(1.20)	(1.63)
	1.52	−1.07	−0.16	0.56	−3.39
	1.08	0.22	0.95	1.36	0.10
Stability	0.09	0.56*	0.17	0.29*	−0.53**
	(0.13)	(0.30)	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.21)
	1.85	0.41	0.67	0.53	−0.84
	1.10	1.75	1.18	1.34	0.56
Trade	−0.64	−3.71	2.17*	−1.02	−4.09*
	(1.17)	(3.25)	(1.20)	(1.69)	(2.44)
	−12.49	−2.71	8.84	−1.84	−5.79
	0.52	0.03	10.23	0.35	0.01
Globalisation	−0.01	−0.04	0.02	−0.03	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
	−0.42	−0.03	0.06	−0.06	0.005
	0.99	0.96	1.01	0.96	1.00
(GDPpC)	0.01**	0.01	$6.52e^{-6}$	0.01*	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
(GDP)	$-2.18e^{-12}$**	$-3.36e^{-6}$**	$-2.14e^{-12}$	$-2.45e^{-12}$***	$-9.95e^{-12}$
	$(8.49e^{-13})$	$(2.19e^{-12})$	$(1.42\ e^{-12})$	$(8.04e^{-12})$	$(2.15e^{-12})$
2014 Dummy	1.60***				
	(0.20)				
	30.85				
	4.96				
LOG likelihood	−1020.01	−255.49	−526.82	−459.04	−362.78

*NOTE: Models 1 and 2 are estimated on full data using an unconditional binomial fixed effects model with robust standard errors and treat Frequency and Intensity respectively as dependent variables. Models 3 and 4 are estimated the same way but using a within-between random effects (hybrid) model. Models 5 and 6 use Frequency and Intensity as dependent variables but include a dummy variable for 2014. Models 7–10 use the individual Intensity categories – counts of political technical, military technical, military representative, and political representative interactions – as dependent variables. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. Since Power is treated as a multiplicative interaction term, GDP and GDPpC are included in all the models as composing variables. Their marginal effects at different values can be found in Tables 5 and 6 in the supplementary material. Asterisks next to the coefficient value denote p-values at the specific level of significance – * for p-value < 0.1; ** for p-value < 0.05; *** for p-value < 0.01.*

Secondly, the Japanese interactions did not dwindle compared to the original numbers, although they were reduced. Yet, it was the major increase in the reported interactions with Sweden that dwarfed the Japanese interactions. Upon further exploration of the event level data,[4] the different nature of the interactions is even more visible – while until 2014 the limited military technical cooperation with Japan was centred around its participation in the counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, from 2015 onwards the sporadic operational engagement with it takes place mostly in the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea. The interactions of a military technical type with Sweden were always about exercises; however, since 2015 they picked up significantly, especially with regard to Air Policing and the Baltic Sea region maritime cooperation.

The key insight from this short comparison is that while both countries have similar scores on other independent variables, Sweden has a lower absolute power compared to Japan, while it still is a relevant player in its region – a region that is right on NATO's borders next to Russia. In more empirical terms, it can be seen on the fact that while Sweden has been described as a special partner for a long time (COTTEY 2013) – even since the Cold War – there has even been a further qualitative change in this respect after 2014. It can be seen on the signing of the host nation support agreement (PETERSSON 2018), or on the fact that Sweden (along with Finland) sat at the NATO Summit in a special format for the first time in 2016 (BACZYNSKA 2016) – incidentally a couple of months after the publishing of the RAND report on wargaming in the Baltics that highlighted the importance of Swedish Gotland for defence of the region (SHLAPAK – JOHNSON 2016). Combined with the information from Figure 13, the increase of NATO's military technical interaction type after 2014 accompanies the shift in dominance from one partner to the other (see the electronic attachment to the article). It is most probably here where the logic of lower total power coupled with regional relevance became central to NATO's behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS: NATO AS AN EXCLUSIVE ORGANISATION

The presented paper started with the claim that the partnership interactions between NATO and its partners can serve as a measurement of NATO's behaviour in terms of the scale whose poles are being an organisation that is *exclusive* – defined by a focus on the defence of its members – and

being an organisation that is *inclusive*, namely focused on global protection of democracies and human rights. Based on the evaluation of the existing literature on NATO partnerships it was established that while an *exclusive organisation* as an ideal type would suggest that NATO attempts to maintain the highest level of intensity in its interactions with powerful partners with a sufficient military capacity that could be of use in a major (global) conflict in a particular region, an *inclusive organisation* would imply an engagement with like-minded democracies that are tightly integrated into the world order. These two ideal points were associated with particular indicators – power, power in context, and trade for the *exclusive* pole; and democracy, stability and globalisation for the *inclusive* pole. Levels of NATO-partner interactions were measured through an original dataset measuring quantity (Frequency) as well as quality (Intensity) through a new categorisation of these interactions. The relationship between the two and the identified independent variables was estimated using the unconditional negative binomial regression with fixed effects as well as the within-between (hybrid) model.

The presented results imply that NATO has drifted significantly towards the *exclusive* pole of the spectrum over the last decade. According to the findings, countries in Europe and the Middle East – regions where NATO was challenged by Russia and the IS – gained majorly in prominence, while countries that NATO engaged in other parts of the globe fell in their rankings. At the same time, the results from the regression analysis indicate that NATO engages primarily countries that are powerful relative to their neighbourhood, even though they are not the most powerful among the partners. Their levels of democracy, integration into the international institutions, and stability, do not seem to play any overarching role. It can be best seen on the cases of Japan and Sweden – both of which are globalised and stable democracies, but the interactions with the former stalled and even declined while those with the latter increased significantly due to its position in a region of importance for the defence of NATO members. The result also highlights the importance of geography for the relevance of power in NATO-partner interactions. In fact, the opposite direction of the power variable in the regression results implies that NATO would not seek engagement with powerful partners that might lie outside of relevant regions. Countries such as Japan, Australia and South Korea rank highly on the power variable, but are geographically far away from or not

particularly relevant for the core NATO interests in the Euro-Atlantic area, and NATO's interactions with them waned over the years. Outside of the particular identification of reasons for partner interaction intensity, the gathered data also suggest a major increase in overall NATO-partner interactions, which highlights an increased willingness to engage partners across the board.

There are several contributions the paper and its conclusions present for the wider academic debates. Firstly, the newly created dataset of NATO interactions, with their categorisation into political-technical, military-technical, military-representative, and political-representative interactions, allowed for their first quantitative analysis in several dimensions. Secondly, this analysis and its results contributed to the literature on NATO partnerships with support for positions (COTTEY 2018: 69; MOORE 2017: 183–184; MOORE – COLLETA 2017: 13) describing NATO, in the later years, as turning towards an *exclusive* – otherwise defensive or Europeanised – organisation that engages partners in a utilitarian and nodal way because of their particular contributions to countering Russia and the IS. Thirdly, considering the debate on the nature of strategic partnerships, at least from the NATO perspective and based on the presented data, it can be argued that questions of power and defence in engagement of partners are important in maintaining a high level of interactions. This contributes to the knowledge of NATO's reasoning for interaction with a given partner.

Considering these conclusions, the next logical step for further research would be to analyse the particular cases of countries that significantly fell or rose in prominence in terms of their interaction with NATO and identify in a more qualitative way how their geopolitical position within their region and overall power along with their trade engagement with NATO influence the way NATO interacts with them as partners. At the same time, it would appear fruitful to continue building the established dataset into the future to allow for additional quantitative analyses and descriptions of NATO partnerships as they develop in time.

ENDNOTES

1 This does not necessarily constitute a problem for the data reliability. It is true that from the perspective of activities, the ACT, along with the JWC and the JFTC, was responsible for the organisation of Major Joint Exercises, which generally drew partners' participation. However, according to a search on the ACO websites, these exercises – both their execution and planning events – were reported through other NATO websites as well since the ACO commands were their primary participants.

2 Most of the time, the website only contained events for the past year.

3 However, as the independent variables used here are continuous in nature, these values represent the instantaneous rate of change. More importantly, the interpretation of the instantaneous rate of change is dependent on the unit of measurement of the independent variable. In the presented case, the units of measurement are non-existent due to the index nature of most of the variables – because of this, the interpretation should be taken with caution.

4 See the annexed underlying data.

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Framing as a Social Movement's Transnational Strategy: The Gülen Movement's EU-Turkey Discourses in the Post–2016 Online Media

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on framing as a social movement's transnational strategy. Applying the cultural approach to framing analysis, it investigates how the Gülen movement, as a social group with restricted access to national gatekeepers, uses discourse to internationalise a domestic power struggle with a powerful opponent. Moving the struggle to the international arena presents a discursive opportunity that determines which ideas become visible and legitimate both internationally and nationally. The importance of such internationalization increases in times of conflict and the media play a vital role in this process. The paper argues that the editors of the pro-Gülen movement foreign online platforms established after the movement was forced into exile following the failed 2016 coup, use strategic framing to tailor their frames for the host context and culture. That increases the resonance of their frames and the potential of the discursive opportunity. The article confirms the previous findings that media are a crucial resource for transnational social movements because policymakers are sensitive to public opinion, which is shaped by media frames.

KEYWORDS	Gülen movement, transnational, social movement, AKP, Erdoğan, media, framing
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International institutions affect but do not determine the behaviour of state and non-state actors. Actors whose access to the national gatekeepers is limited (or restricted) might reach out to various foreign and international actors, including states, international organisations and the international public opinion, to gain a normative advantage in the domestic debate (KECK – SIKKINK 1998; PRINCEN – KERREMANS 2008). It brings forward the question of how transnational social movements utilise the public arena of international discourse to achieve their goals vis-à-vis their domestic adversaries.

A rather specific case of a social movement with an international political engagement is the Turkish Gülen movement (GM). Once the most influential religious/social group in Turkey (TURAM 2007; HENDRICK 2013), its transnational network reached an estimated 160 countries by the 2010s. The GM's recent history has been closely linked to the rise of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), which has been in power in Turkey since 2002. The support of the AKP facilitated the movement's immense expansion both in Turkey and abroad. However, the alliance fell apart in 2013 and the former allies became foes, which culminated with the 2016 failed coup. Since the Turkish government accused the GM of organising the coup (which the movement denies) (CF. CAGAPTAY 2017; YAVUZ 2018; YAVUZ – BALCI 2018), the GM became a key target of persecution by the Turkish regime and all its official activities had to move abroad. While its pre–2016 foreign activities were extensive, the post–2016 exile experience forced the movement to become far more transnational and active in the international arena.

A multitude of works analysed the GM foreign activities (YAVUZ – ESPOSITO 2003; HENDRICK 2013; LACEY 2014; TITTENSOR 2014; ÇELIK – LEMAN – STEENBRINK 2015; NOCERA ET AL. 2015) but relatively few works have examined the transformation of the GM foreign engagements after the 2016 failed coup (WATMOUGH – ÖZTÜRK 2018; ALAM 2019; SOZERI 2019; UGUR 2019; MARTIN 2020). Martin (2020: 15) concluded her work by stating that the GM had a good chance to flourish in liberal democracies, where it could *"convincingly frame [itself] as a victim of the obvious authoritarianism in Turkey."* Scholars close to the GM such as Alam (2019: 270) stated that its followers were still active and believed that the GM would *"continue to grow"* by developing a post–2016 identity which would combine its religious, civic-social and political dimensions.

The most comprehensive outlook on the GM activities in the post–2016 exile so far has been presented in a 2018 special issue of *Politics, Religion & Ideology*. The special issue's editors argued that the links formed through *"cultural democracy"* (WATMOUGH – ÖZTÜRK 2018: 7), including media and publishing activities, allowed the GM to *"lobby host publics and governments"* and continue with their *"coordinated campaign"* against the Turkish government. The members and sympathisers of the movement who lived in the West, were *"becoming outposts of resistance to the Turkish regime under Erdoğan"* (TITTENSOR 2018: 127), taking their fight *"to the public arena of international discourse"* (TEE 2018: 13).

Despite the fact that the GM controlled a large share of the Turkish media market and owned several foreign outlets (CF. NOCERA ET AL. 2015), research on the post–2016 foreign activities of the GM has for the most part ignored the transformation of their post-coup media involvement. As mass media are a *"site of struggle between competing positions"* (SPLENDORE 2020: 993) and the access to the media is often crucial for exerting influence over the narrative defining political reality (CURRAN 2002; CARPENTIER 2011), media might represent a discursive opportunity structure for social movements. Discursive opportunity determines which *"ideas achieve visibility, resonance or legitimacy"* (BERKOWITZ – MUGGE 2014: 77). Its importance increases in times of conflict or change, when the actors need to generate additional support (HEIN – CHAUDRI 2018: 16). One way to study discursive opportunities is by applying framing analysis, an important tool of the IR theory of constructivism.

This paper focuses on framing as a social movement's transnational strategy. The multifaceted nature of the GM (CF. BAŞKAN 2005; STEENBRINK 2015; BAŞKAN CANYAŞ – CANYAŞ 2016, TEE 2021) makes it difficult to conceptualise it within the standard definitions used by social movement scholars (CF. TITTENSOR 2014; FITZGERALD 2017). Acknowledging this limitation, this paper follows some previous works on the GM (YAVUZ 2005; JAGER 2016) and uses a social movement framework. A social movement is defined as a *"loose collectivity acting with some degree of organization, temporal continuity, and reliance on noninstitutional forms of action to promote or resist change in the group, society, or world order of which it is part"* (MCADAM – SNOW 2010: 1).

Applying the cultural approach to framing analysis (VAN GORP 2007; SCHEUFELE – SCHEUFELE 2010), I investigate how a transnational social movement

promotes *"specific frames in order to gain public support for their interests, positions, and concerns"* (SCHEUFELE – SCHEUFELE 2010: 110) in the international arena. I argue that the editors of pro-GM foreign online platforms increased their legitimacy as frame advocates by distancing themselves from the movement. They used strategic framing to depict the *current* Turkish regime as a threat to the EU and to define the GM as a victim. Their aim was to persuade the relevant international actors to apply pressure on their antagonist, which would increase the GM's chances of getting an upper hand in its domestic power struggle.

The article is organised in the following way: the first section presents constructivism as the theoretical basis of this article, and explains the cultural approach to framing analysis and how it relates to social movements. It is followed by a brief summary of the relationship between the AKP and the GM. The next section outlines the method of data collection and then defines and analyses the GM frames. The article concludes with a discussion of the main findings and some concluding remarks.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Constructivism, *"one of the most influential and compelling perspectives in mainstream IR"* (JUNG 2019: 4), includes social factors in the study of world politics (WIENER 2007). The scholars of constructivism highlight the importance of values, norms, rules, or discourses for explaining political processes and events. In constructivism, a lot of attention is directed to how international norms are developed and challenged. It takes place in a *"highly contested"* (FINNEMORE – SIKKINK 1998) context, where ideas compete with other (often contradictory) norms and perceptions (RISSE-KAPPEN 1994).

The obvious question then is what leads to the selection of a particular idea. Among the key mechanisms are the powers of persuasion and contestation. Persuasion turns ideas into norms (FINNEMORE 1996; LYNCH 1999); values are attached to actions and provide legitimacy for actions. Public opinion is influenced or manipulated *"to provide support for a selected policy"* (MINTZ – REDD 2003: 200). The actors who share the given norms might try to persuade the less convinced actors (WIENER 2007). Interests and preferences are *"subject to discursive challenges [because] actors [...] are prepared to change their views of the world or even their interests in the light of the better*

argument" (RISSE 2000: 7). Persuasion is also used to delegitimise the interests and actions of the actors' opponents. Another key feature is the perceived legitimacy of the actor and its interests and preferences (PFEFFER – SALANCIK 1978), where the actor's actions are perceived as *"desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions"* (SUCHMAN 1995: 574).

Interpretation of norms is affected by those who participate in the process of forming the norm; i.e., the definition of the norm depends on the actors. While states remain the main actors of international politics, constructivists also focus on individuals and groups (E.G., PRICE 1998; KECK – SIKKINK 1999; KIM – SHARMAN 2014; TABOSA 2020) and examine how non-state actors try to affect preferences of not only their home countries, but other states, international organisations and non-state actors. That includes areas of "high politics".

Policy situations in both national and international arenas can be framed by states but also non-state actors such as social movements (MINTZ – REDD 2003). One way to examine how actors mobilise support and obtain legitimacy by using language and discourse is frame analysis (BENFORD – SNOW 2000; MINTZ – REDD 2003; DELANTY – RUMFORD; VAARA – TIENARI 2008; BOESMAN – D'HAENENS – VAN GORP 2016; HEIN – CHAUDHRI 2018; BELMONTE – PORTO 2020), which is explained below.

Framing Analysis

Frames have their roots in common cultural themes; thus, if the problem at stake matches the public's pre-existing interpretations (value constructs) coming from their political, ideological or religious beliefs and is put in a familiar context, it increases the likelihood of its acceptance by the public (SNOW – BENFORD 1988; NISBET 2010; VAN GORP 2010; BERBERS ET AL. 2016; BELMONTE – PORTO 2020). Successful *"norm entrepreneurs"* are able to *"'frame' normative ideas in such a way that they resonate with relevant audiences"* (MINTZ – REDD 2003). The resonance of the frame depends on its credibility (the frame consistency, the credibility of the frame articulators and empirical credibility) and salience (promoting values close to the values of the target audience and their everyday experience, and the frame's resonance with the cultural narrations of the target audience) (BENFORD – SNOW 2000). The resonant norm or frame can be used strategically, as the actors can willingly adopt values

even if these values were previously peripheral to their main goals (BARNETT 1999; PAYNE 2001). As different cultures use different sets of frames (BERBERS ET AL. 2015), frames must be adjusted in a foreign environment to become understood and accepted. Strategic framing involves intentional tailoring of the frames to the host context/culture and reacts to external factors such as framing of the state or counter-movements (CARREGEE – ROEFS 2004).

Framing analysis shows how the use of reasoning devices promotes particular facts and assessments of the situation, making them *"more salient"* in order to 1) define a problem, 2) identify the causes, 3) make moral judgements and 4) suggest solutions (ENTMAN 1993). This chain provides a logical move from identifying a problem to its solution (SNOW – BENFORD 1988; VAN GORP 2010). Thus, frames can be used to justify a particular solution to a problem. Besides reasoning devices, framing analysis works with framing devices, which Reese (2010: 19–20) defined as *"specific linguistic structures such as metaphors, visual icons, and catchphrases that communicate frames."*

Frames being part of social movements' discourses (DE VREESE 2005), they are the key *"challengers of hegemonic values"* (CARREGEE – ROEFS 2004: 224). Social movements use frames to not only mobilise possible followers but also gain support and *"demobilize antagonists"* (BENFORD – SNOW 2000). In such cases the success often depends on the media (MINTZ – REDD 2003). The media, being *"a component of [the] political opportunity structure"* (GAMSON – MEYER 1996: 287), construct meaning, reproduce culture and are sites of contest. The rise in the online media furthermore presents a *"substantial resource for movements to utilize"* (HEIN – CHAUDRI 2018: 5). Indeed, social movements have tried to gain stronger ground in the *"discursive contest"* by using unconventional media such as social media, blogs, and online platforms, which fecilitated the reliance on mental short-cuts and sources *"that conform and reinforce [...] preexisting beliefs"* (NISBET 2010: 51).

How social movements produce frames in the international arena (framing) has generally received less attention than the actual frames (CARREGEE – ROEFS 2004). How a social movement tries to affect the home country's relations with the EU and thus demobilise its opponent is an example of conflict internationalisation (or conflict Europeanisation in the EU context), where a social movement shifts *"to transnational strategies"* (TARROW 1995: 233) and strategically targets *"power-holders outside the state"*

(BOURNE – CHATZOPOULOU 2015: 878). Examining conflict internalisation contributes to our knowledge about the social movement's role in the politicisation of the European public space (BOURNE – CHATZOPOULOU 2015), which I examine on the case of the internationalised power struggle between the Turkish Gülen movement and the ruling AKP. An overview of their relationship is provided next.

THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT AND THE AKP

The impact of the Gülen movement on the Turkish political and economic systems since 2002 is undeniable (E.G. GÖZAYDIN 2009; TAŞ 2018). The evaluations of the movement, and its nature, characteristics and impact on Turkish politics have been very contradictory and ranged from the belief that it represented moderate Islam and intercultural dialogue and provided excellent education, to views that saw it as a dangerous sect trying to take control of the Turkish state (CF. STEENBRINK 2015). Indeed, its activities have ranged from a personal and religious focus to institutional involvement (including involvement in education and the media) and *"infiltration of key government and military offices"* (FITZGERALD 2017: 4).

Starting in the 1970s with a group of followers around the former imam Fethullah Gülen, the Gülen movement (known as *Hizmet* or *Cemaat* in Turkey) rose to nationwide importance in the 1980s. Gülen's relocation from Turkey to the USA in 1999 facilitated the globalisation of the movement and turned it into one of *"the largest and wealthiest"* (TEE 2016: 161) transnational movements in the world. His influence remains strong over the core but limited over the entire GM, which *"allows GM followers to claim that Gülen is at once the reason, motivator, and instigator behind the GM's transnational efforts, and that he leads no one and manages nothing"* (HENDRICK 2013: 72). This gradually developed sophisticated defence strategy (HENDRICK 2013; TITTENSOR 2018) reacted to the Turkish Kemalist elites' treatment of religious movements as a threat to the secular order of the country.

Gülen's exile in the USA coincided with the EU granting Turkey the official candidate country status in 1999 and resulted in the GM adopting a pro-Western and pro-European Turkish foreign policy narratives (YILMAZ 2005). It used Turkey's NATO membership and EU accession process obligations to soften the Kemalist elites' pressure on Islamic movements in the

country. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the USA, the GM has also used the *"discursive opportunity"* (LACEY 2014: 97) provided by the dichotomy between "good" and "bad" Muslims (MAMDANI 2002); it described itself as a liberal, pro-Western and pro-democratic Sufi-inspired movement, which helped it gain legitimacy as a norm entrepreneur in the West.

To protect and promote its interests in Turkey and abroad, the movement sought support among various Turkish political groups but its rapid expansion started when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP came to power in 2002 (TAŞ 2018; YAVUZ – BALCI, EDS. 2018). The AKP broke away from political Islamism and promoted itself as a conservative but pro-Western force. The AKP and the GM shared the social base of pious Anatolian middle-class Muslims, were market-oriented and culturally and religiously conservative, and had a common "enemy" – the Turkish army and nationalist Kemalists. Their ideological combination of Islamic roots and neoliberal economic policies known as conservative globalism (ÖNIŞ 2009) won them broad support. The GM and the AKP together framed the AKP's "new Turkey" as democratic and pro-Western, as a conservative democracy defined by the cultural values of Islam, a neoliberal economy and European democracy (ÖZTÜRK 2019; GÜMÜŞ, 2020). They contrasted it with the Kemalist "old Turkey," which was perceived as undemocratic, corrupt, and economically weak. Even though the GM never openly declared its political support for the AKP (insisting that they did not support a particular party but democratisation and EU accession), it admitted that large numbers of their sympathisers voted for the AKP. Their informal alliance continued throughout the period of Turkey's gradual de-democratisation and de-Europeanisation after 2007 (YAVUZ – BALCI 2018).

Once the AKP-GM alliance removed its powerful Kemalist opposition from the critical positions in the state, their differences grew larger and the alliance broke down in 2013 with a corruption probe against the then Prime Minister Erdoğan and some ministers of his government (CF. CAGAPTAY 2017). Erdoğan responded by calling the GM a Fethullah terrorist organisation (Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü, FETÖ) in 2014. To downplay the allegations that the GM tried to control the Turkish police and judiciary, the GM reacted not so much by denying them as by trying to undermine the legitimacy of the critics. The distancing support it previously lent to the AKP enabled the GM to quickly become a staunch critic of the AKP

governance. The feud they declared with each other culminated with the 15 July 2016 failed coup, which the Turkish government directly blamed on the GM (CF. YAVUZ – BALCI 2018). While in the pre–2016 era the movement supported global expansion to promote its political and economic interests, the coup transformed it into an involuntary exile movement and it has become a major critic of Erdoğan abroad.

Part of the GM's economic success rested in its massive investment into the media market since the 1980s (NOCERA ET AL. 2015). They reacted to the political and economic environments in Turkey, which favoured the hegemonic discourses of powerful secular groups, whose hyperbolic narratives were often *"adopted by the foreign media and then also reproduced in the academic literature"* (TITTENSOR 2014: 66), which taught Islamic movements like the GM the importance of having access to the media and controlling the narrative.

The GM media played a crucial role in securing the AKP electoral victories in 2002, 2007 and 2011 and the positive image of the party in the West during the 2002–2012 period (CAGAPTAY 2017). In exchange, the AKP supported the GM's domestic and international business activities. Most important was the story of the newspaper *Today's Zaman* (TZ), which was launched in 2007; the paper was tailor-made for the European market and targeted non-Turkish readers interested in Turkey, including scholars, businesspeople, and diplomats. The newspaper promoted the Turkish accession process in Europe and quickly became the most widely read English-written Turkish newspaper. The AKP government supplied the paper to the foreign embassies in the country and made it available free of charge at its foreign missions (NOCERA ET AL. 2015). It led many European actors to believe that the AKP was a pro-democratic reform party and that the GM was *"Turkey's leading voice on issues of human rights, democracy, EU integration, and constitutional reform"* (HENDRICK 2013: 179). The GM's cultivating of its connections with foreign diplomats, intellectuals, businessmen, journalists and politicians, increased the potential of creating a favourable reception of the movement in the country (BALCI 2017) and legitimised the GM's discourses. The media in English-speaking countries were used to *"exert control over their own framing efforts and identity"* (FITZGERALD 2017: 6).

The EU accession process and the requirement of democratisation and desecuritisation presented a unique opportunity to raise domestic and international support for weakening the opposition (the traditional secularists/Kemalists in the military, the judiciary, academia and the media). The GM media used the democratisation frame to attack the undemocratic features of Kemalism, referring to the universal categories of democracy, human rights, and economic liberalisation (YAVUZ 2013). The campaign culminated with the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, which accused military officers, judges, academics, journalists, and politicians of plotting a coup against the AKP government because it had placed Turkey on the Europeanisation track.[1] The stories, based on illegal wiretaps, were first published in GM-linked media such as *Taraf*, *Zaman* or *TZ* and pro-AKP media (*Yeni Şafak, Star*), which set the agenda and kept the stories going for many months, legitimising the mass detentions and the trials. The *"criminalisation of the military and opposition [...] deprived [the opposition] from shaping public opinion and from participation in the formulation of politics in Turkey"* (GÜMÜŞ 2020: 149) and legitimised the crackdown on the AKP opposition in the eyes of the international audience, including the European UNION (TEE 2016). Many accepted the frame that the trials were part of the government's democratisation and liberalisation efforts in line with the EU accession process.

The trials weakened the common enemy but contributed to the demise of the GM-AKP alliance, where the media played a crucial role once again. During the Gezi Park protests in 2013, *Zaman* published an article criticising the government's treatment of the protestors written by Gülen, which was followed by several extremely critical columns in TZ.[2] In autumn 2013, *Zaman* revealed the government's plan to abolish the preparatory schools,[3] which represented a serious blow to the GM's economic base and recruitment place in the education system. The most visible split came with the corruption probe in December 2013, which was heavily covered by the GM media well into 2014. The GM media attacked Erdoğan domestically and internationally, depicting him as a corrupt and increasingly authoritarian leader, which made the GM media a target of the government. In March 2016, the government took over *Zaman* and following the July 2016 coup it banned all GM-linked media in Turkey. In the days following the failed coup, the government shut down 1,284 private schools, 15 foundation universities, 800 private dorms, 54 private hospitals, 195 media outlets, 19

trade unions, 560 foundations, and 1,125 associations that were all associated with the GM (IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD OF CANADA 2020).

Once the GM's domestic voice had been silenced in the post–2016 massive purges in Turkey, the international arena, including cyberspace and media, became an important factor in the movement's power struggle against the Turkish regime (SONER 2016; ÖZTÜRK 2019). Yet, framing analysis was previously applied to the post–2016 GM only in a very limited way (DUMOVICH 2019; SALEEM AND OSMAN 2019; UGUR 2019). The analysis below investigates the strategic framing in four pro-GM online English-written media platforms to examine the dynamics of an internationalised domestic conflict between a social movement and a state.

DATA COLLECTION

Preceding the framing analysis, I obtained thorough knowledge of the GM and their media in their political and social contexts. I collected findings of academic research on the framing patterns and strategies in their pre–2016 English-written resources (the failed coup serving as the breaking point after which the Turkey-based media were eradicated). The next step was to identify and select online English-written platforms linked to the GM. Even though this research did not aim to measure the impact of these platforms on public opinion and policymakers, I included potential impact[4] among the selection criteria because the size of the audience of the platforms affected the resources available to them. Four online platforms met the primary criteria: *Ahval News (AN)*, *Nordic Monitor (NM)*, *Stockholm Centre for Freedom (SCF)*, and *Turkish Minute (TM)*.

Given the tradition of secrecy and *"strategic ambiguity"* (HENDRICK 2013: 72) in the GM, it is important to explain at this point how I addressed this major limitation with establishing a credible and verifiable link between the GM and these platforms. No acknowledgements were found in the platforms' official statements and the financing of the platforms was also unclear. Following the previously observed findings that most GM followers in the organisations (including the media) linked to the GM can be found among their administrative staff and on their boards (SEE, E.G., TEE 2016), the link was established through the platforms' editorial teams, whose members all had a very strong representation in the pre–2016 GM media.[5] That

the crews were very similar to those of the pre-coup GM flagship media was also confirmed by interviews with Turkish journalists.[6] The deep ideological divisions between the Islamic and Kemalist/leftist circles in the Turkish society, where the Turkish media work as an *"echo chamber for their own side"* and tend to present the problem as a binary good-and-bad problem (EVANS – KAYNAK 2015: 48), together with the fact that the members of the platforms' editorial teams had closely cooperated with the GM media in the pre-2016 era, justified the selection.

To analyse how the platforms reported on Turkey-EU relations, I examined all the news texts published on the four online platforms between January and March 2019, a period which coincided with the European Parliament's (EP) 2018 Regular Report on Turkey, the EP's vote to suspend Turkey's EU accession negotiations and the 54th meeting of the Association Council between the EU and Turkey in March 2019 (the first since the State of Emergency was lifted in Turkey in 2018). The search included all articles published on the platforms in this period (making no distinction between news, opinions, and editorials). I first identified all articles with the keyword Europe in them. Articles with this keyword that were not relevant to the EU and EU politics were subsequently eliminated from the analysis pool. This yielded 64 articles in *AN*, 16 in *NM*, 6 in *SCF* and 30 in *TM* (N=116) that covered Turkey's relations with Europe.[7] I carefully read these strategically collected news articles, focusing on how the stories about Turkey and Europe/EU were told and answering the following questions: How is the relation between the EU and Turkey described? Which factors are identified as the causes of the current state? What/who is identified as the villain/victim? What are the effects of the current situation? What are the suggested remedies? This yielded two dominant frames, democratisation and Islamism, which are summarised in Table 1 and defined and discussed below.

FRAMING THE EU-TURKEY RELATIONS IN THE GM-LINKED MEDIA

The EU as a Democratising Force for Turkey

All four platforms focused on the civic definition of European identity, defined the EU in terms of democracy, freedom and human rights and

presented the EU as one of the crucial sources of Turkish democratisation, which had to be externally imposed on the country – Turkey needed the EU/West to democratise. They described the EU as the vital force of the Turkish democratisation process. *TM* (FEBRUARY 12, 2019) wrote: *"progress was the result of the EU accession process and the associated democratization, system transformation and appropriation of EU norms and principles in regional politics;"* and described the post-2016 de-Europeanisation process of Turkey as de-democratisation, and Turkey as a *"disqualified ex-democracy"* (FEBRUARY 6, 2019). The platforms made frequent references to the EU accession process and the values associated with it and claimed that Erdoğan's Turkey contradicted them domestically but also in its foreign policy. Erdoğan and the AKP were defined as the causes of Turkey's departure from the EU project. They handled their former support of the AKP and Erdoğan by claiming that he tricked the EU (and the GM) and that he only pretended to be a democrat to use the EU and assume unlimited power (a previously common admonition of the Kemalist opposition). Calling the Turkish accession process "*the most spectacular failure*," *AN* (March 11, 2019) argued that *"[his] commitment to elevating Turkey into the club of European nations [...] gave him cover to dismantle the constitutional checks on his power"*, and *"to neuter the powerful military, passing laws subjecting it to civilian control."*

TM repeatedly used the good/bad Turkey binary dichotomy, where "good Turkey" was the Europeanising Turkey at the time of the AKP-Gülen alliance, and "bad Turkey" was the AKP and Erdoğan post-2016: *"Once there was a democratizing and Europeanizing Turkey: a reliable NATO partner, an EU candidate, a secular and democratic constitutional liberal model based on a pluralist society [...] Now things are different [...] a country run by a tyrannical and unpredictable regime that systematically violates the rights of its citizens and even those visiting Turkey or doing business within its borders"* (*TM*, February 6, 2019). Some of the articles were instrumental in leading to conclusions such as the claims that the change in Erdoğan's EU policy started in 2013 and was linked to his alliance with "Eurasianists," and that they used him to pull Turkey toward Russia. The slide away from democracy was in all four cases associated directly with Erdoğan. *AN* described him as *"an arrogant monster politician"* (January 4, 2019) and *"a populist colossus,"* (March 11, 2019) and *NM* described him as anti-western, anti-democratic and anti-secular (January 21, 2019) and as a dictator (February 25, 2019). Strong words were used to describe not only Erdoğan but the regime as such. For

example, *AN* labelled the Turkish regime as *"autocratic"* and *"brutal"*, and as a *"sultanate"* (February 14, 2019).

The EU was also criticised for being too benevolent with Erdoğan, cooperating with him and in this way helping in the rise of his authoritarianism. The platforms argued that other factors such as economic relations or migration should take prevalence over the democratic concerns. *AN* labelled the EU policy towards Turkey as *"seeing no evil, hearing no evil, speaking no evil"* and *"brinkmanship"* and accused the EU of *"lending a precious helping hand to Erdoğan"* by keeping Turkey as a candidate country (March 12, 2019). Like *AN*, *TM* (February 21, 2019) partially blamed the EU for its lax approach: *"the ongoing pathetic 'wait-and-see policy' of the EU based on the refugee deal with Erdoğan and some other short-term interests [... that] strengthen the regime."* Like *AN* and *TM*, *NM* (March 18, 2019) warned against an *"appeasement"* of Turkey, which they claimed Erdoğan saw as a demonstration of *"weakness."*

The EU and its emphasis on democracy, respect for human rights and rule of law were identified as remedies for the halted democratisation in Turkey. The commentators argued that the EU should insist on a return to democratisation, and that until Turkey complies, the accession negotiations should be suspended; thus, they supported the EP's call to end the negotiations if Erdoğan stayed in power. *TM* (February 21, 2019) requested that the EU use its power to change the nature of Turkey's regime, which meant that it should push for *"[a] return to normative EU politics on Turkey, emphasizing the restoration of the constitutional regime, the rule of law and individual and minority rights: in a nutshell, the re-democratization of Turkey. To achieve this, the EU should freeze the negotiation process." NM* (February 14, 2019) called for *"intergovernmental complaints that could be filed by multiple member states against Turkey [and that could] help restore the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms."*

The democratisation frame of the Turkey-EU relations was also used to address the falling out between the GM and the AKP in 2013, the 2016 coup and the following crackdown on the Gülen movement in Turkey and abroad. *NM* (January 21, 2019) defined the GM as *"a civic group that is highly critical of the Erdoğan government."* The platforms linked the GM to the Kurds, with *AN* and *TM* labelling them the two most oppressed groups in

Turkey. The initial falling out between Gülen and Erdoğan in 2013 was presented as having been caused by Gülen's concern for the future of Turkish democracy and his support for Turkey's Western orientation. *AN* (January 24, 2019) published an opinion which claimed that Turkey failed to prove to the West that the movement was a terrorist organisation, that attempts to do so were a *"self-engineered political fiasco,"* and that the *"war"* against the GM was a policy of *"quashing dissent."*

The failed 2016 coup was also covered by the democratisation frame; all the platforms denied Turkey's allegations that the coup was organised by the GM and claimed Erdoğan staged the coup to dismantle the remaining parts of the Turkish democracy, purge the GM and move Turkey away from the West. *TM* (February 21, 2019) argued that it *"was a civilian coup by Erdoğan and his allies"* and described the coup as a means to abandon the Turkish effort to join the EU as supported by the GM. *NM* argued it was a *"false flag"* coup (January 30, 2019) and that Erdoğan *"faked"* the coup to purge the opposition and take control of the intelligence agency, and to get rid of *"government officials including thousands of judges and prosecutors"* (January 14, 2019). It described the charges against the GM followers as *"a bogus criminal case against legitimate critics"* (February 7, 2019). The platforms praised the EU and the European countries for standing up against Turkey and helping those persecuted by the undemocratic regime of Turkey in cases of failed kidnappings, espionage, and *"politically motivated harassment tactics"* (*NM*, February 1, 2019).

Of the four platforms, *AN* covered the broadest range of governance-related topics pertinent to Turkey. To strengthen and legitimise its arguments and positions, it worked with liberal, Kurdish, secular and foreign writers. It quoted EU institutions, well established, respected papers and magazines such as the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, and the *Economist*, experts and analyses prepared by foreign think tanks, by which it achieved *"legitimacy by association"* (TEE 2018: 8; HENDRICK 2018: 200). The Western sources of information were presented as reliable, objective sources of information, while the Turkish sources were used for reporting the Turkish point of view.

While they were most common in AN, all the platforms made references to European politicians to increase the legitimacy of their narratives. These politicians included the 2019 EPP Spitzenkandidat Manfred Weber,

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini and MEP Kati Piri (*NM*, *SCF*, and *TM* quoted her definition of the post-coup purges as a *"witch-hunt"*). All the platforms also frequently used the EU institutions as reference points in their headlines, the *"most powerful framing device of the syntactical structure"* (PAN – KOSICKI 1993: 60), especially the EP (including various MEPs), and the Commission, or they made vaguer references to *"EU officials"* (*TM*, January 21, 2019) or *"EU politicians"* (*SCF*, March 25, 2019); these references were made in connection with not only the Turkey-EU relations and the authoritarian tendencies of the Turkish regime but also the defence of the GM. *SCF* used the EP, for example, as a reference in its headlines twice out of a total of six relevant articles – when praising the GM schools in Pakistan and when criticising the legal insufficiency in Turkey. A link between a politician and the EU was achieved, for instance, by the headline *"EU's Hahn"* (*TM*, March 15, 2019).

The distancing, objectivising support the GM lent to the AKP during the alliance times enabled the GM to quickly become a staunch critic of the AKP governance based on the continuum of the pro-democratic frame. Even though the nature of the relationship changed as the GM and the AKP went from being allies to enemies (MARTIN 2020), the democratisation frame was used to promote the GM's position in the West; the movement defined itself as a democratising pro-Western/European force and its "enemies" as those who opposed the pro-democratic and pro-Western/European direction of the country.

TURKISH ISLAMISM AS A THREAT TO EUROPE

The second frame defined the EU-Turkey relations in terms of the Islamic threat the current Turkish regime presented to Europe. Establishing their legitimacy as the "good Muslims," especially in some liberal circles in the West, the GM continued with its intercultural and interfaith activities in the post–2016 era, emphasising "good Islam" as part of the Turkish culture. While the AKP, including Erdoğan, was previously described as a party for secular, moderate, democratic Muslims, and as a Muslim version of Christian democratic parties (the AKP received observer status with the European People's Party in 2005), they platforms claimed that, under the current regime, Turkey was becoming a radical Islamist force. They linked Erdoğan's anti-western rhetoric and the neo-Ottoman tendencies in the

AKP foreign policy to his wish to lead the Muslim world (with the help of the Muslim Brotherhood, to fulfil his *"caliphate dream"* by 2023 [*NM*, January 21, 2019]), which would be achieved by supporting terrorism, jihadists and sharia. The row with the GM was included in this frame along the same lines; *NM*, for instance, argued that the Turkish government persecuted its followers because the GM media disclosed that Erdoğan's regime was *"aiding and abetting armed jihadist groups"* (January 14, 2019). He and the AKP were, thus, presented as a radical Islamist threat to Europe.

The Islamism frame was most visible in *AN* and *NM*; they claimed that Erdoğan's Islamism was a tool of his foreign policy, and that he was trying to establish a Turkish *"hegemony by funding organizations and mosques around the world"* (*AN*, January 12, 2019). While *NM* distinguished between the "good" (democratising, pro-European) and the "bad" (Erdoğan's, anti-western) Turkey within the democratisation frame, it also promoted the "good versus bad Muslims" dichotomy in the Islamism frame, defining Erdoğan and his clique as *"fake"* Muslims when arguing *"Erdoğan's leadership has practically nothing to do with fundamental Islamic values"* (January 21, 2019).

NM (March 18, 2019) also warned against the Erdoğan-induced radicalisation of the Turkish diaspora in Europe, to which he exported *"poisonous political Islamist rhetoric"* (*NM*, January 21, 2019). *NM* claimed that the Turkish government was involved in the support of jihad in Syria and the spread of Islamist terrorism to Europe through the Muslim diaspora and its radicalisation. It identified the Turkish religious authority, Diyanet, and its German branch DITIB, as sources of jihadist policies towards Europe in Turkey. *NM* requested that the EU address the problem and thus become *"more effective in neutralizing Erdoğan's looming threat over diaspora groups."* *NM* avoided defining the *GM* as a religious movement (a term used by *AN*), calling it a *"civic group"* instead, possibly to downplay its Islamic element.

AN (January 12, 2019) claimed that Turkey was interfering *"in the religious lives of immigrants preventing their integration"* and associated the reversal of Erdoğan's pro-European policies with his Islamism; *AN* (March 11, 2019) blamed Erdoğan's loss of appetite for the EU bid on the 2005 decision of the ECHR to *"uphold the French ban on Muslim face veils"* but also distinguished between the good and bad Turkey/Muslims by reporting how Muslims previously living in Europe had moved to Turkey, where they

were better received and enjoyed cultural similarities. In these instances, Turkey and Turks are depicted as "good," while it is argued that the problem for Europe is the political Islamism of the current Turkish regime.

Due to the Turkish regime's aims to influence Europe's Muslims, the Turkey-EU security and migration cooperation plans were questioned in the platforms. *AN* (March 12, 2019) called the counter-terrorism cooperation between the EU and Turkey *"ludicrous"* because Turkey was *"widely reported to be one of the privileged nests of the Islamic State."* It also warned against the refugee deal because Europe faced "the inflow of Turkish refugees," including members of the GM, fleeing Turkish oppression. *AN*, *NM* and *TM* highlighted that Turkey used the refugee deal to blackmail Europe and turned it into a security threat, linking it with both internal and external threats to Europe's safety and stability. *NM* (January 14, 2019) argued that Turkey was *"forcing migrants to European borders"*, undermining the integration of the Turkish diaspora and contributing to the rise of far-right parties. Erdoğan/the AKP's Turkey was presented as a direct and indirect threat to Europe and the West due to its radical Islamism.

NM represented the most vocal anti-Erdoğan and pro-GM platform of the four, using episodic presentations, drama and sensationalism with expressive and emotional language. Its reporting frequently consisted of issue stories focusing on one topic (PAN – KOSICKI 1993). These did not reflect on current EU-Turkey developments and used extensive speculative documents and claims. For instance, they described Erdoğan's past as an *"Islamic Raider"* (*NM*, January 17, 2019). They implied that Erdoğan and his family had jihadist roots, and argued that he supported terrorism, which they based on Erdoğan's speech in March 2019, where he referred to the Ottoman Empire stretching from Vienna to East Turkistan (currently the region of Xinjiang in China).

All four platforms used strong headlines to draw attention to the claimed Islamic militancy of the Turkish regime (they included the words *"jihadist,"*[8] *"radical," "violence," "Islamism," "caliphate,"* and *"abduct"*) and linked its rising Islamic radicalism (just like the democratic backsliding above) to Erdoğan. In the 16 analysed *NM* articles, Erdoğan's name was in 6 headlines, where he was associated with purging intelligence service officials, helping a *"drug runner"* (January 25, 2019), having a *"mafia leader*

ally" (February 5, 2019), and promoting *"violence and radicalism"* (March 18, 2019). The headlines were also used as a red herring when they did not match the actual content of the article, such as in the case of an article mostly describing long queues at the fruit and vegetable stands in Turkey but with the title *"Erdoğan says EU not taking Turkey into the bloc because it is Muslim"* (*TM*, February 16, 2019).

The threat of militant Islam served as the dominant symbol, using the existing fear of Islamic terrorism and the already existing view of Erdoğan as an Islamist in Europe to undermine the credibility of the Turkish regime. Erdoğan was the villain, and the European public and Muslim minorities were the victims. The problem for the EU and the West at large was not Turkey or Islam per se, but Erdoğan and his political Islam.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the Europe-related articles in the given period (January – March 2019) revealed two key frames which the four platforms shared: 1) Erdoğan/the AKP's failure to proceed with democratisation and reversing the trend; 2) Erdoğan/the AKP's political Islamism as a threat to Europe and the West. These frames of democratisation and Islamism developed in the context of the post-2016 coup developments in Turkey and built on the republican narrative of Turkish identity, which was based on the policies of modernisation, westernisation, and laicism/secularisation.

The democratisation frame argued that Erdoğan and the AKP opposed and denied European values, while the Islamism frame labelled him a threat to Europe's internal (Muslim communities, political extremism) and external (migration) security. Both frames identified Erdoğan as the cause of Turkey drifting away from the EU accession goal and promoted the idea that the EU should adopt a tough stance on Turkey, should not make any deals with the regime and should halt/end the negotiations. The platforms used the context of the EP's Foreign Committee recommendation to formally suspend the negotiations with Turkey to validate their demands to end the negotiations until the government in Turkey changes; the platforms appealed to the rationality of the EP's decision.

TABLE 1: THE FRAME MATRIX FOR TURKEY AND TURKEY-EU RELATIONS

	Reasoning devices					**Framing devices**
Frame	**Definition of the situation**	**Causes**	**Consequences**	**Possible solutions**	**Moral values**	**Metaphors, catchphrases and lexical choices**
Democratisation	De-democratisation of Turkey and a staged coup to bring Turkey closer to Russia and further away from the West	The AKP/Erdoğan used the EU to assume unlimited power but did not internalise the European values; the EU was too benevolent	Violation of human rights, one-man rule, persecution of the opposition	Halt or end the accession negotiations until the democratisation process restarts, change the regime	Rejecting democracy in favour of power	disqualified ex-democracy, tyrannical and unpredictable regime, sultanate arrogant monster, populist colossus, dictator autocratic, brutal, quashing dissent pathetic 'wait-and-see' policy, appeasement engineered political fiasco, witch hunt
Islamism	Erdoğan has neo-Ottoman ambitions, and wishes to lead all Muslims and establish a Turkish hegemony in the Muslim world	The Turkish regime does not follow the basic values of Islam; they are 'bad' Muslims	Security threat – radicalisation of the Turkish diaspora, preventing integration, support of terrorism; Turkey's policy generates refugee flows, and contributes to the rise of far-right parties in Europe	End the EU refugee deal, control the links to the Turkish diaspora	Rejecting secularism, tolerance and liberalism	caliphate, Jihad, radicalism, violence fake Muslims, Islamic raider looming threat, privileged nest of the Islamic State Mafia, drug-runner

Using the two frames, the platforms distinguished between the "good" and "bad" Turkey, which allowed them to avoid fatalism regarding the future of the EU-Turkey relations and continue with the pro-Western narrative of the movement, which placed Turkey in the Western world. The Islamism frame worked with the post-9/11 "good versus bad" Muslim narrative (MAMDANI 2002); the Gülenists were presented as the "good Muslims," and the AKP and Erdoğan as the "bad Muslims," which was extended to

the "good versus bad" Turks in the democratisation frame; "good Turks" representing the Turkish opposition to Erdoğan were able to integrate into the European society, and his supporters were the "bad Turks," who are unable to integrate into the European society.

The platforms fed into the already existing images of the villain (Erdoğan), adding the dimension of the victim (GM). *NM*, *SCF*, and *TM* specifically focused on the victim/villain relationship between the AKP and the GM, defining the GM [9] as a civil group which promoted democracy and Western values and which was punished by the regime for this. The removal of the villain would rectify the injustice incurred. It fit with the collective action frames identified by Gamson (QUOTED IN WICKS 2017); the purges and exile were an unjust punishment (injustice), which could be remedied if the negotiations were halted (agency) until Erdoğan (the identified specific adversary) was removed. The amplified victimisation confirmed the presence of the injustice frame, which is common among social movements (BENFORD – SNOW 2000).

Since the 1993 Copenhagen criteria defined the prerequisites of EU candidate countries as including not only a market economy but also democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, the self-perception of the EU as a "democratic club" rose in importance. The rapid de-Europeanisation of Turkey, Erdoğan's populist Islamism and the persecution of the GM by the Turkish regime created new resources, which could be strategically used. The impact of the de-democratisation on the support for the Turkish accession among the European public has been confirmed by opinion polls[10] and was confirmed to be *"a relatively strong driver"* (LINDGAARD 2018). The European public is also very concerned about Muslim radicalism – a report published by the European Council on Foreign Relations (KRASTEV – LEONARD – DENNISON 2019) showed that it was the most threatening image to Europeans and was present not only among anti-EU and extreme right but also pro-European mainstream parties. Other surveys confirmed these findings (BAYRAKLI – HAFEZ 2019).

Framing the EU-Turkey relations by democratisation and Islamism, the GM wished to support and develop a favourable hegemonic discourse (CARRAGEE – ROEFS 2004) over what had happened in Turkey. The negative attitude of most EU member states and the European public to the current

Turkish regime provided the material reality against which the platforms constituted their anti-Erdoğan discourse. The slide away from democracy was empirically observable just like the promotion of the Islamic agenda in Turkey, making both frames credible and legitimate because they confirmed and did not challenge the accepted European worldview regarding the current Turkish regime. They were *"congruent with the most common audience schemata"* (ENTMAN 1993: 56). Resonating with the *"larger cultural themes"* gave both frames a *"natural advantage"*, increasing their appeal because they appeared to the public as *"natural and familiar"* (GAMSON – MODIGLIANI 1989).

The GM promoted a change in the EU policy towards Turkey (ending the accession negotiations) as an opportunity which the present moment offered, and emphasised *"the risks of inaction"* (GAMSON – MEYER 1996: 286); if the EU did not act, the situation would progressively worsen. They used moral statements to demonstrate that the change would produce more fairness and better policies. They identified the GM as a victim which stood up against a powerful oppressor, the Turkish regime. The reader is expected to *"sympathize with the weakest side"* (BELMONTE – PORTO 2020: 63), which suffered because it defended the values it shared with the audience. They worked with what Ahmad (2020: 16) called the *"most enduring myth of the Cold War era"*, i.e., reducing complex problems to a *"single, external, collectivised enemy 'Other'"*. The GM presented itself to the European public as part of "us" (the in-group), which the audience perceives in a more favourable light and as superior to the "other" (the Turkish regime as the out-group) (BERBERS ET AL. 2016). As the international level remained the only arena for an exiled group, it framed the Turkish regime in a way that made the EU an ally in promoting its domestic demands. As Berkowitz and Mugge (2014) found in the case of the Kurdish transnational diaspora, which was also securitised by the Turkish government, we similarly observed that the GM turned to the EU transnational political space because unlike in the domestic context, in this space it was possible for the GM to get access to institutions that seemed favourably inclined to their aims.

Framing the Turkish regime as a threat to democracy and secularism increases the saliency and urgency of the issue, and thus, it attracts the attention of other journalists. Journalists often rely on sources, including other media (LEWIS ET AL. 2008; DAVIES 2008; BELMONTE – PORTO 2020; IROM ET AL. 2021),

especially for complex problems; given the complexity of the Turkish environment, and the structure of the media market in Turkey, including the widespread violation of media freedom and the limited presence of foreign correspondents in Turkey (TASTEKIN 2019), European journalists are looking for information that would present a counterview to the official Turkish views (KILIS 2019). The pro-GM media provide the information they are looking for. Presenting their work as independent journalism (avoiding any identification with the GM), referring to key policymakers to validate their reporting perspective (LAWRENCE 2010: 270) and redefining themselves as Turkish "dissidents" increases their credibility and legitimacy as sources of information about Turkey.

The GM-linked platforms tried to evoke the feeling that they presented an objective and fair view reinforcing authority and legitimacy (PAN – KOSICKI 1993); openly taking sides in the conflict would lower their chances of influencing public opinion – they risked that expertise would *"be quickly and easily interpreted by the public through partisan lenses"* (NISBET 2010: 45). As access to media is not equal, the use of their own/favourable media for validating their frames might be crucial (SPLENDORE 2020) for affecting the European discourse so that it would be in favour of their strategic framing of the situation in their home country, and so that Europe would react in the desired way.

The analysis showed that both aspects of frame resonance, that is, credibility (frame consistency, credibility of the frame articulators and empirical credibility) and salience (promoting values close to the values of the target audience and their everyday experience, and resonance with the cultural narrations of the target audience), need to be addressed for social movements to successfully employ the discursive opportunity provided by an internationalising of their domestic power struggle with a potent antagonist. It allows them to provide information to policy makers, which presents a potentially powerful means of affecting policy. The potential of the discursive opportunity increases with a direct involvement in the media market, which confirms the previous findings that media are a crucial resource for social movements at the European level because policymakers are sensitive to the public opinion that is formed based on the media frames (PRINCEN – KERREMANS 2008).

CONCLUSION

As the Gülen movement, once the most influential religious/social group in Turkey (CF. TURAM 2007), has been silenced in the post-2016 Turkey due to the massive purges against its followers, the European arena has become an important factor in the movement's battle against its former allies, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). The know-how the GM acquired when building its media empire in Turkey and its pool of professionals have the potential to be applied in its endeavours abroad. It does not have enough resources to engage in the national debates across the EU but it has utilised the online media and its links and skills to expand its online advocacy and recreate the "Turkish reality" for the European public.

While scholars have studied how transnational issue networks tried to persuade and pressure state and non-state actors in the international arena both online and in real-world politics (KECK – SIKKINK 1998; PRICE 1998; CARPENTER – JOSE 2012; BELMONTE – PORTO 2020; SPLENDORE 2020), the GM represents a similar, yet different case. It has entered the international arena to promote its economic interests and to protect its position in the insecure domestic context, whether the opponents were the Kemalist elites (in the past) or the AKP government (today). For that purpose, it utilised the established international norms and values. The transition from voluntary to involuntary exile due to the changed relationship with the ruling party presented a challenge to the movement's legitimacy. Oppression from a government *"facilitated movement development"* and the repression served as a "*fortifying myth*" (SUH 2001: 450). As it never openly endorsed the AKP, it used the continuum of the democracy and Islamism frames to argue that, just as the EU, it had been "tricked" by the regime.

Learning the context, motivations and tools contributes to our understanding of social movement discourses in a foreign arena. It demonstrates how reality is created and promoted based on the mediated meaning of particular actions. Using framing analysis allows us to better comprehend and explain social movement dynamics, namely how social movements assess and approach political opportunities. The study thus contributes to our knowledge of internationalised domestic conflicts and how a social movement can utilise international discourse to gain and preserve its legitimacy and persuade international state and non-state actors to act in its interest.

Here the aim was not to assess the impact of the movement on European policy but to assess the process of trying to influence it through cultural framing. This approach recognises that social movements react differently to circumstances, and events can have different effects on the movement. The EU level has limitations for social movements; that discussion is outside the scope of this paper but it is clearer that as the importance of Brussels increases in European politics and politics in the neighbourhood, the engagement of local social movements with the EU level and in the EU capitals is often perceived favourably by the movements. The next step would be to extend the analysis to a longer time frame to test the findings of this time-limited analysis and include the GM's academic and dialogue centres and think tank activities in Europe.

ENDNOTES

1 For the treatment of the case in the GM-affiliated media, see Hendrick 2013; Nocera 2015; and Cagaptay 2020. The individuals convicted in the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials were released from prison in 2014 based on evidence that the cases were fabricated, and the GM played a crucial role in bringing them to court, which the GM denies (Tee 2016).

2 While *Zaman* quickly muted the criticism, TZ continued with the critical tone, which was indicative of the diverging contents of the English and Turkish versions of the paper.

3 For more, see Tee 2018.

4 Defined by the year of establishment and the number of unique visitors on their websites and their social media presence. By March 2020, the *AN* website had 1 million unique visitors, *TM* 13.6 thousand, *NM* 8.4 thousand and *SCF* 5 thousand. The data were collected from the website https://www.semrush.com. The *AN* Twitter account had 27 thousand followers, *NM* 11 thousand, SCF 16 thousand and *TM* 230 thousand followers. The *AN* Facebook account had 117 thousand likes, *NM* 932 likes, *SCF* 2 thousand likes and *TM* 11 thousand likes. For *AN*, only the English version data were measured.

5 The editor-in-chief of *AN* is Yavuz Baydar, a former columnist at *TZ* and the newspaper *Bugün*, which was owned by the Koza-İpek Media Group, which was linked to the GM. After *Bugün* was taken over by the government and Baydar was removed from office, he began a new daily, where he worked with Ergün Babahan, who formerly wrote for *TZ* and *Millet*, another newspaper of the Koza-Ipek group, and is currently the editor of the Turkish language version of *AN*. A detailed account of the take-over of *Bugün* was published in *TZ* and is still available on hizmetnews.com, which archives several articles that were written by Babahan and Baydar for the GM-linked media in the past (the Turkish government banned and erased their content). They wrote pieces where they praised the GM; Babahan complimented Gülen as a preacher and celebrated the GM's presence in the USA (*Hizmet News*, October 9, 2011; *Hizmet News*, November 23, 2011); Baydar called the GM schools *"arguably the best[Turkish] activity"* (*Hizmet News*, April 10, 2014) and wrote a column stating, *"For a day and beyond, one felt that Gülen's vision was within reach – possible indeed"* (*Hizmet News*, May 19, 2013). İlhan Tanır, the editor of the English version of AN, was also associated with the GM (see, e.g., Berlinski 2012). The other platforms can be linked to the GM through their staff as well. The editor-in-chief of *TM* is the former editor-in-chief of the GM magazine *Puff*. Its columnists include Ekrem Dumanlı, the former editor-in-chief of *Zaman* and the author of a book entitled *Time to Talk. An Exclusive Interview with Fethullah Gülen*, which was published in 2015; and Abdullah Bozkurt, a former Ankara bureau chief for *TZ*, who is also the president

of the *SCF* and an executive director of the Nordic Research Monitoring Network, which runs the *NM*.

6 Three interviews were conducted in March 2019 during a field trip to Turkey. All the interviewees worked for media not affiliated with the Turkish government and wished to stay anonymous. One of them said, regarding AN specifically: *"Unfortunately since the Gülen movement is so secretive[...], it is quite hard to get solid evidence that it is connected. But the fact that Baydar and Tanır are leading the news portal and their publication line favours defending the Gülen movement in the news, [makes it sound] like it is connected. They have hired people who lost their jobs after* Zaman, Birgün, Samanyolu, *etc. were taken over and shut down… same crews mostly… various freelance journalists and some young academics who worked for them briefly, were all saying that Ahval pays 5–6 times more than the market prices so they were tempted to work for them, despite the obvious links [to the GM] one can see at the management level"* (Whatsapp communication with the author, July 17, 2019).

7 It was not possible to establish the total number of all articles published on all four platforms between 1 January and 31 March 2019 to determine the ratio of all EU-Turkey-related articles.

8 Of all four platforms *NM* made the most frequent references to *"jihad,"* which was in various forms mentioned 67 times during the three-month period (compared with 8 times in *TM*, 5 times in AN, and 0 times in *SCF*).

9 *TM* previously compared the GM purges to the oppression of *"the modern day's[sic] Jews of Nazi Germany and black Africans of the apartheid regime in South Africa"* (December 8, 2018).

10 Lindgaard (2018), who analysed the trends of the European public opinion on Turkey's EU accession from 1996 to 2016, showed that there was a relatively stable support for it (36% in 1996 to 31% in 2010), and a rising number of those who opposed it (44% in 1996 and 59% in 2010) but a sharp decline in the support after the 2013 Gezi Park protests (7% for it and 76% against it in 2016). He also showed that the member states' governments were more in favour of it than the general public, with the concerns for democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and liberal values playing an increasingly important role for the general public.

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Forum

The Forum on the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic in International and European Politics

The purpose of this forum is to review and discuss recent theoretical and practical insights on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic in the international and European politics. Developing on our special issue *The Coronavirus and the Future of Liberalism* (4/2020), the Forum hosts six contributions from researchers working in Brazil, the UK, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Moving from broader reflections on the changing nature of security and health governance both in national spheres and globally to critical inquiries into the changing nature of populism or discourses of vulnerability, the forum seeks to answer a simple question – what has the pandemic changed, and what has it not changed?

The Forum opens with Rychnovská's 'Rethinking the Infodemic', which aims to shed light on the newly politicised nexus of public health, information management, and global security. This contribution argues that the discourse of the infodemic securitises information with the use of two distinct frames that cast information as a disease and as a weapon, respectively. Drawing on literatures on global health and the emerging research on disinformation, the paper situates the two framings of the infodemic in the broader discourses on the medicalisation of security and securitisation of information disorder.

The Forum continues with Guasti's 'Democratic Erosion and Democratic Resilience in Central Europe during COVID-19'. This contribution attends to the effects the pandemic has brought to democracy in the Visegrad Four countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia). Starting from the understanding that democracy erodes when horizontal and diagonal accountability fail to effectively push back against attempts at executive aggrandisement by illiberal elites, the paper claims that democracy eroded in Hungary and, to a lesser degree, in Poland but remained resilient in the Czech Republic and, to a lesser degree, in Slovakia.

Coming third in the Forum is Švedkauskas and Maati's 'Long-Term Precription? Digital Surveilance Is Here to Stay'. This paper claims that the pandemic has facilitated digital surveillance by shifting communication

to digital means, which served as an excuse for governments around the world to develop long-term surveillance solutions and enhanced the ability of governments to politically justify prolonged surveillance.

Subsequently, Hardoš and Maďarová's 'On the Forms of Vulnerability and Ungrievability in the Pandemic' ponders about what the discursive framing of vulnerability in the political discourse tells us about our political order. The paper puts forward that the discourse tends to steer away the attention from the structural causes of vulnerability, that the individualisation of responsibility blurs the accountability of state institutions, and that the frequent calls to return to normalcy indicate that our polities have most likely missed the chance to acknowledge the pandemic as an opportunity for transformation.

The Forum then proceeds with Kazharsky and Makarychev's 'Russia's Vaccine Diplomacy in Central Europe'. This contribution analyses Russia's efforts to promote its Sputnik V vaccine and the repercussions this had in Hungary and Slovakia, which authorised the use of the Russian vaccine. The paper argues that for Russia, Sputnik V promotion was significant both as a business project and as a political enterprise, as it was supposed to enhance Russia's international status and help it in overcoming its post-Crimea isolation from the West.

Finally, the Forum concludes with Resende's 'Pandemics as Crisis Performance', which proposes to conceptualise the crises that came with the pandemic as constructs and performances in which populists try to increase the antagonism between the people and the elites. This contribution, however, concludes that the COVID-19 crisis could not be owned by the populists, and that it ended up imposing its own reality.

The editorial team wishes you a pleasant reading experience.

Rethinking the Infodemic: Global Health Security and Information Disorder

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ABSTRACT

The discourse on the *infodemic* constructs the combination of the pandemic and disinformation as a new source of insecurity on a global scale. How can we make sense – analytically and politically – of this newly politicized nexus of public health, information management, and global security? This article proposes approaching the phenomenon of the *infodemic* as an intersecting securitization of information disorder and health governance. Specifically, it argues that there are two distinct frames of security mobilized in the context of infodemic governance: *information as a disease and information as a weapon*. Drawing on literatures on global health and the emerging research on disinformation, the paper situates the two framings of the infodemic in broader discourses on the medicalization of security, and securitization of information disorder, respectively. The article critically reflects on each framing and offers some preliminary thoughts on how to approach the entanglements of health, security, and information disorder in contemporary global politics.

KEYWORDS	infodemic, disinformation, vaccine diplomacy, global health, security, COVID-19
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Already at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, on 15th February 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that *"we're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic. Fake news spreads faster and more easily than this virus, and is just as dangerous"* (WHO 2020A). In a similar spirit, the US President Joe Biden asserted that misinformation about the pandemic and the COVID-19 vaccines is *"killing people"* (BBC 2021). Albeit published in different contexts and at different stages of the pandemic, these statements share a common message: by denying the existence or seriousness of the virus, or promoting distrust in vaccines and other medical measures, misleading information makes the outbreak of the pandemic worse. This phenomenon has been described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an *infodemic*, understood as an *"overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – that occurs during an epidemic. It can lead to confusion and ultimately mistrust in governments and public health response"* (WHO 2020b). The WHO and other experts warn that the harmful impact of the infodemic is amplified by digital technologies and thus it poses a more serious problem than similar phenomena in the past.

The discourse on the infodemic constructs the combination of the pandemic and disinformation as a new source of insecurity on a global scale. How can we make sense – politically and analytically – of this newly politicized nexus of public health, information management, and global security? In this article, I argue that the phenomenon of the infodemic can be understood as an intersecting securitization of health and information disorder. I highlight some recent theoretical developments in global health, a field of International Relations studying the entanglements of global politics and public health, and outline how research on global health might approach the theme of disinformation. I draw on literature on global health security (ELBE 2010; HARMAN 2012; KICKBUSCH 2005; MCINNES – LEE 2012) and link it with the emerging research on political, social, and military dimensions of disinformation (DANIEL – EBERLE 2018, 2021; FRIDMAN 2018; GALEOTTI 2019; LANOSZKA 2016; MONSEES 2021). Specifically, I use the concept of *information disorder*, as introduced by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017). The concept of information disorder goes beyond the notions of 'fake news' or disinformation, which have been appropriated by political elites around the world and which provide only a narrow perspective on an otherwise rather complex phenomenon (WARDLE – DERAKHSHAN 2017: 5). The concept of information disorder

highlights the roles of different actors involved in the production, circulation, and consumption of messages and distinguishes several types of messages (mis-, dis-, and malinformation).[1] As such, the term acknowledges the multiplicity of intentions, harm, and dynamics of information circulation.

This paper shows that the discourse on the infodemic mobilizes two distinct – yet not mutually exclusive – security narratives constructing the link between health and information disorder. In the first narrative, information is framed as a disease, and its governance is informed by the logic of medicalization of security. In the second narrative, information is framed as a weapon, used strategically in international politics as a part of (geo)political rivalry, and approached via the lenses of militarization. I briefly describe the key tenets of each framing of the information disorder and critically reflect on them. By doing so, the article seeks to provide some preliminary reflections on how to think about the intersecting securitization of health and information governance, and outline how to understand the increasing interconnectedness of health, disinformation, and global security through broader literatures.

POWER, KNOWLEDGE, AND THE VIRUS: TWO TALES OF (IN)SECURITY

As we have been reminded via numerous examples, from negotiating the regimes for covid-safe international travel (E.G. CRESSWELL 2021; SEYFI – HALL – SHABANI 2020) to vaccine production and distribution (DAVIES – WENHAM 2020; E.G. FIDLER 2020; KOBIERECKA – KOBIERECKI 2021), the pandemic is a social phenomenon shaping and shaped by multiple political factors. The efforts to contain the virus have intersected with numerous global political and security issues, from the functioning of global health institutions to intellectual property rights, international mobility, border control, data protection, or human rights. However, the conceptual vocabulary for exploring the links between health, global security, and newly also disinformation is still rather limited.

The meaning-making of the COVID-19 pandemic is still an open-ended process, but what resonates strongly in many discussions on the pandemic is the role of information governance as affecting the governance of the disease. To tackle the pandemic, individual citizens are asked to do their part of the job and follow specific hygiene and medical practices – wear

masks, socially distance, wash their hands, and get vaccinated. This approach, however, exposes some vulnerability of the liberal democratic politics: on the one hand, citizens are entitled to make informed choices about their health individually (such as whether to get vaccinated against covid), but on the other hand, to fully protect the population and stop the virus from further mutating, these rules and practices would ideally be followed by everyone. To persuade the citizens to follow these rules, their trust in the public authorities issuing these rules is needed (CF. E.G. HELSINGEN ET AL. 2020; SIEGRIST ET AL. 2021). Instead of focusing on building trust, however, much of the public as well as expert debate about compliance and non-compliance with the individual measures is focused on the issue of news consumption and the "quality" of information about the pandemic that citizens receive.

When we look at the discourse on the infodemic, we can find two main framings of the health-information nexus, or the infodemic: on the one hand, *information as a disease*, and on the other hand, *information as a weapon*. While the first framing focuses on consequences of information disorder and how to deal with it, the second one highlights the role of agents (allegedly) creating and controlling the information disorder and links it with the struggle for power in the international arena. This section looks at these narratives to reflect on the logic and strategies that they promote.

INFORMATION AS A DISEASE

According to the WHO, *"[a]n infodemic is too much information including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak. It causes confusion and risk-taking behaviours that can harm health. It also leads to mistrust in health authorities and undermines the public health response"* (WHO 2021). In effect, an infodemic can prolong an outbreak. The WHO further points out that an infodemic is interconnected with the rise of social media and the internet. As a remedy, it promotes *infodemic management* based on *"risk- and evidence-based analysis"* and providing *"credible health information, and building resilience to misinformation for people worldwide"* (WHO 2021).

It is in this context that scientists reinvigorate the research of infodemiology (E.G. CUAN-BALTAZAR ET AL. 2020), initially established to improve public health through measuring and tracking health information on the

internet and in the population (EYSENBACH 2009), and seek to measure the impact of misinformation on the dynamic of the pandemic, as exemplified, for instance, by the intent to get vaccinated (LOOMBA ET AL. 2021). The WHO directly supports infodemiology, suggesting that it shall aim to *"build and deliver sustainable tools that health authorities and communities can use to prevent and overcome the harmful impacts caused by infodemics"* (WHO 2021).

In its call for action to manage the infodemic, the WHO and many other experts call for "information hygiene" and seek to develop good practices for this type of personal behaviour: *"Although infodemics are not a new phenomenon, the volume and rapid scale-up of facts, but also misinformation and disinformation, surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak are unprecedented. Owing to the opportunities and challenges brought by new technologies and social media platforms, the infodemic that accompanies the first pandemic of the digital age is more visible and challenging than ever before. Practicing information hygiene, just as we are practicing hand and cough hygiene, is thus becoming vital to prevent the spread of the virus"* (WHO 2020C).

The problem of the infodemic is constructed as a technologically mediated problem directly affecting health practices of people during a health emergency. Therefore, individual resilience against "bad news" is supported – typically via the promotion of good practices on information hygiene – and seen as a way to build societal resilience against disinformation and consequently also the pandemic. This logic is promoted, for instance, by the European Union External Action Service, which writes about building "immunity" to covid disinformation: *"Just like vaccines can provide immunity to viruses, including COVID-19, we can build immunity to disinformation. And we can do it ourselves. Hygiene, such as frequent hand-washing, helps to protect us from COVID-19. In the same manner, information hygiene can slow down the spread of harmful misleading information, especially on the social media"* (EEAS 2021).

Among the initiatives to counter covid misinformation was, for instance, a global campaign launched by the UK Government in partnership with the WHO and the BBC called "Stop The Spread", which aimed to raise the public's awareness of covid misinformation and encouraged people to double-check the information that they hear – and intend to spread – about the pandemic from trusted sources. Similar initiatives typically focus on,

first, increasing trust in scientific evidence and sharing positive messages about vaccines, and, second, fact-checking and fighting myths about covid and vaccines. The latter becomes a particularly vibrant sphere with many actors getting involved in promoting good practices of information hygiene, media literacy, and fact-checking, including governments and state institutions (e.g. the "Stop The Spread" campaign, the online game called Go Viral!, which is supported by the UK government, the fact-checking website of the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.), civil society (such as the News Literacy Project), as well as international organizations (e.g. the EU-funded project EUvsDisinfo).

The politicization of the infodemic can be seen as a recognition of how social and political factors play a role in governing health. Scholars of global health have already pointed out how global health governance gets increasingly securitized, as certain health issues are framed as security threats and approached via exceptional, or otherwise non-traditional policy means (ELBE 2006; FIDLER 2003; HOWELL 2014; KELLE 2007; MCINNES – LEE 2012; SJOSTEDT 2008). At the same time, they observe another development at the boundary of security and health politics: the use of medical language and practices to address security issues. This *medicalization of insecurity*, as Elbe shows (ELBE 2010, 2012), leads to more and more pressure to develop medical interventions at the level of the individual as well as the society and ultimately contributes to reconceptualizing the logic of security (ELBE – VOELKNER 2014: 78–79). As such, the medicalization of insecurity relates to a changing understanding of security and insecurity in world politics and changing views on who is entitled to practice security and through what instruments (ELBE 2012).

The tale of information disorder as a disease is firmly based on the logic of medicalization of insecurity. By using medical metaphors to describe the nature of the problem and the solutions to it, it provides a seemingly depoliticized view on the interconnectedness of health, technology, and social behaviour. However, this view overlooks actors as well as systemic factors behind the production and circulation of conspiracy theories, misleading news, and mixed messages. Instead of searching for who is responsible for the information disorder, or focusing on the underlying social, political as well as technological conditions that make it possible and desirable, the tale of information as a disease focuses on prevention

and the cure. This framing of the infodemic provides a very narrow, techno-individualistic narrative which puts emphasis on media literacy and effectively responsibilizes the individual for developing resilience amid the infodemic rather than looking for social conditions that enable the covid-related information disorder.

INFORMATION AS A WEAPON

Apart from the medical framing of the infodemic, which presents the rise of information disorder as yet another virus complicating the containment of the pandemic, we can find another framing of the health-information nexus – a security framing constructing the information disorder as a tool of (geo)political rivalry. This framing focuses on disinformation and foreign influence operations and presents the COVID-19 information disorder as a part of the struggle for power and authority in the international arena. The covid-related information disorder is then seen as a product of influence campaigns and "weaponized" information. Some experts even suggest understanding this nexus as a cyber-biowarfare and argue that: "*…in light of the rise of state-sponsored online disinformation campaigns we are approaching a fifth phase of biowarfare with a 'cyber-bio' framing. […] Biowarfare in the fifth era aims to undermine sociopolitical systems through social, political, and economic means by 'weaponizing' or 'virtually escalating' natural outbreaks, rather than directly inducing mortality and morbidity in populations through the deployment of harmful biological agents*" (BERNARD ET AL. 2021: 3).

Neither misinformation related to disease outbreaks nor information campaigns about biological weapons are new. For instance, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union accused the United States of creating HIV/AIDS (GRIMES 2017), and similarly China and North Korea argue that the United States engaged in germ warfare during the war in Korea (LEITENBERG 2016). What is new in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, is the popularity of these narratives and the fact that they have been openly shared by some political elites, experts, and mainstream media, and not only by fringe players of the information space.

Some of the narratives focus on accusing other states of mishandling the pandemic; others go as far as to argue that COVID-19 is a man-made biological weapon and the information disorder related to it is

a part of co-ordinated state-sponsored information campaigns, which are sometimes even referred to as a new type of biological war (DFRLAB 2021). Interestingly, this framing can be found not only in policy circles whose communication is typically aimed at a domestic audience, but in certain versions also among academics and think-tank experts (E.G. BERNARD ET AL. 2021; NIE 2020). The best-known example is the repeated labelling of COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" and the "Wuhan virus" by the US President Donald Trump (LINDAMAN – VIALA-GAUDEFROY 2020), which put the blame for the pandemic on China and went against the guidelines of the WHO for naming of diseases (WHO 2015). This further intensified when Trump pursued the lab leak theory, suggesting that SARS-CoV–2 was originally engineered as a bioweapon by researchers in the Wuhan laboratory (SINGH ET AL. 2020).

Both the United States and the European Union further accused Russia of aggravating the pandemic situation in the West by spreading disinformation (GLENZA 2020; RANKIN 2020). The Strategic Communications and Information Analysis Division (StratCom) of the European External Action Service has been particularly active in monitoring the information disorder and repeatedly warned against "pro-Kremlin" COVID-19 disinformation (EEAS 2021). In a report on COVID-19 disinformation, it explains the relevance of these narratives: *"In the EU and elsewhere, coordinated disinformation messaging seeks to frame vulnerable minorities as the cause of the pandemic and to fuel distrust in the ability of democratic institutions to deliver effective responses. Some state and state-backed actors seek to exploit the public health crisis to advance geopolitical interests, often by directly challenging the credibility of the European Union and its partners"* (EEAS 2020).

What receives particular attention in this regard is theories that *"deny the actual epidemiological complexities of the pandemic while offering simple geopolitical imaginations of sinister powers who conspire against the world's population"* (STURM ET AL. 2021: 7). These stories offer a simple explanation of global affairs, assuming the existence of international power structures that initiate conspiracies of a global scale. Such narratives can be understood as constructing alternative geopolitical imaginaries, or fantasies of geopolitics (CF. LAKETA 2019), and thus offering alternative visions of the socio-political order – which is exactly what makes them seem threatening.

This framing and this approach, however, are not new and need to be contextualized in the prior securitization of information disorder, which has been promoted by some actors for already a few years now as a part of the fight against "hybrid threats". As argued elsewhere (MONSEES 2021; RYCHNOVSKÁ – KOHÚT 2018), in an attempt to explain the polarization of society and the rise of populism in Europe and the United States, information disorder has been securitized and framed in military terms, shifting the attention to state-sponsored propaganda and information operations and presenting them as a part of a new type of 'hybrid warfare' (DANIEL – EBERLE 2021; MÄLKSOO 2018). StratCom is a typical example of a platform where the practices of fighting disinformation have been institutionalized for several years now as a part of the EU's response to hybrid threats.

There are multiple security narratives framing COVID-19 as a weapon, ranging from pure conspiracy theories interpreting COVID-19 as an intentionally released bioweapon, to those that focus on countries that want to use the pandemic for their own gain and use misinformation for that purpose. What unites them is the focus on state actors as the exclusive – or at least dominant – producers and disseminators of the COVID-19 disinformation, and the interpretation of these narratives as a part of foreign influence operations. I propose to look at these narratives as militaristic, since they provide a state-centric perspective on the problem of the infodemic, and they explicitly or implicitly treat (dis)information as a weapon in the hands of states. I sought to show that this framing is not new but is embedded in the existing securitization of information disorder (most visible in the EU), which has shaped the discourse and practices on the covid-related infodemic.

GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY AND INFORMATION DISORDER

This paper identified two frames of security present in the discourse on the infodemic: information as a disease, and information as a weapon. The tale of information as a disease promotes fighting "bad information" with "good information". Anchored in the logic of medicalization of insecurity, it downplays the issue of agency, yet also focuses only on a very limited scope of systemic factors that contribute to the infodemic – typically the technological context of social media and digital technologies, which enable the fast spread of news and its global outreach. The tale of

information as a weapon approaches information disorder as a tool and a result of political rivalry. It is situated in military logic and focuses only on a very selective agency informed by a traditional geopolitical view of international affairs as shaped by great powers. In effect, each framing empowers different kinds of actors and forms of expertise and legitimizes different policy solutions.

These two frames are not mutually exclusive, and there are certainly other narratives on COVID-19 (dis)information than the ones discussed here. What these two demonstrate well, however, is distinct modalities of securitizing the health-information nexus, or securitizing information disorder in the context of global health. To recognize the multiplicity of intentions, types of harm, and dynamics of information circulation is indeed a key step in unpacking the phenomenon of the infodemic and addressing it as a complex, multi-layered 'wicked problem' (CF. RITTEL – WEBBER 1973). This means to accept that the problem contains several dimensions which might need to be addressed separately *"with different types of urgency, expertise, and in a different mode of knowledge production"* (EVANS ET AL. 2021: 198).

The management of information disorder becomes a new space of global governance, and the pandemic only hastened these efforts.[2] Therefore, it is only advisable that scholars of global politics pay more attention to the intersection of global health and information governance, and the broader socio-political and technological developments that underpin this nexus. Among the key tasks for researchers is to explore what makes the conspiracy thinking on global health so popular and socially acceptable. Opening to literatures on disinformation, the politics of post-truth, and conspiracy theories from political science, geography, sociology, policy studies and other related disciplines could be a good step to enrich the conceptual vocabulary and theoretical frameworks through which we make sense of the intersection of global security, health, and information management.

ENDNOTES

1 Wardle and Derakshan suggest that *"[m]is-information is when false information is shared, but no harm is meant. Dis-information is when false information is knowingly shared to cause harm. Mal-information is when genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere"* (2017: 5).

2 Prior attempts to govern information disorder include, for instance, programmes to fight online radicalization (Baker-Beall et al. 2014; Hoskins et al. 2011).

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Democratic Erosion and Democratic Resilience in Central Europe during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

What are the effects of populists in power on democracy during a pandemic? The paper seeks to distinguish the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic can (not) be traced to democratic erosion and democratic resilience. Are the changes in the quality of democracy resulting from political leaders' actions or rather a path-dependent continuation of previous trends? This contribution focuses on two paths – democratic erosion and democratic resilience – in the Visegrad Four countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia), which are all governed by populist leaders. It builds on previous literature that focused principally on the first wave of the pandemic by focusing on institutional guardrails and accountability (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal) during the 18 months of the pandemic. It seeks to answer the following question: What conditions are necessary and sufficient to prevent democratic erosion?

KEYWORDS	pandemic, democratic erosion, democratic resilience, CEE, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
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During the COVID-19 pandemic, faced with unprecedented challenges to public health and economy, established and new democracies alike struggled to maintain the quality of their democracy (EDGELL ET AL. 2021). The violations of democratic principles included chippisng off fundamental liberties and press freedom, and, most crucially, erosion of diagonal accountability (GUASTI 2020; MERKEL 2020). Established democracies prevented most of their democratic backsliding, while democracies in transition were less successful in preventing democratic erosion (EDGELL ET AL. 2021; ENGLER ET AL. 2021). The pandemic tests the institutional safeguards and accountability (AFSAHI ET AL. 2020; GUASTI 2020A). It shifts the loci of power towards governments, weakening the parliaments and stress-testing the judiciary independence (MERKEL 2020).

The conditions for democratic resilience are vertical accountability (where elections took place during the pandemic), horizontal and diagonal accountability (GUASTI 2020A; GUASTI – BUSTIKOVA 2021). In vertical accountability governments have to ensure free and fair electoral competition. In horizontal accountability mechanisms, parliaments must act as checks on executive power, as do the courts at all levels by scrutinizing regulatory and legal changes adopted 'in the name of public health.' Diagonal accountability mechanisms include media and civil society. Media demand and provide the transparency of and information on government actions and the pandemic. Meanwhile civil society can mobilize against pandemic-related violations of democratic standards and in support of the rule of law.

This paper is structured as follows. First, the literature on pandemic-related democratic erosion is discussed. Second, the analysis focuses on democratic backsliding during the pandemic in the V4 countries. The focus is on the dynamics leading to democratic erosion and democratic resilience. Third, I conclude by summarizing the main findings and the limits of the analysis, and outline some questions for future research.

PANDEMIC EROSION OF DEMOCRACY: DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND PANDEMIC SWERVING

There is an ongoing discussion in political science about whether the current trend of democratic erosion represents the so-called "illiberal turn" (BAKKE – SITTER 2020; CIANETTI – HANLEY 2021). Bustikova and Guasti (2017) criticized the notion of a turn in this case, replacing it with the concept

of swerving. *Pandemic swerves* are an extension of the original concept. Focusing on swerving during the pandemic allows us to capture the dynamics – the attempts at a concentration of power, and the pushbacks against the parliament and the courts (horizontal accountability), and the media and civil society (diagonal accountability). Democracy erodes when executive aggrandizement remains uncontested, media freedom is undermined, and a mobilization for democracy by civil society is absent or polarized (CF. GUASTI – BUSTIKOVA 2021).

Accountability has three components – horizontal, vertical, and diagonal – that all centre on constraining the use of power (LINDBERG 2013). Vertical accountability is the relationship between voters and elected officials via elections and it is eroded by the imposition of limits on electoral competition. Horizontal accountability is the balance of power and it can be distorted by shifting power to one branch. The most frequent distortion of horizontal accountability is an executive aggrandizement that undermines legislative oversight and judicial independence (BERMEO 2016; GUASTI 2020B). Finally, diagonal accountability focuses on the time between elections, during which media and civil society hold the government accountable (BERNHARD ET AL. 2020), and it can be distorted by curtailing media freedom and placing limits on civil society (GUASTI 2020A).

A pandemic can lead to erosion of all forms of accountability (ENGLER ET AL. 2021). Vertical accountability might be eroded by incumbents skewing the electoral playing field – by disadvantaging challengers by imposing limits on campaigning (CF. PIRRO – STANLEY 2021 AND GUASTI 2020 ON THE POLISH 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS). In horizontal accountability, the pandemic is a perfect opportunity for executive aggrandizement. It puts parliaments and courts attempting to preserve institutional safeguards in a position to defend slowing down the government's efforts (MERKEL 2020; CORMACAIN – BAR-SIMAN-TOV 2020; PETROV 2020). Diagonal accountability is tested by governments lacking candor towards the media regarding the statistics on the impact of the pandemic and by limiting core civil liberties and freedoms such as those of protest and association (EDGELL ET AL. 2020; HABERSAAT ET AL. 2020; GUASTI 2020A).

Emergency powers during the pandemic enable leaders to bypass or weaken checks and balances (eroding horizontal accountability). In countries where backsliding was underway before the pandemic, and thus the

institutional safeguards were already weakened, accountability tended to erode more, and placing limits on media freedom was the most common pandemic violation (LÜHRMANN ET AL. 2020; EDGELL ET AL. 2021).

This paper centres on democratic swerving during the pandemic by focusing on distortions of accountability during the pandemic. The next part analyses the dynamics of democratic swerving in the Visegrad Four countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) during the first 18 months of the pandemic. It further expands on Guasti (2020A), a text which focused on the same countries during the first six months of the pandemic.

PANDEMIC SWERVING IN THE V4

Democratuc Erosion in Hungary

The pandemic is a perfect opportunity for a power grab. Viktor Orban was ready and succeeded in the ultimate form of executive aggrandizement – a rule by decree. In March 2020, the Hungarian National Assembly enabled the PM to rule by decree while instituting significant penalties for *"obstructing the crisis efforts by disseminating misleading information,"* and jail penalties for breaking the quarantine rules (VEGH 2020). In June 2020, the rule by decree law was replaced by a 'medical state of emergency' that the government might declare by decree without parliamentary approval (VEGH 2021). Thus, the Hungarian parliament turned itself from a co-equal branch of power tasked with government oversight to a rubber-stamper.

The two-thirds majority of FIDESZ enabled sidelining of the opposition. The courts had already been fully captured, so there was no possibility for legal recourse (BUZOGANY 2017; BRUSZT 2020). The lack of constraints enabled Orban to continue his crackdown on the final vestiges of power beyond his control: the media, small independent churches, civil society, LGBTQ+, universities, and opposition-led municipalities (VEGH 2021). The crackdown on the media took place under the guise of fighting the 'spreading pandemic misinformation.' (KELLER-ALANT 2020; RFE/RL 2021) Civil society organizations with foreign funding have to report their activities, and small churches are marginalized. In moves such as the creation of free parking or new industrial zones, the PM is shifting resources away from opposition-led municipalities towards his allies.[1] The crackdown

against LGBTQ+ continued by the introduction of the concept of "gender at birth" – a de facto ban on transgender citizens changing their legal gender (KNIGHT – GALL 2020). But the most significant and lasting move was the transfer of 11 state universities and significant stocks in state companies to a foundation led by Orban's allies in 2021 (EURONEWS 2021).

Viktor Orban seized the pandemic moment. As a result, both horizontal and diagonal accountability eroded significantly. The parliament is now a rubber stamper. The courts are captured (horizontal accountability), and free media are marginalized, while media controlled by Orban's allies are rewarded by state advertisement (CF. BATORFY – URBAN 2020), and civil society has been marginalized. Central European University was pushed out of the country, and domestic universities that are sources of opposition were transferred to a foundation whose mission is to generate right-wing elites. The only hope for democracy in Hungary is the ongoing unification of the opposition led by Gergely Karácsony. Nevertheless, the extent to which the 2022 general elections will be free and fair remains to be seen.

Illiberal Swerving in Poland

In Poland, strengthening the executive during the pandemic presented itself as an opportunity to resolve the issue of the divided parliament that had prevented the Law and Justice party from delivering legislation that was long-sought by its conservative allies. However, the outcome was mixed – the government did not succeed in executive aggrandizement, but it delivered on limiting reproductive rights.

In March 2020, the Polish parliament adopted a new law strengthening the executive's power in handling the crisis (WOJCIK – WIATROWSKI 2021). Critical voices saw this as an attempt at executive aggrandizement – shifting power from the divided parliament. Judicial independence in Poland is severely undermined – the Constitutional Tribunal is largely captured, and disciplinary proceedings were launched against judges of lower courts that continued implementing EU law (CF. SADURSKI 2019). The Constitutional Tribunal became a key player in delivering on a demand by the Catholic Church and conservative groups – namely the demand for limits to legal access to abortion (LETOWSKA 2020). During May 2020, the Polish Sejm discussed the bill, but similarly to 2016, large-scale protests

ensued (CF. KOROLOCZUK 2016). The legislative path was abandoned, and in October 2020, the Constitutional Tribunal instituted a near-total abortion ban (LETOWSKA 2020). Again, protests ensued, but the ban remains in place.

The 2020 Polish presidential elections had hallmarks of eroding vertical accountability. After the opposition rejected Law and Justice's proposal to lengthen the president's term by two years, Law and Justice decided to switch to a postal vote, ignoring the constitutional restriction on changing electoral rules less than six months before elections. In preparation for the aborted postal vote, the Polish Post started to gather the private data of 30 million Polish citizens, violating the GDPR and other existing laws (ODIHR 2020). Originally planned for May 2020, the elections, with in-person voting, took place in June and July 2020. The incumbent, Andrej Duda, was reelected by a thin margin of 51%. Infringements in this case included the failure of the public broadcaster to provide balanced and impartial coverage of the candidates (ODIHR 2020).

The government tried and failed in limiting protests and association rights. Polish activists found new innovative ways to protest, such as drive-by protests or jamming major crossroads. The government nonetheless partially succeeded in its crackdown on the media. In the fall of 2020, the state company ORLEN purchased a network of 20 regional newspapers and a distribution network (DW 2020). The attempt at forcing the highest-rated private TV network TVN24 to sell to a Polish owner in September 2021 failed due to domestic and international pressure (ONOSZKO – MARTEWICZ 2021).

In sum, during the pandemic, the Polish democracy was swerving towards illiberalism. Some institutional constraints remain in place (those on the parliament, private media, and civil society), while the government has utilized others to aggrandize its power and deliver on core conservative policies sought by its allies. The vertical accountability declined, and the horizontal accountability remained the same (as the courts were already captured in the pre-pandemic times). The vertical accountability continues to withstand the ongoing attempts at skewing the playing field, but the polarization is strengthening.

Guardrails Hold in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, Andrej Babis promised to run the state as a firm (BUSTIKOVA – GUASTI 2019) but continued to struggle with his company Agrofert's conflict of interest and his prosecution for his alleged misuse of EU funds. The PM attempted at various points to concentrate his power, but the guardrails held.

The parliamentary oversight and investigative journalism were crucial – the opposition performed oversight by forcing the government to seek renewals of the pandemic-related state of emergency (GUASTI 2020A). In early 2021, the parliament refused to prolong the state of emergency due to the mishandling of the pandemic (IROZHLAS 2021A; CF. BUTKOVIĆ 2021 FOR A SIMILAR DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRIA). The government attempted but failed to instrumentalize the pandemic to push through legislation favourable to the PM in his conflict of interest proceedings. The Senate was key in pushing against the pandemic-related violations of civil rights and liberties (SENÁT ČR, 2020).

Investigative journalists stepped in when the government failed to provide information on the case rate, hospital bed occupancy, the case fatality rate, and public procurement, forcing the government towards more transparency (HLÍDAČ STÁTU 2021).

The municipal, administrative, and Constitutional courts were crucial in scrutinizing the legal compliance of the pandemic regulations and measures (GUASTI 2020A). From repeated rulings, it became evident that the Ministry of Health was counting on the courts to let infringements of previous laws slide in the name of public health (IROZHLAS 2021B). Alas, the municipal and administrative courts called the Ministry of Health out on this tactic. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court ruled that the government retains a political responsibility for the public health and the health of democracy and cannot hide behind experts and numbers (JUDGEMENT 123/2021 COLL.; IROZHLAS 2021C). Also, the Supreme Audit Office was crucial in scrutinizing the pandemic procurement, finding major infringements, and awarding record fines (SOA 2021).

As for vertical accountability, the 2020 regional and Senate elections saw an increase in turnout (VOLBY.CZ 2020). Upon initially planning to exclude

COVID-19 positive and quarantining citizens from the vote, the government adopted a new law that enabled drive-thru voting in all regions for citizens in quarantine and at-home visits by a special commission for the COVID-19 positive (MV ČR 2020). Civil society continued its mobilization for liberal democracy – holding the PM accountable for his conflict of interest (BERNHARD ET AL. 2019). The mobilization before the 2021 general elections led to an almost 5% increase in turnout and the victory of the democratic opposition (VOLBY.CZ 2021).

In sum, the Czech Republic saw some pandemic swerving, but its institutional guardrails prevented executive aggrandizement. When the opposition was unified, it held the government accountable (horizontal accountability) and prevented erosion of vertical accountability (exclusion of COVID-19 positive and quarantining citizens from the vote). The courts were key in preventing democratic erosion (horizontal accountability), as were the media and civil society (diagonal accountability).

Swerving, but Not Turning in Slovakia

During the onset of the pandemic, Slovakia simultaneously managed to carry out an effective pandemic response and coalition building after the 2020 general elections. The swift response by the outgoing PM Pellegrini led to a major success during the first wave (GUASTI 2020A). Once the new PM Matovič took office (April 2020), he immediately started to test the institutional guardrails (BUSTIKOVA – BABOS 2020). The second and third waves' strength increased the pressure on the Slovak healthcare system and the political pressure on the PM (UCEN 2021). When the large-scale COVID-19 testing events in November 2020 and January 2021 failed and further increased public frustration, PM Matovič saw the last resort in negotiating the importation of Sputnik V from Russia without informing his coalition partners or the government (GUASTI – BILEK 2021). As a result, the coalition partners called on Matovič to resign. Matovič resigned and was replaced by Eduard Heger (who, like Matovič, was also from the political party OLANO).

The Slovak parliament remains polarized, undermining its ability to hold the government accountable (horizontal accountability). The coalition partners held Matovič accountable and managed to prevent an attempt to curtail access to abortion (fall 2020). The political polarization

also translates into polarization within the civil society and undermines the vaccination efforts (GUASTI – BILEK 2021).

In addition to the pandemic, Slovakia continues to undergo the reckoning about the rule of law – prosecuting large-scale corruption networks that linked the police, prosecutors, and the mafia, and which led to the murder of the investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancé in February 2018 (UCEN 2021). Furthermore, the media are essential in holding the government and other state institutions accountable for managing the pandemic (spring 2020), corruption in the pandemic-related public procurement (summer 2020), gaps in the vaccine rollout (2021), and ensuring that anti-corruption measures do not become a tool against the opposition (throughout the pandemic) (ibid.).

In sum, Slovakia experienced and withstood a major stress test of its guardrails, its horizontal accountability is working, and the media are a key element of the diagonal accountability. However, the pandemics and the major political reckoning about the rule of law in the country contribute to increasing the polarization in the country.[2]

CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyses the dynamics of pandemic swerving, focusing on accountability in the V4 countries over the 18 months of the pandemic. The paper's starting point is that the pandemic tests the institutional guardrails and democratic quality in all countries by enhancing executive dominance (MERKEL 2020). Under what conditions does executive dominance turn into executive aggrandizement? The answer offered here is that when horizontal and diagonal accountability fail to effectively push back against attempts at executive aggrandizement by illiberal elites, democracy erodes.

The analysis presented here shows that democracy eroded in Hungary and, to a lesser degree, in Poland but remained resilient in the Czech Republic and, to a lesser degree, in Slovakia.

In Hungary, the parliament with a two-third FIDESZ majority was a willing conduit in the executive aggrandizement led by Viktor Orban, and the captured courts failed to act. The capture of the media and civil society is almost

complete (CF. VEGH 2021). Hungary in 2021 is on the cusp of authoritarian rule, and it remains to be seen whether the 2022 elections can reverse this trend.

The Polish attempt at executive aggrandizement was significantly less successful than that in Hungary (CF. WOJCIK – WIATROWSKI 2021). Only the Law and Justice party's capture of the Constitutional Tribunal allowed it to deliver on its conservative agenda (CF. SADURSKI 2019). The 2020 presidential elections were an example of how illiberal politicians succeed by skewing the playing field to maintain their power (ODIHR 2020). The Law and Justice party's attempts to curtail civil society were not successful. Their attempt to capture the media was only partially successful as TVN24 remains a key source of balanced information (ONOSZKO – MARTEWICZ 2021FT.).

In the Czech Republic, democracy proved resilient (CF. GUASTI 2020A, 2020B). The opposition was able to hold the government accountable (CF. BUSTIKOVA 2021). Media and civil society were crucial in maintaining diagonal accountability. In October 2021, the voters exercised vertical accountability, and PM Babis lost the election to the democratic opposition thanks to the 5% increase in turnout (cf. ft. 10).

In Slovakia, PM Matovič tested the guardrails, and his attempt to circumvent the existing rules and coalition partners cost him the PM office (CF. GUASTI – BILEK 2021). However, in this case, horizontal and diagonal accountability are undermined by a polarization stemming from the ongoing rule of law reckoning (CF. UCEN 2021). The coalition managed to contain Matovič and prevent a rollback on reproductive rights, but the political polarization is spilling into civil society, politicizing the pandemic response and undermining the vaccination efforts.

While this analysis shows the various dynamics of democratic erosion and democratic resilience during the pandemic, it does not seek to establish a causal link between the pandemic and democratic erosion or democratic resilience. The cases of Slovakia and Poland show that the pandemic alone is not the source of polarization; it is rather that what happens during the pandemic can increase polarization. Further research should broaden the scope of the analysis and untangle the causal mechanisms, distinguishing between democratic erosion during the pandemic and democratic erosion due to the pandemic.

ENDNOTES

1 For example, parking fees were a major municipal revenue in Budapest when it was led by the leader of the unifying opposition Gergely Karácsony, but the PM abolished them throughout the whole country, stating that citizens need free parking in a pandemic (cf. Vegh 2021).

2 On polarization undermining the pandemic response see also Machitidze and Temirov's (2020) comparison of two hybrid regimes, Ukraine and Georgia.

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Long-term Prescription? Digital Surveillance is Here to Stay

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ABSTRACT

An emerging literature has shown concerns about the impact of the pandemic on the proliferation of digital surveillance. Contributing to these debates, in this paper we demonstrate how the pandemic facilitates digital surveillance in three ways: (1) By shifting everyday communication to digital means it contributes to the generation of extensive amounts of data susceptible to surveillance. (2) It motivates the development of new digital surveillance tools. (3) The pandemic serves as a perfect justification for governments to prolong digital surveillance. We provide empirical anecdotes for these three effects by examining reports by the Global Digital Policy Incubator at Stanford University. Building on our argument, we conclude that we might be on the verge of a dangerous normalization of digital surveillance. Thus, we call on scholars to consider the full effects of public health crises on politics and suggest scrutinizing sources of digital data and the complex relationships between the state, corporate actors, and the sub-contractors behind digital surveillance.

KEYWORDS	digital surveillance, COVID-19, pandemic, privacy, human rights, surveillance capitalism
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Times of crises open opportunity structures that can change the nature of politics and society as we know them. The "war on terror" doctrine that started after the the 9/11 attacks illustrates that in such cases, structural changes remain even after the original emergencies are over. The COVID-19 pandemic likewise invites us to rethink the political ramifications of global crises (LIPSCY 2020). In this essay, we focus on how the pandemic brought transformations related to the field of digital surveillance in particular. We argue that it has facilitated digital surveillance in three ways.

The first impact that the pandemic has on digital surveillance is social. The unprecedented restrictions on movement and interaction have increased the reliance of a sizeable portion of the world's population on digital means of communication. The trend towards digitization has captured the attention of many scholars in recent years (KOSINSKI – STILLWELL – GRAEPEL 2013; KUNER – CATE N.D.; ZWITTER – HADFIELD 2014). However, during the pandemic, personal, educational, and business communications have moved to the online world to limit the spread of the virus to previously unseen extents. At the same time, the ongoing great migration to the digital world generates a generous data pool awaiting the manipulation of surveillance technologies. In this context, we believe that the impact of the pandemic on the exponential migration from the analog to the digital has been generally understudied.[1]

The pandemic has also highlighted the agency of national governments around the world in facilitating the proliferation of new and innovative surveillance tools. Even before COVID-19, the literature has been increasingly concerned with the fast-paced growth of digital surveillance techniques and capacities (DIAMOND 2019; FARRIES 2019, 2019; FRIEDEWALD ET AL. 2017; LEWIS 2014; MICHAELSEN 2020; PRIVACY INTERNATIONAL 2014; QIANG 2019; XU 2021). The pandemic has fast-forwarded the movement on this track. Many countries in the world developed digital tools to trace the contacts of infected individuals as well as to enforce quarantine measures (AMIT ET AL. 2020; CALVO – DETERDING – RYAN 2020; ECK – HATZ 2020; GOLINELLI ET AL. 2020; STEHLÍKOVÁ 2020; WHITELAW ET AL. 2020). In parallel, many observers continuously raise concerns regarding the breach of individual and collective privacy (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2020; GIGA 2021; GREITENS 2020; RANISCH ET AL. 2020; SEKALALA ET AL. 2020).

Finally, the ability of governments to justify the wide-ranging employment of digital surveillance has been broadened due to the global public health

emergency. The pandemic provided the perfect ingredient for both democratic and authoritarian governments to frame digital surveillance as necessary for dodging an imminent public health crisis. Governments have combined different liberal and illiberal rhetorical elements to create a hegemonic discourse that justifies the prolonged use of digital surveillance. In the following, we provide anecdotal empirical evidence for all three transformations.

In our empirical exercise, we have reviewed reports prepared by the Global Digital Policy Incubator at Stanford University and zoomed in on instances of digital surveillance between July 2020 and September 2021.[2] Looking at the second and third waves of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we believe that digital surveillance is being continuously normalized across different regime types. First, it is being done by governments promoting digital tools and data collection techniques as pandemic counter-measures. Second, the mass migration to online platforms has provided previously unseen amounts of digital data that are vulnerable to varying forms of state and "outsourced" surveillance. In the sections below, we use evidence from around the globe to illustrate how these tendencies come together to form a self-enforcing vicious circle or "the long-term surveillance prescription."

AVAILABILITY OF DATA

Social media, mobile applications, and specialized software have enabled millions to continue interacting, and connecting to workplaces and study rooms throughout the ensuing waves of the global pandemic. At the same time, the shift to the digital amassed previously unseen amounts of data exposed to state and "outsourced" surveillance. What is more, the very structure of remote work and study encourages us to accept pervasive digital supervision, socializing workers and students for the "long-term prescription."

The heightened vulnerability to surveillance is best illustrated by evidence from authoritarian and autocratizing regimes. For instance, in June 2020, Zoom, the biggest video-conferencing platform to emerge in the wake of the pandemic, admitted that it had complied with Chinese government requests to block users from meetings commemorating the June 4th Tiananmen Square incident. According to Zoom, it identified and suspended four such meetings without providing *"any non-China-based user information or any meeting content to the Chinese government [...] other*

than a limited amount of user data concerning China-based attendees" (ZOOM 2020). Despite admitting fault, by identifying, suspending, and terminating host accounts Zoom effectively served as a surveillance arm of the Beijing regime. Similar examples of autocratic governments using domestic regulations to subject online platforms have abounded in the past years.[3] In addition, democratic governments have also found ways to capitalize on the expanding pool of digital data available for surveillance.

The surveillance industry has also fed on the increasing migration to the digital world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearview facial recognition software, trained on a database of billions of images scraped from social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, has been at the forefront of this industry. Using Clearview AI, as of February 2020, 88 law enforcement and government-affiliated agencies in 24 countries, including the U.S., Canada, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Australia, and several EU countries, had matched photos of suspects with samples scraped online (MAC ET AL. 2021). Though marketed as a tool for fighting child abuse, Clearview has been deemed unlawful in a few countries due to its incongruency with privacy regulations. For instance, Canada's data privacy commissioner ruled in February 2021 that Clearview had violated federal and provincial privacy laws and called the company to stop collecting and delete any scraped images and biometrics of Canadian citizens (MAC ET AL. 2021). However, recent reports reveal that law enforcement agencies around the world continue using the tool both with and without leadership oversight. For example, reports from different states in the U.S. have indicated that Clearview had been employed to identify and arrest protestors captured on CCTV cameras during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests (KATE COX 2020).

Moreover, downloads of mobile applications have skyrocketed with the outbreak of COVID-19[4] and presented an additional entry point for "outsourced surveillance." As reported by Vice's Motherboard, the U.S. government has been harvesting location data from mobile applications used around the world, including the most popular Muslim-oriented apps (JOSEPH COX 2020). Exploiting a loophole in federal privacy regulations prohibiting the collection of location data without a warrant, X-mode, a third-party data broker, has been subcontracted to source data from original apps and forward it to government agencies (Express VPN). Some mobile applications

sending information to X-mode include Muslim Pro, which reminds users when to pray and indicates the direction of Mecca, the dating app Muslim Mingle, and some local social media apps widely used in Iran, Turkey, and Colombia. Targeting broader audiences, the X-mode network also includes weather, sports, dating, and home repair applications (JOSEPH COX 2020). In an interview, Joshua Anton, the founder and head of X-Mode, said the company tracks 25 million devices inside the United States every month, and 40 million more around the globe (CNN BUSINESS 2020). In December 2020, Apple and Google app stores announced that any application that would continue using tracking software would be removed. However, a 2021 research by ExpressVPN and the Defensive Lab Agency, found nearly 200 apps still sending information to X-Mode and 450 apps downloaded at least 1.7 billion times containing various location tracker software development kits (SDKs)[5] (EXPRESS VPN 2021; O'BRIEN 2021).

Finally, the pandemic has not only accelerated the usage of existing digital communication tools, but also facilitated the mass adoption of previously little-explored software solutions which pervasively monitor and amass pools of data on students and employees. Alongside the so-called "bossware" promoted by employers for "activity monitoring" of employees during remote work (CYPHERS – GULLO 2020), proctoring software is the most vivid illustration of how COVID-19 has facilitated the normalization of everyday surveillance. Programs like ProctorU, which oversee students taking online exams and doing homework, have long drawn criticism from human rights activists, who point to the discriminatory nature of these systems. Students of colour, students with learning disabilities, and low-income groups are more likely to be subjected to errors of proctoring algorithms (KELLEY 2020). With the increasing adoption of proctoring software in schools and universities during the pandemic, concerns about the security of vast amounts of student data have also arisen. Alongside leveraging of student data for commercial purposes, breaches of proctoring databases and subsequent data dumps are among the most likely risks. In 2020, over 440,000 user records were leaked from the ProctorU database to a hacker forum, including email addresses, full names, addresses, phone numbers, hashed passwords, the affiliated organizations, and other information (KELLEY 2020).

All in all, with the growth of the digital data pool in the past years, the individual susceptibility to digital surveillance only increases. What is

more, in the "new normal" workers and students have a choice of forfeiting their data and subjecting themselves to surveillance by proctoring and various worker efficiency applications or facing professional and academic consequences. Thus, in a slow but steady manner, we are socialized into "the long-term prescription."

TOOLS FOR SURVEILLANCE

The ensuing waves of the pandemic have also served as an excuse for governments around the world to develop long-term surveillance solutions and strike long-term data sharing agreements with "surveillance capitalists."[6] China, where digital COVID-19 response measures have been particularly embraced by the communist regime, has been among the frontrunners in this regard.

As early as May 2020, officials in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou announced plans to create a permanent version of the surveillance application developed by the home-grown tech giant Alibaba. The current health app works like a traffic light, where red indicates that a person poses a public health risk, and green allows individuals to access public facilities (KHARPAL 2020). The extended version of the application could have also been linked to electronic medical records and taken into consideration lifestyle choices such as drinking, smoking, and sleeping. Though the Hangzhou government backed down from its proposal after criticism for its alleged disrespect for individual privacy, it has already connected its health code to electronic health and social security cards. The governments in Shanghai and Guangzhou have also followed suit and integrated local health codes with electronic identification, health insurance, and users' bank accounts (CONG 2021), thus making the digital surveillance in China even more comprehensive.

Private entities in western democracies, very much like the Chinese Alibaba, have also seized the chance to offer technical expertise to the public sector and gain access to pools of invaluable individual data. The ensuing states of emergency and rollouts of mass vaccinations have turned into "the hour of surveillance capitalists". This is because governments have found themselves on the losing end, reliant on tech corporations and unable to lobby for appropriate privacy safeguards. As reports vividly illustrate, Google's free smartphone software used by countries around the

world as a blueprint for contact-tracing applications was called into question in June 2020. Despite assurances of data security, governments were surprised to learn that location-tracking must be active for the software to work with Android phones, allowing Google to determine and track the location of millions. Numerous European governments voiced their concerns; however, without feasible alternatives, none said that they will stop using the blueprint (SINGER 2020).

The struggle over access to patients' data has been probably the most pronounced in the United Kingdom. In the light of the COVID-19 emergency, tech companies saw an opening for gaining access to national health data, which would serve as real-life lab material for training commercial artificial intelligence models. The now published Google contract with the National Health Service (NHS) signed in March 2020 hints at the data-for-expertise exchange as it promised free *"technical, advisory and other support"* to the NHSX lab for the development of a data platform to streamline the public health response to COVID-19. Moreover, the Google-owned DeepMind's co-founder Mustafa Suleyman was also reportedly consulting the NHS on how to collect patient data in a *pro bono* advisory capacity (LOMAS 2020). Another company which benefited from data-sharing deals with the UK government, is Palantir Technologies, known for providing analytics and data to law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies around the world. After signing the contract stipulating that it would support the NHS data platform, Palantir Technologies recorded £22 million in profits despite reporting a loss the previous year (WILLIAMS 2021).

After "No Palantir in our NHS" activists from openDemocracy and Foxglove sued the government in February 2021 for an *"'unprecedented' transfer of patients' information,"* the court ordered not to extend Palantir's contract beyond the pandemic without public consultation. In September 2021, the government ended one of its data-sharing contracts with Palantir by *"seeking to move away from reliance on third-party data analytics platforms"* (BYCHAWSKI 2021). Nonetheless, another consulting agreement with Palantir for COVID-19 data analysis will continue running until December 2022. Furthermore, in May 2021, the NHS announced new plans to scrape nearly 55 million medical records, including information on mental and sexual health, criminal records, and abuse, into a database to share with third parties (MURGIA 2021). Despite promises that the scraped

data will be "gatekept," the tainted NHS track record raises red flags about yet another opening for "surveillance capitalists" in the United Kingdom.

In sum, just as citizens around the world become more dependent on social media, mobile applications, and online platforms in their everyday communication, so have governments grown increasingly reliant on tech corporations for streamlining digital pandemic counter-measures. In turn, economic profit is overtaking political control as the key variable in the global pandemic surveillance equation.

HEGEMONIC JUSTIFICATIONS

Finally, the ability of governments to justify new data-sharing parnerships with private surveillance actors and the wide-ranging employment of digital surveillance have been broadened during the ensuing waves of COVID-19. With COVID-19, both democracies and autocracies have found the perfect rhetorical ingredient to politically justify prolonged surveillance.

In October 2020, France rebranded its contact-tracing application StopCovid and reframed it as a liberal, inclusive, and "open-sourced" pandemic counter-measure, looking to boost its small user base (DILLET 2020). EveryoneAgainstCovid (*TousAntiCovid*), the new name of the app, echoes the liberal rhetoric that surrounded the launch of Singapore's 'TraceTogether,' one of the most successful national contact tracing applications worldwide. By early 2021, nearly 80 percent of Singaporeans were using TraceTogether on their smartphones or had connected it to wearable Bluetooth tokens for accessing workplaces and public facilities (ILLMER 2021).

However, despite a lot of energy being invested into encouraging the use of the application in early 2020, presenting it as being developed in a decentralized manner and highlighting its internationally-endorsed privacy safeguards (MAATI – ŠVEDKAUSKAS 2020: 17–20), the Singaporean government has gone back on its promises. Officials have switched from assurances that the collected data would only be used for contact tracing, arguing that privacy regulations could and should be overruled. In January 2021, Minister for Foreign Affairs Balakrishnan claimed that data collected through TraceTogether is no different from *"other forms of sensitive data like phone or banking records,"* the privacy of which should be overruled because *"police*

must be given the tools to bring criminals to justice and protect the safety and security of all Singaporeans" (BALAKRISHNAN 2021). The shift to a "harder," more securitized framing of digital surveillance in Singapore and the reverse rhetorical trajectory in France follow our prediction that more blurring of the line between liberal and illiberal rhetoric is to be expected with the new waves of the pandemic (MAATI – ŠVEDKAUSKAS 2020).

Though national rhetorical and policy trajectories vary, it is evident that at the time of writing, the pandemic has become a lasting rhetorical symbol in the vocabularies of governments and tech corporations. Mixing liberal and illiberal arguments, these actors produce hegemonic discourses necessitating permanent digital public-health-surveillance, as in China, or repeated harvests of patients' data, as in the UK.

TAKEAWAYS

Taken together, the three realms of data, tools and justifications, through which the pandemic facilitated the proliferation of digital surveillance, point towards two broad conclusions. The first is that digital surveillance is here to stay. As we have hypothesized elsewhere, governments mixing liberal and illiberal rhetorical elements are already refitting their justifications for digital surveillance in a way that outlives the COVID-19 emergency. The illiberal tone and hegemonic discourses necessitating long-term digital surveillance are especially concerning since public health experts increasingly agree that the pandemic has entered a long-lasting "endemic stage" (PHILLIPS 2021).

The second conclusion is that we might be on the verge of a dangerous normalization of digital surveillance. This results not only from internalizing government discourse and practices (FOUCAULT 2007), but also from the emergency discourse that the pandemic readily provides (CSERNATONI 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic offers the perfect ingredients for such a normalization: It motivated a voluntary though necessary migration to the digital world, creating large pools of digital data that are amassed through teleconferencing platforms, social media, and mobile applications. This provided a corporate and governmental motivation to develop new tools of surveillance for harvesting these sources. The pandemic has also threatened people and governments enough so that they would accept digital surveillance as necessary even if it threatens privacy. In the

background of a global public health crisis, we have also seen the *de facto* acceptance of a new type of surveillance medium. With so-called "bossware" and proctoring applications deployed for remote work and study, everyday surveillance is yet more comprehensive.

In the light of our anecdotal evidence, we believe that future research should not only focus on digital surveillance tools and the discourses surrounding them. Following Phillip Lipscy (2020), we think that scholars should also rethink public health crises as openings for increasing the availability of digital data, a necessary condition for the future proliferation of the digital surveillance industry. Research should also focus on better understanding the motivations of and complex relationships between the state agencies, corporate actors, and sub-contractors behind digital surveillance. Since these actors exist and operate transnationally and across regime types and socio-economic orders, future investigations should adopt a multitude of approaches to uncover the full complexity of this surveillance ecosystem. By taking this course, the academic community could assist in the ensuing struggle against the unnecessary long-term deployment of digital surveillance.

ENDNOTES

1 For a testimony on how relevant this could be see Ronald Deibert's testimony in front of the House of Commons (Kenyon 2020).

2 See Freeman Spogli Institute of International Studies (2021).

3 For the most vivid illustrations, see Krishnan (2021) on India, Coşkun (2021) on Turkey, and Rumyantsev (2021) on Russia.

4 In the U.S. alone, education, remote work and grocery delivery applications respectively saw 1,087%, 1,457% and 322 % increases in their download numbers in the first half of March 2020 (Statista 2021).

5 For the list of SDKs and "infected" apps, see O'Brien – Onfroy (2021).

6 For more on the concept of surveillance capitalism, see Zuboff (2019).

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On the Forms of Vulnerability and Ungrievability in the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This contribution reviews and comments on recent scholarship on the politics of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on how vulnerability was constructed and studied. We reflect on the various meanings of vulnerability and suggest political science should go beyond individualized and identity-based approaches and see the pandemic conditions as shared and embedded within the already existing social, political, and economic structures. We also examine how our previously identified discursive frames of science and security work in the context of the later pandemic stages and the vaccination rollout and note how these frames continue to render certain lives ungrievable. Our contribution is intended to add to the growing interest in using the concepts of vulnerability, precariousness, and precarity in studies of politics and international relations, as well as in critical studies of public health and the coronavirus pandemic.

KEYWORDS	COVID-19, vulnerability, precarity, grievability, pandemic politics
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Much has been said about what the global coronavirus pandemic has revealed. After 18 months of the pandemic and 4.6 million dead worldwide, international relations and political science scholars have mostly concentrated on the effects of the pandemic on various states' regimes and executive capacities (BUTKOVIĆ 2021; MAATI – ŠVEDKAUSKAS 2020), and on international organizations' and governments' capacities to coordinate responses (YAN ET AL. 2020), deliver health services and policies (GREER ET AL. 2021), and mitigate the social and economic consequences of both the pandemic and the responses to it (DELANTY 2021).

But in order to understand the political implications of the current global pandemic, we also need to keep in mind that it has been first and foremost a "mass death event", and one that defies existing convenient political narratives (HAN – MILLAR – BAYLY 2021: 11). As such it calls on us to not only recognize the political import of grief and mourning (CF. MCIVOR ET AL. 2020), especially when the direct political responsibilities are opaque and the mounting deaths produce a potentially community-wide trauma, as Han, Millar and Bayly (2021) point out, but also to recognize the question of who gets to be grieved. What does the political attention to and discursive framing of lives worth saving and lives passed on in silence tell us about our political order?

In our previous contribution to this journal (MAĎAROVÁ – HARDOŠ – OSTERTÁGOVÁ 2020), we have sought to examine how vulnerability and grievability are constructed in the elite political discourses by highlighting the implications of the pandemic and the biopower responses to it for different populations. In this forum on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in international and European politics, we aim to follow up on our thoughts there and again bring the concepts of vulnerability, precarity, and grievability to the discussion.

We reflect on the various meanings of vulnerability over the course of the pandemic in order to suggest how the concept of vulnerability as developed by Judith Butler (2016A, 2016B, 2020) offers a perspective that goes beyond individualized or identity-based approaches and understands the pandemic conditions as shared and embedded within already existing social, political, and economic structures. We also examine how the frames of science and security that we have previously identified in the elite political

discourses in the early stages of the crisis, work in the context of the later pandemic stages and vaccination. We would like to contribute to the growing interest in using the concepts of vulnerability, precariousness, and precarity in studies of politics and international relations, as well as in critical studies of public health and the COVID-19 pandemic (BAYLIS ET AL. 2008; WILCOX 2010).

THE DYNAMIC MEANINGS OF VULNERABILITY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Vulnerability might be one of the most used terms in the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is not just that its meaning differs in different academic disciplines or in academia and public discourse, but the conceptualization of vulnerability has been changing over the course of the crisis.

Early in the pandemic, the narrative focus was on individual–subjective vulnerabilities. The political discourse here followed the medical expertise of the WHO and other expert organizations that called attention to the consequences of the coronavirus ravaging the bodies of the sick and the elderly more severely (ABRAMS – ABBOTT 2020). As we argued earlier, based on the analysis of the political discourses of the Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, and Slovakia, it was the scientific frame through which vulnerability was constructed in terms of biomedical characteristics, while "stripping people of the social and relational features of their lives" (MAĎAROVÁ – HARDOŠ – OSTERTÁGOVÁ 2020: 24). Understanding vulnerability as an inherent characteristic of individual bodies renders invisible that under the economic or political conditions that have cut social and medical services or let the infrastructure of care fall into disrepair through years of neglect, lives can be written off as not worth the effort to save them, too costly, they become ungrievable, perceived as no longer worthy of protection, and treated as if already dead.

Social and political aspects of vulnerability have become more discussed in both political and academic discourses, mostly in relation to the specific populations suffering more severe consequences of the pandemic and the anti-pandemic measures. Perry et al. (2021: 1) found that *"pandemic precarity disproportionately affects historically disadvantaged groups, widening inequality"*. Another study suggested that *"the first wave of COVID-19*

replicated racial and ethnic inequalities" as *"people from minority communities are more likely to be infected by and to die from COVID-19 than the white population"* (HOOIJER – KING 2021: 12). Such legacies of racial and ethnic discrimination are not limited to the United States, as they were also found in Great Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Recent reports from Germany also suggest that persons experiencing poverty and persons with an immigrant background face a greater risk of contracting the disease and ending up in intensive care units (THURAU 2021). Though it is not surprising that decades of discrimination reverberated into market and health outcomes even before the pandemic, it is noteworthy that *"policy makers continue to underestimate the impact of legacies of institutional racism and discrimination"* (HOOIJER – KING 2021: 14).

Particularly in the medical academic discourses the concept of social vulnerability has been examined repeatedly. Here, vulnerability is understood as rooted in social, economic, and geographic structures and socially constructed (KARAYE – HORNEY 2020; KIM – BOSTWICK 2020). This focus leads to important calls for improved public health policies and global health responses, including calls to address long-term social inequalities. But it also includes building vulnerability indices, and spelling out the 'most vulnerable' social groups as if it was a competition, and in principle renders invisible both the relational aspects and political inducement of vulnerability.

We again turn to the work of Judith Butler, who identified two lessons about vulnerability stemming from the pandemic: *"it describes a shared condition of social life, of interdependency, exposure and porosity; it names the greater likelihood of dying, understood as the fatal consequence of a pervasive social inequality"* (YANCY 2020). Thus, vulnerability is not to be understood simply as a feature of the descriptive conditions of each individual but should also be seen as distinctively configured by social arrangements in which these individuals find themselves. Following Butler (2016A, 2016B, 2020), we see vulnerability as the core condition of all human existence, which is marked by dependency and interdependency, which also invites us to recognize the ethical imperative of mutual empathy and care.

The enduring dependence of our bodies on social and economic forms of support means that we can become exposed to vulnerability when

such support is unavailable or withheld from us, and consequently our life becomes *precarious*. The important feature here is that absent, withdrawn, or failing infrastructural support can mean certain populations are more exposed to harm or death. When this condition is politically induced – materially and discursively – Butler calls this condition *precarity* (2016A, 2020). We see this nexus of vulnerability-precariousness-precarity as helpful in better understanding the pandemic world.

THE PROMISE OF SECURITY VS. EXPERIENCE OF ABANDONMENT

The long-term implications of the experience of the mass deaths, often resulting from the failing health care systems, the insufficient state-led anti-pandemic measures, or long-term social and economic inequalities, are still to be seen. However, as Han, Millar and Bayly (2020: 11) maintain, *"the state is posited as either culpable for COVID-19 fatalities or – perhaps in a manner ineffably worse – powerless or irrelevant in the face of the pandemic. COVID-19 not only exposes our interdependent vulnerabilities to transnational disease but also threatens to reveal the political fiction that is the modern state's ability to produce security."*

Paradoxically, the frame of security was one of the dominant discursive tools through which the pandemic was interpreted around the globe. In some contexts, it allowed the vulnerable communities to be treated as a threat, while the focus of vulnerability itself was shifted toward institutions or the economy, which were seen as requiring government protection (MAĎAROVÁ – HARDOŠ – OSTERTÁGOVÁ 2020). We believe that over the course of the pandemic, the construction of the economy as in need of both government protection and people's sacrifice has strengthened. It includes appeals to workers to get vaccinated and get back to work regardless of the pandemic situation, actual working conditions, or safety measures. It is an individual who seems to be bearing the responsibility for the state of the economy or even the healthcare system.

Against this background, some governments – such as those of the Visegrad countries – used military assistance as a military 'band aid' for systemic vulnerabilities of healthcare systems, but once the peak of the crisis was over, it was the military which received financial support

from the state, while the fragile healthcare and broader care infrastructure remained outside of the political focus with no substantial reforms (GRZEBALSKA – MAĎAROVÁ FORTHCOMING).

Failing to fix the deficiencies and insufficiencies in the system of care can be seen through Achille Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics, which was recently extended toward analysing health disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic (SANDSET 2021). Mbembe's original insight was showing how Foucault's notion of biopower also has an end-of-life element where the state's power to protect life also involves the power to expose life to conditions that ultimately lead to death. Sandset suggests that COVID-19 has revealed the necropolitics of global health inequality, which is characterized *"by a state of chronic acceptance that some have poorer health than others"*, leading to their slow death (2021: 1412). We would add that at both global and local level, this acceptance legitimizes the lack of systematic changes and investments in the spheres that do not produce economic capital but are necessary for social reproduction.

Building on a similar note, Barnett (2021) posits that our international order has a sacrificial dimension. Despite its purported liberal nature, it nevertheless produces inequalities and hierarchies of value, where some people become more vulnerable, but drop out of the focus of our moral economy. Barnett calls our attention to the practices in which market logic has informed our sense of deservingness of basic subsistence and the processes of prioritization of the lives deemed worth saving. As he concludes: *"Such ordering is not random but rather an effect of historically-produced and structurally-induced preconditions that leave some groups more vulnerable than others. Some of the dead will be counted as sacrifices, but arguably many more on the death registry will be listed as unseen, abandoned, and permitted to be killed."* (BARNETT 2021: 143E)

THE PROMISE OF VACCINES AND NEW FORMS OF UNGRIEVABILITY

Through another dominant discursive frame – the frame of science – vulnerability became a focus limited to the features of each individual person, not just in terms of their health characteristics, but also in terms of their personal responsibility and freedom. It was a focus that transferred

the medical characteristics of individual bodies and moralized them into a default moral category – it became the individual responsibility of everyone to avoid the virus or bear the consequences of their failure to heed the best scientific advice (CF. CARDONA 2021; HOOK – MARKUS 2020). This focus persists even today, when the question of vaccines against the coronavirus is discussed as a matter of individual right and personal choice (GOYAL – HEGELE – TENEN 2021). Throughout these discussions – especially on the side of vaccine opponents – what remains neglected is the biological and social aspect of people as bodies existing together, living and breathing together, socially embedded in structures of mutual dependence, and relying on each other for their very survival. However, discussions framing vaccination as a personal choice – particularly those blaming the unvaccinated for the pandemic situation – also build on a false assumption that everybody 'has a choice' (FOLENTOVÁ 2021). That this is not the case is now seen at the local as well as the global level.

For example, by the end of April, when the vaccination rate of the general population in Slovakia was nearing 20 percent, the rate of first dose vaccination in marginalized Roma communities had not exceeded 1 percent (HRABOVSKÁ FRANCELOVÁ 2021). By summer this number did not improve significantly, as it rose only to 4% by mid-July (DENNÍK N, 2021). An organization working with marginalized communities has noted that *"the current registration system and [...] vaccination at large-scale and often remote vaccination centers pose an insurmountable practical obstacle"* (HRABOVSKÁ FRANCELOVÁ 2021).

The default expectation that countries will give themselves priority at the potential expense of everyone else challenges the personal choice narrative globally. The phenomenon of 'vaccine nationalism' (BOLLYKY – BOWN 2020), where countries scrambled to develop and secure vaccines for themselves, and which was being likened to an 'arms race', displayed a clear example of the political ontology of war (LEHTINEN – BRUNILA 2021). The frame of security, or even the frame of war, became handy again for convincing local populations that they are being taken care of – a false promise face to face with a global pandemic.

Despite growing recognition that such a vaccine nationalism is both costly and counterproductive (HAFNER ET AL. 2020; GHEBREYESUS 2021) and despite the possibility of an equitable global solution to the pandemic being present

within the existing international legal order (DE CAMPOS-RUDINSKY 2021), a systematic addressing of global vulnerabilities to vaccine inequality has been elusive. Instead, what we have mostly seen so far has been only the occasional gesture of charity, or vaccine diplomacy, such as the recent donation of 100 million doses of the vaccine by Germany (FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE 2021).

Those who cannot be or do not want to be vaccinated are often constructed as a threat to the 'responsible' citizens through both the frame of security and the frame of science. While in the case of vaccine nationalism the accountability is usually put on the political and economic elites, in the case of local unvaccinated people, the responsibility is often individualized and explained by the triumph of conspiracism (ENDERS ET AL. 2020; MARQUES ET AL. 2021).

There is no doubt about the mass spread of unsupported, false, and even conspiratorial ideas. However, in order to understand why these became so influential, we perhaps should get back to the promise of states to provide security as it is contrasted with the experience of abandonment described above. While it might not be possible to protect everybody from the virus, its threat has been exacerbated by weak care infrastructure, underfunded and understaffed health care, as well as persisting structural inequalities or just uncaring institutions (CHATZIDAKIS ET AL. 2020). Long existing social and economic grievances and the experience of the pandemic have further weakened the trust in authority (CF. GERBAUDO 2020; LINDHOLT ET AL. 2021). When the vaccines became available to some, people were expected to trust the very same – local and global; political, economic, and social – systems that had made them vulnerable in the first place. Constructing the unvaccinated as those who deserve punishment – in this case even death – not only makes them publicly ungrievable, but it also shifts the attention away from politics failing people to the failures of the people.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We started writing this contribution with a clear idea that vulnerability, precarity, and grief should be part of this forum, and with a few messy ideas that we tried to clarify even for ourselves in the process of writing. While we build on our previous analysis, this contribution mostly consists of our reflections on the political situation around the globe and the recent

scholarship on the coronavirus pandemic. There are three points that we put forward and believe need further consideration.

Firstly, vulnerability has been widely discussed in the last 18 months and even the connection between social inequality and susceptibility to the virus has become more common in the later stages of the pandemic. However, it seems that attributing vulnerability to certain groups and building indices of social vulnerability resulted in a focus on enumerating groups and evaluating who is more at risk instead of on the conditions that have made these populations vulnerable.

Secondly, precarity is exacerbated in the pandemic in the form of abandonment. Numerous interventions took place and lives were saved but weak healthcare institutions and care infrastructure are still mostly presented as in need of citizens' individual caution instead of systemic political intervention. The individualization of responsibility when it comes to getting infected or vaccinated blurs the accountability of state authorities that leave key institutions underfunded and understaffed and many populations unvaccinated, uncared for and unmourned.

Finally, we once again turn to Butler. As she writes in *Precarious Life* (2004: XI), when boundaries are breached, an unbearable vulnerability is exposed, a terrible toll on human life is taken, and these are causes for fear, mourning, and political reflection. If mourning means that *"one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly for ever"* and one agrees to undergo this transformation (BUTLER 2004: 21), then our societies probably have not started this process. The frequent call to return to "normalcy" and the presentation of vaccines as a promise of this return suggest a failure to acknowledge our shared corporeal vulnerability and a rejection of the open-ended *"transformative moment"* that has been initiated by the pandemic as a *"mass death event"* (Han – Millar – Bayly 2021). In the past, we saw that an inability to grieve can often lead to aggression, and instances of future state and civil violence should be explored with this recognition in mind.

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Russia's Vaccine Diplomacy in Central Europe: Between a Political Campaign and a Business Project

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the concept of vaccine diplomacy, the article analyses Russia's efforts to promote its Sputnik V vaccine and the repercussions this had in two Central European EU member states which authorized the use of the Russian vaccine. The authors argue that for Russia, Sputnik V promotion was significant both as a business project and as a political enterprise, as it was supposed to enhance Russia's international status and help it in overcoming its post-Crimea isolation from the West. The results were mixed, however, as Russia's international credibility had been undermined by its previous policies. Thus, in Hungary the vaccine managed to gain some traction thanks to a government that preferred importing non-EU certified vaccines as part of its larger policy of fostering closer ties with the authoritarian great powers in Eurasia. In Slovakia, the vaccine deal with Russia caused a political crisis but eventually resulted in a very poor performance of Sputnik V as compared to EU-certified vaccines.

KEYWORDS	biopolitics, COVID–19, Hungary, Russia, Slovakia, Sputnik, vaccines
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COVID-19 has significantly affected the vocabulary of international relations and foreign policy analysis, including the concept of diplomacy. The pandemic has drastically re-actualized the scholarly attention to 'vaccine diplomacy', a concept that might be discussed from two different perspectives.

One way of approaching vaccine diplomacy is to look at it as a subset of health diplomacy that initially was understood as a multilateral international *"aid or cooperation meant to promote health or that uses health programming to promote non-health-related foreign aims"* (FAZAL 2020: E78). As seen from this viewpoint, the key goals of vaccine diplomacy are explicitly global, as they include equitable distribution of vaccines in the world, countering anti-vaccination narratives, international cooperation between otherwise rival powers (such as the USSR and the USA during the Cold War) and alleviation of tensions between them. Within this explanatory framework, roles of private corporations in funding vaccine research and global organizations – such as the Global Alliance of Vaccines and Immunization, or Gavi – are key (HOTEZ 2021).

Another perspective sees vaccine diplomacy as a component of biodiplomacy, a concept that explicates how biological research and commercial activities become parts of health emergency management. Biodiplomacy *"extends to the strategy by which governments, private groups, and individuals influence the attitudes and opinions of other peoples and governments to create domestic and foreign policy concerning biological materials, equipment, and facilities"* (SUTTON 2013). This interpretation embraces a broad spectrum of issues requiring international cooperation that are related to technological and scientific progress in saving and improving people's lives, particularly in such areas as environmental protection (BIOPOLITICS INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION 2016), agriculture, biodiversity, and counter-epidemic policies (JUMA 2005). Biodiplomacy may connote a type of biopolitical management that is *"exercised upon a foreign population"* (CONSTANTINOU AND OPONDO 2019, 12). In a general sense, biopolitics connotes governance of life and populations. More specifically, in this article we refer to two dimensions of the concept, both grounded in a nexus of sovereignty and biopower. One involves the governance of life and populations in a conflictual zone of competition and rivalry between major actors looking for supremacy in world politics. Under these conditions, sovereign qualities of Russian power, boosted by

biopolitical investments in vaccine diplomacy, pave the way to global leadership. The other dimension points to the ability of a sovereign power to promote biodiplomacy in general and vaccine diplomacy in particular, and by so doing, to financially capitalize on the market demand for vaccines.

Both perspectives on vaccine diplomacy place a heavy emphasis on its structural characteristics and particularly on its contributions to constructive multilateral interaction among vaccine-producing nations and their recipients (VARSHNEY AND PRASANNA 2021); in the most optimistic interpretation vaccine diplomacy is seen as a major element of global health governance. What is less studied is how individual states profit from vaccine diplomacy as a soft power instrument, a nation (re)branding tool, or a source of financial revenues. It was only recently that researchers found out that vaccine diplomacies of illiberal governments, such as China or Russia, may diverge from the globalist expectations and contradict the liberal internationalist reading of health diplomacy in a wider sense (LEE 2021).

Against this backdrop, in this article we discuss how Russia's vaccine diplomacy affects this country's relations with Slovakia and Hungary, two Central European countries, former members of the Moscow-patronized socialist bloc and, nowadays, EU members that allowed the use of Sputnik V. Our research shows that Russian vaccine diplomacy is effectuated by a group of new actors who previously were not known for their participation in international affairs. This network is based on earlier experiences of promoting Russia's technological achievements by the state, accompanied by previous engagements with soft power diplomacy. This Sputnik-promoting coalition serves the double purpose of sustaining the Kremlin's political agenda and profiting from the market capitalization of the Russian vaccine. On the one hand, Russia wishes to position itself on the side of both scientific and market rationality against the (geo)politics that is ascribed to Western powers. Yet on the other hand, the logic of political distinction and contestation of the West is an inherent part of Russian vaccine diplomacy.

VACCINE DIPLOMACY IN THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOOLKIT

To further conceptualize the notion of vaccine diplomacy, we need to scrutinize the aims that Russia pursues in the international arena through

promoting Sputnik V. Two of them are of particular relevance: one claims the alleged efficacy of Russian sovereign power, while the second one points to Russia's market competitiveness.

The first aim is explicitly political and based upon a presumption that the pandemic brings meaningful structural changes in the world scene, both in the international agenda and in the functioning of institutions. This approach particularly resonates with the covid-related vision of biopolitics among Russian policy analysists. Most of the Russian authors who use this concept with direct references to Agamben interpret biopower as an exceptional type of power that "*rejects laws*" (POGONYAILO 2020: 670). This argument is transformed into a claim that Russia nowadays is facing not a geopolitical confrontation with the West, but rather a new biopolitical challenge that stems from cynical and inhuman policies of global pharmaceutical companies and producers of health care technologies (KRAMARENKO 2020). Consequently, biopolitics is discussed in close conjunction with the concept of biological security (KUMINOVA 2020: 97–98).

In the long run some Russian authors expect that Russia might contribute to making global biopolitics less Western-centric (KRAVCHENKO 2020: 100). As seen from this perspective, the global state of emergency has confirmed some major Russian foreign policy tenets: the crisis of liberal globalization, the validity of national sovereignties, and the broad space for unilateralism (TIMOFEEV ET AL. 2020). With these assumptions in mind, Moscow's political goal is to prevent a return to normative and value-based structures of international relations, and therefore to blur the lines between liberal and illiberal regimes, as well as between democracies and non-democracies. The Western liberal order therefore, in the eyes of Moscow, does not have competitive advantages over illiberal regimes when it comes to the life protection function. This strategy set a basis for the Russian vaccine diplomacy, from the humanitarian yet militarized missions in Italy and Serbia in spring 2020 to the robust promotion of Sputnik V. By engaging with vaccine diplomacy, Russia means to diminish the importance of the liberal international agenda of democracy and human rights, and to show that it is more effective than liberal states when reacting to medical emergencies, and therefore it is needed as a partner. The Sputnik V project comes from the centrality of visibility, recognition and respect as core political concepts defining Moscow's standing in vaccine diplomacy.

The global race for an anti-coronavirus vaccine gave Moscow an opportunity to modify the structure of its relations with the West, as it moved away from normative and legal issues (such as the annexation of Crimea, or the poisoning and incarceration of the opposition leader Alexei Navalny) to a pragmatic, business-like, and transactional approach. It is at this point that the second aim of Russian health diplomacy becomes apparent: the discourse on "medical sovereignty" (understood as the self-sufficiency and efficiency of Russian medical infrastructure and expertise in fighting the pandemic) transforms into a discourse fostering Russia's global competitiveness as a major vaccine producer in the world. This shift confirms that Russia is not only a sovereign power, but it also relies on the global market. In this context, Sputnik V might be metaphorically compared with "a new oil" for Russia, a source of material profit and revenue: it is financial calculations (expecting, according to some estimates, to get about 25 percent of the global vaccination market) that largely drive Russia's campaign for promoting Sputnik V. The Russian producers and funders of the Sputnik V project, supported by the officialdom, are engaging in competition for market shares on a global scale. As some experts estimate, in 2021–2022 Russia can earn up to 30 billion USD by selling vaccines to other countries, which is twice as much as the Russian annual revenues from arms sales, and almost as much as the annual revenues from gas exports (REGNUM 2021).

The global campaign for Sputnik V was coordinated by the Russian state, and can be seen as an extension of the previously well-articulated interpretation of sovereignty as Russia's competitive advantage, including the state support for major business projects. To outrace foreign competitors, the Russian government took the risk of registering Sputnik V on the basis of a relatively small number of tests. President Putin has directly spoken in support of the Russian vaccine on multiple occasions (TASS 2021), and did not hide his irritation with the reluctance of the European Medicine Agency to accept Sputnik V. Within this logic, Russian politicians and opinion makers explained the problems with the registration of Sputnik V in Europe by pointing to "fears of competition", which, in their view, only proved its quality.

In the meantime, the promotion (apart from the promotion by Russian governmental institutions), advertisement and co-production

of Sputnik V have substantially expanded the Russian health diplomacy, which integrated a group of other actors – state corporations and financial institutions (such as Sberbank), professional associations (for example, the Russian Association of Pharmaceutical Producers), market agencies, and the media. Among the key stakeholders are the vaccine producer the Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology that functions as a research hub and a medical institution, and the Russian Foundation of Direct Investments (RFDI), a state corporation that provided financial means for the Sputnik V project.

The picture of vaccine diplomacy is two-fold: it is entangled with both market logics and a geopolitical reasoning. The nexus between vaccine diplomacy and the market is well illustrated by Nina Kandelaki, the head of the RFDI healthcare projects, who has claimed that it is "*rules of the industry rather than vaccine diplomacy*" that matter the most in this regard (RUSSIAN HOUSE IN BRUSSELS 2021). One of the examples of a practical implementation of this approach was a memorandum on cooperation signed in December 2020 by RFDI and AstraZeneca. The online event was attended by Vladimir Putin, who particularly underscored that this type of interaction is a practical implementation of recommendations given by the UN, the WHO and the then recent G20 summit (YOUTUBE 2020B). In the words of the RFDI director Kirill Dmitriev, the memorandum is an important step in the international recognition of Sputnik V, and opens perspectives for the Russian vaccine to become part of AstraZeneca products in international markets (YOUTUBE 2020C). However, the Russian officialdom – in particular, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov – rebuffed vaccine diplomacy as a Western concept (VEDOMOSTI 2021) and denied its applicability for Russia. Apart from market considerations, the mainstream discourse is heavily embedded in the traditions of Russian messianism (KUSHNIR 2019) and treats the Sputnik V promotional campaign as a humanitarian project grounded in the culture of responsiveness, compared to the Western mode of vaccine diplomacy as a geopolitical project aimed at eliminating Russia as a strong competitor in global markets (NOVOE POKOLENIE 2021). An illustrative example of the messianic approach to promoting Sputnik V beyond Russia is the "History of the Fatherland" Fund of the Russian Historical Society, a quasi-nongovernmental organization chaired and patronized by Sergey Naryshkin, the head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. The Fund has developed a virtual project called "On Behalf of Humankind," which

is devoted to the 130-year anniversary of the Gamaleya Institute and advertised by the Russian House in Brussels. In the words of Konstantin Mogilevsky, the director of the Fund, historical experience is a powerful factor that legitimizes Russia's leadership in virology and epidemiology and proves that *"Russia was never isolated from the world; on the contrary, it was driven by a sense of its mission"* (RUSSIAN HOUSE IN BRUSSELS 2021).

The state efforts to expand the global horizons for Sputnik V were accompanied and sustained by the enthusiastic coverage of the Russian vaccine by a whole bunch of broadcasters and media outlets in one way or another associated with the Kremlin. According to the widely propagated media narrative, dozens of countries prefer Sputnik V over "Western" vaccines in spite of US pressure or EU hesitation (RT 2021B). Russia portrays itself as a potential savior, or a normalizer of Europe (RT 2021C). Visualized stories of an Italian politician who got jabbed in Moscow and a French advocate who lambasted "the criminal negligence" of the French medical infrastructure (YOUTUBE 2021) were extended into an appeal to save lives as the top priority for European policy makers, and a concomitant campaign for "opening borders for Sputnik V" in Europe (RT 2021D). The Austrian chancellor's "successful phone call to Putin", along the lines of this narrative, secured a certain amount of needful vaccines for this country (RT 2021E). For countries with Islamic traditions, Sputnik V was advertised as being allowed for all Muslims in the world (RT 2021F). According to one opinion, the origins of the Russian strategy were not commercial, as was the case with *Pfizer* or *Moderna*, but more related to soft power projection (KULISH 2021). A good example at this point is Russia's initiative to offer Sputnik V to all football fans attending the European championship games in St. Petersburg and Moscow in summer 2021 (RT 2021A).

Most of the pro-Kremlin TV channels depicted the above mentioned memorandum between RFDI and AstraZeneca as a Russian response to a plea for help that came from the producers of the "Oxford vaccine," whose efficacy rates, according to Russian sources, are lower in comparison to Sputnik V (YOUTUBE 2020D). The Russia-proposed combination of two vaccines was largely interpreted as a demonstration of the advantages of Sputnik V over the "European" (or "Anglo-Swedish," as it is often referred to in the Russian media) vaccine.

The role of the media in the Russian vaccine diplomacy raised other controversies. One good example is the vaccine tourism initiative that originated from the networked efforts of the Russian Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers (EXPERT 2021), the Union of Shopping Malls and the Public Movement of Entrepreneurs (VEDOMOSTI 2021), and was supported by the Russian Association of Medical Tourism (GXP NEWS 2021), the State Duma Committee on Physical Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs, and the All-Russian People's Front (DW 2021). International medical travel is a widely spread form of trans-border mobility that might be explained by such reasons as the institutional failure of the home state to provide health care services, or desires of various diasporic groups to receive medical treatment in their countries of origin (WHITTAKER – LENG 2016: 296). However, in Russia this initially practical idea was politicized due to its disproportionate coverage by a plethora of mainstream TV channels. Russian journalists created numerous stories about masses of foreigners who came to Russia for vaccination, but the reality check shows that most such tourists were Russian citizens living abroad, members of mixed (part Russian) families, or seasonal workers from some post-Soviet countries. Fact-checking with independent sources indicated that there were only a few tourists from Germany who went to Russia for vaccination (TOKMANTSEVA 2021). Some Russian tourist companies lobbied for opening vaccination stations in airports' transfer zones, yet did not get approval for that from the Russian Healthcare Ministry, and the idea also remained a media story.

The communicative components of the pro-Sputnik campaign appear to be vulnerable to criticism from outside. As seen from the perspective of some Western observers, the Kremlin has created a network of individuals and groups that run disinformation attacks against Western vaccine producers, aiming to discredit them. A series of media reports published in May 2021 pointed to a network of Russian marketing companies known for selling nutritional supplements that allegedly was behind a disinformation campaign to denigrate Western coronavirus vaccines. According to a journalist investigation, this network includes an organization called Russian Initiative, and three marketing firms called Fazze, AdNow and 2WTrade (KRUTOV ET AL. 2021), along with News Front, a multimedia outlet based in Crimea.

Therefore, what Russia considers a legitimate and effective vaccine diplomacy might often be viewed from a different angle – it could be viewed as a series of intrusive and unethical actions aimed at exaggerating the gravity of the side effects of the competing vaccines and questioning their efficacy. This skeptical reasoning may be based on a generally low level of trust in Russian statistics, including in the medical sphere, as well as on the previous disinformation campaigns against many countries launched with direct or indirect support from the Russian state. This conflict of interpretations boils down to the issues of legitimacy and illegitimacy of foreign policy actions, and adds another inextricable dimension of politicization to vaccine diplomacy.

REPERCUSSIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

As of 2021 there were two countries in the EU that authorized the use of Russia's vaccine whilst it was not certified by the European Medical Agency (EMA). The repercussions of Russia's vaccine diplomacy were, however, very different in them, depending on the specific cultural and political context. In Hungary PM Viktor Orbán's promotion of "Eastern" vaccines (Sputnik V and the Chinese Sinopharm) followed up on his foreign policy of the "Eastern opening," a pragmatic (or opportunistic) philosophy according to which Hungary should develop closer ties with the authoritarian great powers in Eurasia. This approach went hand in hand with the ruling party's incessant criticism of the EU and *liberal* democracy as a model that the West was allegedly imposing on Hungary (SEE BUZOGÁNY 2017; CSEHI – ZGUT 2020; KAZHARSKI – MACALOVÁ 2020). Orbán himself set a public example by getting vaccinated with Sinopharm. The government also undertook efforts to try to convince the population that *"the Russian and Chinese vaccines are more effective than the ones produced in the West"* (HUNGARIAN SPECTRUM 2021A). By the summer of 2021, this "unique vaccination strategy" resulted in what the government claimed was a million Hungarians having been vaccinated with Sputnik V (in a country with roughly nine and a half million people) (BAYNAZAROV 2021).

Russia and Hungary also opened talks on a strategic cooperation on vaccine production. On the other hand, Russia's vaccine diplomacy did not bring it an exclusive influence; Sputnik V had to compete with both Sinopharm and Western vaccines certified by the EMA. However, as the

number of non-EMA-certified vaccines was high, there were rising concerns about Hungarians' freedom of movement inside the EU (INOTAI 2021). Additionally, the national vaccine authorization policy also had to be visibly politicized and "de-Europeanized" through the new changes in the rules of emergency use of vaccines. Previously, a vaccine *could* be approved by the National Institute of Pharmacy and Nutrition (OGYÉI) if it had been previously approved in an EU or a European Economic Area (EEA) state. The new decree changed the law to the effect that now the OGYEI *would* (unconditionally) approve it if it was being used in any three states, one of which had to be an EU member state *or* a *candidate* country (MAGYAR KÖZLÖNY 2021). In practice this meant that the authorization could be outsourced to non-EU member states like Serbia, where non-EU-authorized vaccines have also been used, and the government's prior political decision to use Chinese and Russian imports could now be legalized. Critics lamented that with that step, Hungary had practically *"left the European Union"* as far as authorization procedures were concerned (HUNGARIAN SPECTRUM 2021B).

In Slovakia, owing to a different, more pluralistic political environment, the events unfolded less favourably for Sputnik V. On the one hand there were some initial expectations that the Russian vaccine may be accepted more favourably by some segments of the population, owing to a certain tradition of Russophilia in the country. Some politicians made claims that nearly half a million Slovaks (in a country of five million) were ready to get the Russian jab, and also that, in many cases, it would help in fighting the anti-vaxxer syndrome, as some citizens (around 11%) would *only* trust the Russian vaccine, but not the Western ones (KUBALOVÁ 2021).

Prime Minister Igor Matovič's trip to Moscow and a secret deal of purchasing two million Sputnik V stocks for Slovakia caused a ruling coalition crisis and ultimately cost him his job. The public debate grew increasingly controversial as Slovakia's State Institute for Drug Control (ŠÚKL) published a statement to the effect that the imported Sputnik was not identical with the samples which were tested for a study previously published by the renowned medical journal *The Lancet* (FOLENTOVÁ 2021). In an unprecedented attempt to interfere with the freedom of the Slovak media, RFDI subsequently threatened the newspaper *Denník N* with legal action, demanding that it take down the story which quoted the statement of the government drug agency (FOLENTOVÁ – TOMEK 2021). In the end, Slovakia

allowed vaccination with Sputnik V but the whole affair turned out to be "much ado about nothing." As of July, only a little over fifteen thousand Slovaks were registered for their first or second Sputnik V jab (BUCH 2021). As for the unused stocks, arrangements were being considered for them to be returned to Russia or donated/sold to other countries.

As the case of Hungary demonstrates, the Russian vaccine diplomacy was facilitated by Orbán's strategy of "Eastern opening", an opportunistic (cf. "multivector") policy of building ties with Eurasian authoritarian regimes, as well as by the systemic criticism of the West/the EU (including criticism for their alleged "crisis mismanagement" during the pandemic) in the Fidesz discourse. The Hungarian government emphasized the benefits of (and preference for) "Eastern vaccines". This type of health diplomacy was a partial success for Sputnik V: 1.8 million Hungarians were vaccinated with it, thus putting it in the third place behind Sinopharm and Pfizer in terms of numbers of vaccinated people as of June 2021.

In Slovakia there was a more pluralist environment in this respect, yet still with a traditionally pro-Russian (pan-Slavist) segment of society that generated high expectations for Sputnik V, as exemplified by the discourse stating that *"500,000 Slovaks want Sputnik V, not Western vaccines"* (BUTOROVÁ 2021). Some political actors made pro-Sputnik moves which led to a strong political outfall, including the resignation of the prime minister. However, a very low interest in Sputnik was ultimately registered: 8,108 / 7,573 people were vaccinated with it as of July 1, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the two available examples, our analysis demonstrated how vaccine diplomacy resonates with states' existing political cultures and previous discourses, including their relations with Moscow. The topic is naturally connected to broader international relations debates. Many of them pertain to the issue of Russia's global status after the Cold War (LO 2002) and its propensity to other and rival the West on many symbolic levels while presenting itself as an "alternative" (RINGMAR 2002; NEUMANN 1996; 2017), as well as to the Russian (mis)understanding and (mis)appropriation of "soft power" (WILSON 2015). Immediately related to this are the questions of the scope of Russia's influence in its former external empire and the factors thereof,

including the growing significance of biopower (MAKARYCHEV – YATSYK 2017; BRAGHIROLI – MAKARYCHEV 2018), along with biodiplomacy and health diplomacy as its derivatives. Examining Russia's recent vaccine diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe strikes all these chords. The symbolism of "Sputnik" for both the domestic and the international audiences, clearly alludes to the past triumphs of the Soviet technological development and the space race with the United States, signalling a claim to an *alternative* modernity that aspires to be on par with the Western one. Russia thus takes the Covid crisis as an opportunity to restore and enhance its international status and overcome its post-Crimea isolation. Furthermore, the particular soft power instrument it chooses in this case is meant to address the foreign publics directly with a possibility of bypassing supranational regulations, norms and platforms, as it targets the very biological existence of these populations. However, this exercise in soft power is a two-way street, and to a significant extent, its success depends on Russia's previous ability to wield soft power, and the overall level of credibility and trust that is linked to its present international image.

The two examined cases allow for several interesting observations with respect to the nature of Russian vaccine diplomacy and its implementation in the two countries of post-Communist Central Europe. First, the relative success of Sputnik V in Hungary does suggest a form of biodiplomacy, especially as vaccine choice could be shaped by simple availability. In some cases, saying no to Sputnik V, in practice, would have meant having to remain unvaccinated and being exposed to additional risks until a Western vaccine became available. Much of its success thus had to do with the approach adopted by the government. Here, the local political elites served as transmitters of Russia's vaccine diplomacy, and their approach clearly followed up on the previous foreign policy strategies of the "Eastern opening." A side effect here was the additional risks to the freedom of movement of Hungarian citizens and a degree of "de-Europeanization" as Hungary refused to uphold a common regime with the absolute majority of the EU member states, which had decided to wait for Sputnik V's EMA certification before approving its use. From Moscow's point of view this could also be counted as a success insofar as it sees sowing dissent in the EU as one of its foreign policy instruments.

In Slovakia, however, despite some initial expectations, the local political elites behaved very differently. Both the generally cautious approach towards the Russian vaccine and the scandalous incident with RFDI trying to meddle in the domestic debate and intimidate the independent media, showed the traditional limits of Russian *soft power*. Russia's massive promotion campaign did fall short of overcoming its overall lack of credibility and trust, which is created by Russia's previous course of action, and which is a typical problem for Russian soft power projection. What the vaccine diplomacy did manage to do, however, was to produce a domestic political fallout and create chaos in the unstable ruling coalition, which came close to falling apart and had to be saved by a job swap between the prime minister and the minister of finance. Hence, despite the partial success in terms of promoting Sputnik V, Russia fell short of being a genuine technological and soft power alternative, and remained more of a spoiler power which was more prone to creating problems than helping to solve them.

Based on this study we can conclude that vaccine diplomacy is to remain a sphere of competitive rather than cooperative relations. For such illiberal countries as Russia it is the nexus of sovereignty and biopolitics that is seen as a warranty for both politically distinguishing them from the West and earning financial resources in the global vaccine market. However, vaccine diplomacy may fall victim to mismanagement and bad governance, from low quality control to disruption of supplies, which puts into question the sustainability of Russia's long-term policies.

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Pandemics as Crisis Performance: How Populists Tried to Take Ownership of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT With the COVID-19 pandemic dominating the agenda, it seems almost natural that it be associated with another buzzword: *populism*. As the pandemic advances, it seems that the prediction of populism surviving the pandemic due to its own diversity has been proved right, given the variation in responses by populists around the world. One common denominator stands out though: populists across the political spectrum understood the benefits of performing the COVID-19 crisis as a tool to strengthen their political positions. They tried to politicize the pandemic to increase the antagonism between *the people* and *the elites*. In this article, I introduce the notion of crisis as both a construct and a performance, and as a useful concept to analyze populist reactions to the pandemic. I argue that notwithstanding the attempts to politicize the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis ended up imposing its own reality. In other words: the crisis could not be owned by politics.

KEYWORDS pandemic, COVID-19, populism, crises, ontology, performance, politization

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On March 11, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. One and a half years later, the total number of reported cases has passed 240 million, and the number of Covid--related deaths worldwide hit 4.9 million (WHO 2021). The world slowly realized that the pandemics would not be a mere bump on the road ahead. Scholars took a pause to plunge deeper into the political, economic, social, and psychological effects of this unknown situation.[1] Not surprisingly, the pandemic evolved to be recognized as the third major shock to the global system in the 21st century, following 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis (SUMMERS 2020).[2] This major systemic shock occurs in a strange political climate that resembles the dark times of the early 1930s – when many governments opted for nationalistic, illiberal, and beggar-thy-neighbour policies, making it difficult for nations to cooperate to stop the virus (RACHMAN 2020). Indeed, over the past few decades, the world has grown more authoritarian, nationalistic, xenophobic, unilateralist, anti-establishment, and anti-scientific (Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orbán, Recep Erdoğan, Jair Bolsonaro and others come to mind). Therefore, it seems almost fitting that the pandemic be associated with another buzzword of our strange time: *populism*. While some claimed the pandemic would demonstrate the limits of populism as a method of government (WRIGHT – CAMPBELL 2020), others pointed out that populism would survive, given that populist leaders would not have a unitary response to the crisis (BOBBA – HUBÉ 2021; MUDDE 2020).

As the pandemic advances, it seems that the prediction of populism surviving the pandemic due to its own diversity has been proved right, given the variation in responses to the pandemic given by populists around the world. While Trump and Bolsonaro pursued policies bordering on negationism (HALLAL 2021; HILTZIK 2020), such as preaching for pseudo-treatments based on chloroquine and attacking masks (BRITO – DARLINGTON 2021; LONDOÑO 2021), leftist populists such as Maduro and Andrés Manuel López Obrador were hardly better in reacting to the pandemics, shying away from implementing strict lockdown and social distancing measures. In Asia, the right-wing politicians Narendra Modi (India) and Rodrigo Duterte (Philippines) opted for aggressive lockdown measures (CNBC 2020; GETTLEMAN 2020). In Europe, Italy, one of the hardest-hit countries early in the pandemic, governed by a coalition of the centre-left Democratic Party and the populist Five Star Movement, imposed a strict lockdown for nearly two months and called for national unity against the virus (MODI ET AL. 2021).

One curious trait stands out as a common denominator though: populists across the political spectrum understood the possible benefits of performing the COVID-19 crisis as a tool to strengthen their political positions. They tried to politicize the pandemic to increase the antagonism between *the people* and *the elites*. In this article, I introduce the notion of crisis as both a construct and a performance (MOFFITT 2015; NABERS 2015, 2019; WELDES 1999), and as a useful concept for analyzing populist reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic (BOBA – HUBÉ 2021; LASCO 2020). More importantly, and based on recent studies comparing policy responses by populist leaders, notwithstanding the attempts by populists to politicize the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis ended up imposing its own reality. In other words: the crisis could not be owned by politics.

POPULISM AND THE PANDEMIC: WHEN CRISES BECOME AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERFORMANCE

Populism has been at the centre of recent debates in political science and international relations scholarship. Recognized as a contested concept (WEYLAND 2001), and framed as a new global phenomenon (STENGEL – MACDONALD – NABERS 2019), populism emerged in the context of liberal democracies when political actors inflated social antagonisms by putting *the people* against *the elite*. Laclau (2005) conceives populism as a particular political (discursive) logic emerging from crisis. Similarly, Mouffe (2005) links populism to a crisis of political representation. Roberts (1995) argues that populism emerges most strongly in contexts of crisis or profound social transformation. Cas Mudde (2007), who defines populism as a thin ideology, points out that *"[t]here's nothing more important for populists than the perception of crisis"* (QUOTED IN CEA 2017). Weyland (1999: 395) has argued that crises *"trigger the emergence of neoliberal populism"*. What they have in common is that they all point to crisis as a necessary precondition for the emergence of populism.[3]

Moffitt (2015: 190) also explored the relationship between populism and crises, arguing that rather than just thinking about crisis as a trigger of populism – e.g., a crisis of representation being the trigger of populism – instead we should also think about how populists engage in constructing – even intensifying – the *"spectacularization of failure"* that underlies the said crisis. It is through the performance of crisis that populists build up social antagonism. They address popular grievances and frustrations

in an attempt to unify and mobilize support against supposedly unresponsive political elites that are blamed for social troubles. Traditionally, they pit *the people* against a dangerous other – the elites, immigrants, criminals, foreigners – and advocate in favour of a strong leadership and quick political action in order to stave off, or solve, an impending crisis.

Moffitt argues that the literature on this relationship has demonstrated that crisis is never merely a neutral phenomenon that is experienced objectively when talking about populism. *"Rather, crisis is a phenomenon that is mediated and performed, and experienced culturally and socially"* (MOFFITT 2015: 195). Therefore, populist leaders perform crisis by elevating failure to the level of crisis – what Moffitt calls the *"spectacularization of failure"*: they *"divide 'the people' from those who are responsible for the crisis, present simple solutions to the crisis and legitimate their own strong leadership as a way to stave off or bring about an end to the crisis"* (MOFFITT 2015: 198).

What strikes us from Moffitt's notion of populism as a crisis performance – which will have important implications for the pandemic as an opportunity – is how crisis is understood here not as an exogenous trigger but rather as structurally constitutive of the social. This is a shift from traditional understanding of crisis, in which it is mostly conceived in terms of something that happens – an unexpected event – and has to be managed, and where *"interventions are both possible and plausible"* (HAY 1996: 425).[4] This description seems to fit an overwhelming body of literature that deals with crisis.[5] Indeed, most of the literature produced during the Cold War was very much concerned with crisis perceptions and decision-making, policy responses to crisis,[6] as well as crisis management;[7] this is an approach that favours agency over structure, and which implies that crises are self-evident phenomena waiting for political intervention by policymakers.[8]

Jutta Weldes was one of the first authors to break from this traditional understanding of the ontology of crisis. Claiming that crises are cultural artifacts – and hence not objectively identifiable – she argues that when particular events threaten the identity of a state, they become constituted as a crisis, which, in turn, helps consolidate, reaffirm, transform, and/or appease a particular writing of a state identity. As a result, there is no ontology of crisis to be grasped beyond the practices that generate

the said crisis in the first place. There is no objective status of the crisis that would require a governmental response to it or its containment and/or management. Instead, she claims, *"events that are ostensibly the same will in fact be constituted as different crises, or not as crisis at all, by and for states with different identities"* (WELDES 1999: 37).

Today, instead of depicting and representing crises as *exogenous shocks* to which decision-makers react (i.e., agent-centred approaches), a growing number of works emphasize them as *endogenous constructions*, where ontological questions about the relationship between agent and structure are integrated and thus problematized.[9] Recent works by Dirk Nabers reject the focus on crisis management at the expense of more structural accounts of the nature of crisis. *"[C]risis represents a situation in which our everyday beliefs of how the world works are thoroughly disrupted by an event that is out of our control"* (NABERS 2015: 44). He proposes that the very notion of crisis only makes sense as a *"permanent attribute of the social" "produced entirely in discourse"* (NABERS 2019: 265). The likely result of this disruptive process would be social change in the form of community (re)building, and the construction and/or transformation of a (new) collective identity. Therefore, crises should be understood as dislocations in discourse that disrupt subjectivities, and sit at the base of any kind of social change.

In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, where a sense of threat, uncertainty, and emergency has pushed *normal* politics into the realm of politics of crisis (LIPSCY 2020), populists have actively engaged in creating a spectacularization of failure – of science, institutions, experts, and governments – vis-à-vis the virus. According to Bobba and Hubé (2021), the pandemic fits perfectly into this framework. Populists act on failures (or tipping points, using their terminology) and perform them into crisis in order to give them a discursive reality. Issues such as mask mandates, lockdown measures, compulsory vaccination, medicine effectiveness, and vaccine certificates become politicized, that is, they are taken from *normal* politics and made contingent and controversial (PALONEN 2005). As a result, populists bring the politicized issues into their black-and-white, antagonistic vision of society, and present themselves as the only ones capable of dealing with the crisis.

Recent research shows that while some populists have tried to take advantage of the crisis to advance their own political position, they did not reap benefits due to the impossibility of *"taking ownership"* of the COVID-19 crisis (BOBBA – HUBÉ 2021: 134). Instead, they had to adjust their policies to fight the pandemic. For instance, the research has shown that populists in Europe have tried to exploit the pandemic crisis to foster their own legitimacy as the leaders who speak for *the people* by assigning blame (to China, the WHO, Big Pharma, or immigrants), but eventually failed as the number of deaths escalated. At the end, the pandemic imposed its harsh reality, as the virus could not be *owned* that way. What is more, to Bobba and Hubé (2021: 7), pandemics are like natural disasters: *"difficult to politicize since they are caused by events beyond human control"*.

In another interesting study, but focusing on cases outside Europe, Lasco (2020) uses the concept of medical populism[10] to analyze the responses to the pandemic in Brazil, the Philippines, and the United States. Despite variation in how they responded to the pandemic,[11] Lasco found parallels in the ways Bolsonaro, Duterte, and Trump engaged in *"spectacularising the crisis"* (LASCO 2020: 1423). At first dismissing the pandemic, then making (false/misleading) therapeutic claims, and later invoking the discourse of individual freedoms to attack – or defend, in the case of Duterte – stricter measures against the spread of the virus. What they had in common is that all of them tried to use the pandemic to forge divisions between *the people* and *the elite* (represented by academics, health experts, and the press). Moreover, they demonstrate the validity of the concept of medical populism in thinking about the binary opposition between a technocratic response to the pandemic that tries to *"soothe the public outcry by letting experts and institutions of accountability take over"*, and a *"populist response which further spectacularises the crisis and pits 'the people' against [a] failed and untrustworthy establishment"* (LASCO – CURATO 2019: 1).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in March 2020, many analysts expected it would expose the contradictions of populist leaders for it was expected that they would mishandle the response to the pandemic. As the events unfolded, it became clear that they reacted differently from case to case. After all, it is not only that populism is a complex, heterogeneous

phenomenon, but the pandemic hit countries in asymmetric ways. The common element that stands out, though, is how populists attempted to use the pandemic to engage in crisis performance in order to advance their own political positions.

By understanding the COVID-19 crisis as both a construct and a performance, one is able to highlight how populists saw the pandemic as an opportunity for building social antagonism. Across the political spectrum, they attempted to use the pandemic to engage in crisis performance, although the virus ended up imposing itself as deaths and infections escalated. Populism thrives when new controversial issues appear, and the handling of the pandemic certainly has been controversial. And the pandemic offered a fertile ground for politization. It is likely then that not only will populism survive the pandemic, as Mudde warned us, but it will be rekindled. The challenge is to acknowledge the need for a new social contract in the post-pandemic period, so that those who feel abandoned by their own political institutions might be able to rebuild their trust in politics. Until then, populism will remain central in our future.

ENDNOTES

1 For special issues on the pandemic, see Survival (2020), Foreign Affairs (2021), and Global Public Health (2021).

2 Drezner (2020) argues that COVID-19 will not have transformative effects on world politics.

3 For a counterargument, see Rovira Kaltwasser (2012).

4 For Herman (1969: 414), crisis is (1) a situation that threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, (2) that restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed, and (3) that surprises decision-makers by its occurrence.

5 Carr (1939), Gilpin (1981) and Allison and Zelikow (1999) are good examples of this literature.

6 For a review of this literature, see Stern (2003) and Boin (2004).

7 For a review, see Kouzmin and Jarman (2004).

8 This approach survived the end of Cold War. Dayton (2004) and Widmaier (2007) are good examples of it.

9 In a way, scholarship on 9/11 helped the shift towards this new ontology. See Croft (2006) for a sample.

10 Also building on the scholarship on populism and crisis performance by Moffitt (2015), Lasco and Curato (2019) developed the concept of medical populism to characterize the political style used by political leaders in health emergencies.

11 While Trump and Bolsonaro rejected social distance and masks, Duterte imposed a strict lockdown.

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Book Reviews

Emma Dowling: The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?

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Abby is a home care nurse on zero-hour contract. She gets paid for every visit but has to pay for commuting by herself. Her clients are elderly or disabled people for whom Abby is often the only contact throughout the day. They get emotionally attached to her and sometimes cause an accident just to get her attention. One day, Abby is standing at a bus stop, getting scolded by her manager for spending too much time with one client who was covered in faeces. Overstretched, she bursts in tears saying, "I've got one rule. Treat them like your mum, look after them. You wouldn't leave your mum in a state like that, nobody would!"

Abby is in fact a fictional character from the last Ken Loach film *Sorry We Missed You* (2019). What could seem like a marginal story, amplified for the purpose of the film, is actually a symptomatic example of the state of care in the UK. As Emma Dowling shows in her new book *The Care Crisis: What Caused It and How Can We End It?* (2021), the British sector of care has long been strained to the brink of its capacities, and held together by the compassion and commitment of carers.

As a sociologist and political economist, Emma Dowling currently teaches at the University of Vienna. Her research focuses on social change and social reproduction, financialisation, feminist political theory as well as affective labour and transformation of the welfare state. Dowling has published several articles about commodification of care, its interconnection with financial capitalism and the British context before, but this newly published book is her first monograph.

In *The Care Crisis*, Dowling explores the global crisis of care, taking Britain as a case study for how it developed, who it affects and what its causes are. Her goal is to highlight what is often rendered invisible and examine certain economic phenomena through the perspective of care. Focusing on adult care, the author uncovers the structural and ideological underpinnings of the global crisis, locating them in the neoliberal logic emphasising individualism, personal responsibility and the free market. As care is relegated into unpaid or underpaid labour, Dowling points out that capitalism is in fact not able to finance social reproduction as it claims. Its inability to satisfy the needs of all groups in society then results in a constant care fix consisting of reorganising and transferring care into informal networks, which only further worsens the crisis.

The text is divided into six chapters, each containing a number of thematic subsections to facilitate the reader's orientation. After an introductory outline of the problem, Dowling focuses on forms of care as the backbone of social reproduction, addressing the intersectional implications and associated ideologies of caring. She then moves on to explore the consequences of the privatisation and austerity measures which were employed mainly after the global financial crisis, and that transferred the responsibility for care to informal carers, volunteers and food banks.

The second half of the book is devoted to financialisation and commodification of care. Offered for investors to capitalise on, the care sector is described as a set of instruments to raise gains and decrease risks, eventually disciplining both providers and recipients of care. In the last chapter, Dowling shifts to the individual level and concentrates on the business of self-care, which substitutes seeming control over one's body for the real lack of outer stability. Finally, the author concludes with some suggestions for how to escape the care fix and change our approach to care.

To understand the causes, it is first necessary to identify what we mean when we speak of the crisis of care. For Dowling, the starting point is to look at the material and structural conditions that show how precarity and insecurity monopolised the care sector: a record number of people rely on food banks, zero-hour contracts are undergoing a significant rise and care workers' wages hover just around the minimum wage. Although the data for her study are taken primarily from the UK, Dowling stresses that both the crisis and its causes are far exceeding the borders of one state, as exemplified by global care chains of migrant (mostly female) workers.

The main underlying feature of the crisis, however, lies in the redistribution of care work into unpaid labour. Care is here understood as a life-affirming action and an important part of human relationships which does not necessarily represent an unwanted burden. Nevertheless, the typical lifestyle of families has changed and what was possible a couple decades ago may not be feasible now. On the contrary, today, offloading care onto relatives under the premise of personal responsibility may throw whole households into poverty, forcing them to make continual compromises, and thereby creating an actual stress that one does not want to inflict upon others.

In addition, the burden of unpaid care, which equals 9 per cent of global GDP (p. 25), does not affect everyone equally. According to the Overseas Department Institute, in 2014, women across 66 countries spent on average 3.3 times more on unpaid care then men (p. 24). The infamous second shift then further punishes carers with a loss of income known as the 'care penalty'. Drawing on feminist perspectives, Dowling thus deconstructs the notion of 'golden years' from the Fordist-Keynesian era and asks, *"[W]ho does the work to allow for that individual to emerge and thrive? On whose assistive labour does this depend? How and why is this assistive labour so often rendered invisible?"* (p. 30). Pointing to the invisibility of care work done by women and other disadvantaged groups such as people of colour or migrants, who eventually enable society to thrive, Dowling highlights the social, political and economic embedding of care that is often disguised behind various ideologies of caring.

When the British government significantly reduced the social security system and cut the local authority funding responsible for a large section of social services by 60 per cent between 2010 and 2020 (p. 55), it appealed to civic engagement and community empowerment to justify its actions. As a result, the income of the poorest households fell by 17 per cent and the number of children living in poverty rose by 1.5 million in the seven years following the financial crisis (p. 52). Nevertheless, corporation tax receipts' share in the national income fell by 0.9 per cent (p. 54). The austerity measures therefore disabled the very communities in question while increasing profits for the most affluent members of society. Again, the burden did not affect everyone equally but targeted mainly the most vulnerable – lone mothers, lone women pensioners, ethnic minorities and disabled. For women, their already existing disadvantage was thus intensified if they belonged to a minority ethnic group or had a physical disability.

What Dowling argues is that such consequences were by no means a necessity, but rather a result of an ideological agenda. Even the IMF admitted that austerity measures do not necessarily lead to economic recovery while Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, called them a *"radical social engineering [...] designed to instil discipline"* (pp. 59–60). By demonising recipients of benefits and creating a new 'us and them' narrative, the government thus promoted a specific neoliberal 'ethic of care' that shifted the accountability from society to the individual.

Since the state withdrew from a number of its social functions, other actors had to step in. Care became private in terms of responsibility, spheres of life and marketisation, leading to the so-called 'triple privatisation'. Despite the number of adult recipients of care being approximately constant, the number of informal, unpaid carers increased by 25 per cent between 2005 and 2014 with most of them exceeding fifty hours of unpaid care work a week (pp. 84–85). Moreover, it is not only adults who care – in 2013 there were about 166 thousand children caring for a chronically ill or disabled relative, two fifths of them being between 10 and 14 years old (p. 87).

Apart from these invisible carers, the care sector became dependent on two other groups: volunteers and food banks. While volunteers use their free time to, for instance, facilitate the work of health professionals in hospitals, food banks have developed into essentially an institutionalised part of the system. Paradoxically, they are praised as a symbol of a compassionate society, yet their beneficiaries are often subjected to pity or condemnation for supposedly being incompetent. Along the lines of neoliberal logic, *"stigmatisation and victimisation are here played off against one another to reinforce the idea of a civic duty of care motivated by empathy or ethical values, as opposed to any entitlement to assistance on the basis of membership of the polity"* (pp. 91–92).

As Dowling points out, this 'community turn' has antagonistic implications. On the one hand, collective caring can indeed strengthen communities and lay grounds for alternative politics. On the other, the same appeals may clearly serve as a cover for measures that severely strain communal capacities and exploit their reproductive value. Thus, for Dowling, community is not the ultimate solution. Although she acknowledges the potential of collective caring, her attention focuses on the structures formed by the state.

After the aforementioned curtailing of public funds and privatisation of care, social service provision has changed considerably. Care homes financed by local authorities became a scarce commodity, while home care expanded but lost public funding. In addition, private companies put care workers under significant pressure. In an attempt to decrease costs, care businesses extend working hours from 8 to 12 hours a day, introduce zero-hour contracts and reduce the possible time a caregiver can spend with a client. The care sector is

also transformed by expanding automation, which on the one hand facilitates some physical tasks, but on the other enables monitoring of the care worker's mobility and time. The alleged rationalisation thus mainly consists of redrawing boundaries between work and free time rather than raising efficiency.

As the population is aging, financing adult care becomes not only a pressing issue but also a promising business. To compensate for budget cuts, the British government decided already in the early 2000s to initiate 'social impact investing', i.e., to enable a financialisation of care through various investment instruments. The central organisation 'Big Society Capital' was subsequently established, once more referring to community empowerment and civic engagement. The types of investments vary; however, one of the popular instruments, the 'social impact bond' (SIB), promises a financial return on an investment between 12 and 30 percent. In contrast to outsourcing, social impact investing requires the investor only to provide money, while the local authority or government commissions some other organisation to perform the actual work. Since such investment generally bears high risk and low returns, the British government already admitted that it has plans for a secondary market that would *"trade and issue insecurities"* (p. 159).

Notably, financialisation of care is gaining a global impact. Alongside the UK, the US and Canada, which take the lead in social impact investing, other countries like Germany or Switzerland are joining in, with parts of South East Asia and Africa showing interest. The first SIB project in the US was introduced by the state of Maryland in 2010, and it was aimed at reducing the length of foster care as well as juvenile recidivism. Belgium followed as one of the first countries in continental Europe to have an SIB project. A local 3-year project using social impact bonds was launched there in 2014, targeting unemployment and juvenile recidivism as well (Nazari Chamaki – Jenkins – Hashemi 2019: 291–292). Altogether, the global impact investing market already amounted to $502 billion in 2018 (p. 144). While financialisation is promoted as a solution to underfinanced care and an incentive for domestic markets, Dowling strongly warns against it. It is not only that care is instrumentalised by the market, but structural reasons are omitted, and complicated cases may be dropped as *"those with wealth to invest decide what constitutes a 'social problem' and how it should be addressed"* (p. 157). What is more, it is those who are abandoned by austerity measures that eventually turn into objects of financialisation and profit-seeking, Dowling argues.

Adapting care to the markets is further illustrated in the last chapter, which best links the personal level with the societal context. Here the author diverts from social service provision and shifts to the business of self-care that includes phenomena like clean eating or clean loving. What she finds is that the wellbeing business is essentially a prolongation of the neoliberal ideology of caring. According to it, people have to take care of themselves both because they are their most valuable asset and because no one else will take care of them. At the same time, Dowling indicates that people seek self-care in order to find stability and control over their lives, ultimately demonstrating their political choices through consumption.

The argument made in the book is that the realm of care and social reproduction is directly influenced and formed by existing material relations of wealth and power. Capitalism is thus part of the problem. However, the proposed solutions do not truly alter current socio-political arrangements. Although some problematic aspects of the welfare state are acknowledged, the structural changes that the author calls for, such as allocating more resources and societal capabilities to care, ensuring better working conditions (e.g. an immediate end to zero-hour contracts), establishing collective infrastructures based on risk-pooling or protecting care from high-risk investments, mostly take place within its framework. Such a lack of alternatives nevertheless points to another important aspect of the book, which is the role of the future. In Dowling's view, financialised capitalism and austerity measures in particular symbolise a mode of governing based on *"expectations, projects and speculations about future gains"* (p. 49) which, however, are never realised. Together with the capitalist capability to co-opt alternatives, our ability to imagine different futures is thereby crippled, limiting chances for change.

Dowling admits that there is no easy solution to the crisis. What she suggests instead is to start rethinking care in our societies and put it in the centre of our consideration. The ultimate goal is thus to broaden the debate and promote the idea of democratisation of care in terms of its recognition, redistribution and reduction.

There are many aspects of the book that could be developed further here – from the gender and ethnic dimensions to the potential of automation or the mechanisms of financialisation. *The Care Crisis* represents

a robust study based on ten years of research that forms a comprehensive picture of the current state of care. Although it is intended for a wider non-expert audience, the author stuck to the rigour of academic writing – Dowling's examination is nuanced and exhaustive in references and data, which certainly makes it a valuable piece of writing. Most importantly, the British case shows how far the situation can go if certain global trends are implemented without restrictions, which is why the book is highly relevant even beyond the British context.

What could be criticised, however, is that in the book, the crisis is covered from so many angles that the original idea disappears. The author often departs from a topic to describe the surrounding context, moving from the present to the past and back, and sometimes repeating the point, which reduces the coherence of the message. As a result, the reader may feel a lack of an overarching framework, even though a connection exists. Despite its weaknesses, *The Care Crisis* is able to bring important insights to the discussion about care and show that a free market and financial capitalism may not always be the most efficient and prosperous solution.

The coronavirus crisis has painfully reminded us of how dependent we are on care. Dowling now incites us to think in which direction we want to continue. Will we leave care to the interests of private capital, or will we re-appropriate it as an essential part of our existence? It is high time to start the debate.

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Adrian Robert Bazbauers and Susan Engel: The Global Architecture of Multilateral Development Banks: A System of Debt or Development?

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Do multilateral development banks (MDBs) promote development, or debt relations among states? Where did the phenomenon of multilateral lending emerge and why does the MDBs model seem to continue to be successful in the 21st century? And should we expect MDBs to yet again turn into debt collectors and austerity advocates after the COVID-19 pandemic? These are some of the issues that Adrian Robert Bazbauers and Susan Engel touch upon in their newly published book *The Global Architecture of Multilateral Development Banks: A System of Debt or Development?*

According to a recently established database on public development banks, there are currently about 450 of these institutions with a combined total of 11.2 trillion US dollars in assets (Public Development Banks Database, undated). A study by Delikanli, Dimitrov and Agoli (2018, pp. 38–39), which focused only on 25 *multilateral* development banks, found out that the subscribed capital of these institutions increased by an average of 5.7% per annum between 2007 and 2016, reaching 1.4 trillion US dollars, which was equal to 1.8% of the world GDP in 2016. Notwithstanding these numbers, *The Global Architecture of Multilateral Development Banks: A System of Debt or Development?* is the first book-length study of multilateral development banks and of the system of multilateral finance more generally. The main aim of the book is to approach the MDBs from a systemic perspective and analyze their activities as part of a larger financial structure. Such novel approach enables Bazbauers and Engel to investigate the question they pose in the book's subtitle – do MDBs constitute an infrastructure for financing development, or do they rather function as parts of a global debt architecture?

Both authors have an established record of dealing with the topic. Adrian Robert Bazbauers (UNSW Canberra) focused in his previous publications mostly on the technical assistance programs of the World Bank and the role of the institution in teaching and transferring development lessons (2016, 2018), while Susan Engel (University of Wollongong) studied the World Bank's operations in Vietnam and Indonesia (2010). In the reviewed book, they combined their different theoretical perspectives (constructivism, organizational sociology and a critical/neo-Gramscian perspective) into an eclectic theoretical framework which guides the analysis of the book. Sadly, the authors decided to *"keep [...] theoretical*

musings short" (p. 3), although the originality of their framework and its shown usefulness for analyzing the MDBs system would deserve a closer examination.

In total, the authors examine 30 MDBs, which they divide into 3 groups: regional development banks, sub-regional development banks, and specialized development banks. The relatively large number of institutions that get attention in the book already makes a sizeable contribution because except for the biggest MDBs – such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – the role, functioning and activities of other MDBs have so far been largely overlooked. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the authors also point out the interconnectedness between different MDBs and throughout the book they emphasize the fact that the MDBs constitute an identifiable system. Together, the 30 MDBs employ around 30,000 people, which compares to the United Nations' 44,000 employees (but with a narrower field of operations), and in 2018 the examined MDBs had a total capitalization of over 1.3 trillion US dollars and 222.7 billion US dollars in new lending commitments (p. 3).

The book could be divided into 3 parts, although the authors decided to not do so. The first part (the introduction and chapters 2–4) contains a short overview of the theoretical framework, and examines development thinking, the emergence of multilateral development finance, and MDBs in an historical perspective. The authors provide what they call *"a brief longue durée examination of the emergence of money and debt"* (p. 18) and with the help of several historical studies (such as Mikesell 1966, or Graeber 2014), they present a narrative on the evolution of debt relations among states. In addition, they identify 5 factors (pp. 24–33) which enabled the emergence of MDBs: the gradual growth of international cooperation, the changing international hegemony in the inter-war period and the rise of the United States (US), the "Keynesian revolution" in economics and Roosevelt's New Deal, US economic planning during WW2, and, finally, the US economic cooperation with Latin America and the role of Latin American countries, especially Mexico, in the evolution of the idea of long-term development investments (a point examined thoroughly by Thornton 2021).

The rest of the first part discusses historical episodes (the "Keynesian" period of 1946–1979, the neoliberal era of the 1980s and 1990s, the post-Washington Consensus era of 1998–2009, and what the authors label the "retroliberalism" of 2010–2020) of the MDBs system and development thinking in general. A significant attention in this introductory overview is given to the World Bank (WB), due to the central position that it occupies in the MDBs system and also due to the fact that the WB often stands as a role model for the organization and functioning of other MDBs (p. 38; see also Heldt and Schmidtke 2019).

The second part of the book (chapters 5–8) firstly delves into the organizational structure of MDBs, again using the World Bank as a case in point. Chapter 5 is arguably the most technical part of the book, as it explains in detail the voting system at the WB; its capital subscriptions, credit ratings, and governance processes; and the types of loans it offers. The authors did a wonderful job in presenting all these aspects of the WB and managing to make the text understandable to non-specialists as well. Students of MDBs will find a lot of insight in this chapter. Regrettably, the comparison of the WB and other MDBs is quite short and even a bit sketchy. On the other hand, comparing all 30 institutions in terms of all the mentioned aspects would probably be too long and not essential for the book's arguments; the authors thus arguably found a good compromise. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that due to the theoretical choice of the authors to "black-box" the MDBs, the internal organization of these institutions into departments, units and committees, together with their dynamics and evolution, is completely omitted.

The rest of the second part presents the remaining 29 MDBs divided, as stated above, into 3 groups: regional development banks, sub-regional development banks and specialized development banks, the last of which can be again divided into 3 sub-groups: the Arab-led grouping, the Nordic one, and the BRICS group. After a brief introduction of the groups, the authors take one MDB after another and focus on each one's establishment, fields of engagement, financial position, institutional development, shareholder structure, and the types of projects it promotes. Although the depth of the insight varies among the different MDBs, the book contains an enormous amount of valuable information in one place. Among the analyzed MDBs are, for example, the Eurasian Development Bank, the

Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, the FONPLATA Development Bank, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Islamic Development Bank, and the recently established New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. As mentioned above, most of the MDBs have not so far received a significant academic attention, which only increases the value of these chapters.

Besides simply presenting an overview of the individual organizations, the authors also try to highlight some of the political dynamics surrounding the MDBs system. For instance, they present the dilemma of regional development banks, namely the matter of accepting non-regional states among their shareholders. Engaging richer states from the Global North may result in benefits for the region;[1] however, the regional stakeholders may lose their political space and autonomy in the bank when this happens. This choice can be a difficult one, since quite often the regional development banks promote as one of their aims the development of the region and regional identity.

Another interesting political dynamic surrounding regional MDBs can be seen in the challenge that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB; established in 2015) poses for the Asian Development Bank (AsDB). While China is a land power with an inland capital and an "East-West" understanding of Asia, Japan is a North Pacific periphery of the Eurasian landmass and has a "North-South" maritime understanding of Asia. This gets reflected in the memberships of the two regional MDBs. As Bazbauers and Engel explain: *"The AIIB members have a strong representation from Central and South Asia and the Middle East, and of note there are eight Middle Eastern countries in the AIIB that are not in the AsDB, though several Middle Eastern states expressed early interest in the AsDB. Russia is a regional member in the AIIB but not a member of the AsDB, while Turkey is a regional member in the AIIB and a non-regional AsDB member. […] The AsDB includes 14 Pacific Islands states that were not AIIB prospective founding members, though a couple have since joined."* Here we see a battle for leadership in Asia being played out in how MDBs are structured and how 'region' is constructed by regional powers (p. 107, my emphasis).

Although the authors underline that the MDBs find themselves in similar political environment, they do not engage in an analysis of the

political dynamics *among* the MDBs. A lot of attention is given to arguments that support the view of MDBs as constituting a system, such as that they share institutional similarities and a corresponding understanding of debt and development processes, but the dynamics of this system hardly show up in the analysis. Are there political fights among the different MDBs? Do the relationships between and among regional, sub-regional and specialized MDBs differ? If so, how? Can we find preferences of certain MDBs to cooperate with other MDBs or not to do so? How is the network of MDBs structured, who are the central actors and the gatekeepers, and who sits on the periphery in different areas of development? Regrettably, the readers won't find many answers to these questions in the book.

The last part of the book (chapters 9–11) leaves behind the institutional focus of the previous chapters and zooms in on specific fields of activity of the MDBs. Chapter 9 deals with infrastructure, chapter 10 with climate finance, and chapter 11 with human development, specifically in education, health and gender issues. These chapters comprehensibly show the systemic nature of the MDBs and their interconnectedness and thus reinforce one of the arguments of the book. In addition, the authors also return to the topic opened up in the first part of the book and warn against the global debt build up. According to them: *"many infrastructure investments from the MDBs will end up as debts, dragging down the prospects of states for decades"* (p. 227).

Ultimately, the book answers the question it poses in its subtitle by arguing that the current MDBs architecture is more a multilateral system of debt relations among states and less a system of development. As Bazbauers and Engel observe: *"the record of MDBs in creating economic development has not been overwhelming yet the system of MDBs continues to expand"* (p. 35). According to the World Bank research, the current global debt build-up is the fastest and most rapid in the post-war period (Kose et al. 2020) and it is only reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the multilateral finance provided by the MDBs is a major source of finance for many Global South countries in their responses to the pandemic. Arguably, it is still too soon to predict the behavior of the MDBs and other international financial bodies such as the International Monetary Fund in the upcoming months, as well as the development and impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The book, however, ends with a rather

dismal point by saying that *"it may not be long before the MDBs switch from being vital sources of funds in a pandemic to debt-collectors and austerity promoters"* (p. 275).

One of the shortcomings of the reviewed piece is the understanding of MDBs as almost exclusively lending/operational institutions. Therefore, the authors are mainly concerned with the financial operations of the MDBs. However, many of the 30 MDBs under examination are also important intellectual actors with significant knowledge production capacities and tangible ideational power in development discourse. The reader can find some scattered remarks pointing in this direction throughout the book, but the system of knowledge production, knowledge flows and research collaborations among MDBs is not mentioned, although one could argue that it is precisely this intellectual role that underpins the MDBs in the world of abundant private capital. Moreover, it would be interesting to see how the MDBs system contributed to the current development discourse (e.g. to the shift toward a retroliberal agenda) and to the intellectual defense of its current standing as a "system of debt".

Notwithstanding, *The Global Architecture of Multilateral Development Banks: A System of Debt or Development?* is a well-researched and well-written book, a must-read for anyone interested in multilateral development banks and global development in general. It compiles an extensive amount of information and reads almost as a handbook in several parts. It places the current MDBs system into an historical context of debt relations among states and development thinking and calls for attention to the massive debt build-up following the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, being the first monograph to analyze the system of multilateral development banks, the book helps to advance an interesting field of inquiry for economists, political scientists and development scholars, and in the future, it could serve as a point of reference in this field.

ENDNOTES

1 The authors present the case of the African Development Bank, which refused to admit non-regional member countries until the 1980s and, during its first ten years of functioning, approved projects totaling 451 million US dollars. In comparison, the Asian Development Bank, which was established two years after the African Development Bank with several Global North members, approved 3.36 billion US dollars in its first decade (p. 107).

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Trine Villumsen Berling, Ulrik Pram Gad, Karen Lund Petersen and Ole Wæver: Translations of Security: A Framework for the Study of Unwanted Futures

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The security landscape has tremendously changed since the Cold War, mainly due to globalization, technological innovations and the internet (especially concerning information exchange), the War on Terror, and so forth. The security field has genuinely escaped its classical confines. The newly evolved security threats such as international terrorism, organized crime, hybrid threats, migration, or environmental challenges do not comply with traditional boundaries between the state's external and internal security.[1] The Westphalian state can no longer grasp a clear demarcation line between internal and external threats since some of the new security threats, such as cyber-attacks, can peregrinate on a global scale. Recently, the international society has been encountered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which pointed at the need to rethink the management of security and risk. Those are the 21st-century challenges the securocrats located in various conventional security establishments such as the police, the intelligence services, and the military have to grasp.

But the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the traditional securocrats (understand professionals) discussed with actors coming from various disciplines (scientists, doctors) the possible ways to carry out the right decision, and with policymaking the ways to manage a threat of this nature or further unwanted security risks. And that is the point where scholars coming from critical security studies – in this case, *Trine Villumsen Berling, Ulrik Pram Gad, and Karen Lund Petersen* from the Danish Institute for International Studies and Ole Wæver from the University of Copenhagen, who is also the founder of CAST (the Centre for Advanced Security Theory) and CRIC (the Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts) – stir up the debate with their recently published book *Translations of Security: A Framework for the Study of Unwanted Futures. Translations of Security* shall become a must-read for anyone interested in security studies, especially in their critical perspective, and in the production of security knowledge in the microperspective field. The authors' thoughts are based on the aforementioned security complexities and problematique; however, the key aim of this book is not to present the new security challenges but to present a new analytical framework that grasps how the security policies are produced among key actors dealing with security challenges of the 21st century, who no longer have to come from traditional security fields.

In the authors' opinion, we have to understand how society handles the security challenges of the 21st century they call unwanted futures – i.e. uncertain (possibly catastrophic) futures. We need to pay attention to how different perceptions of security and threats, risk, or danger meet and are translated among various actors. Hence, the book's primary goal is to analyze translations within various meetings and among various actors. According to the authors, it is inevitable to comprehend what takes place during various security meetings when experts with different perceptions of security translate security challenges. After having understood the meetings, scholars can detect the weak spots of those meetings to make use of the possible lessons learned for further management of unwanted futures. Moreover, such an understanding of the security landscape enables a qualified critique of current political practices of security. That is the main reason why translations of security among actors should be studied, especially nowadays when unwanted futures are not solely discussed by traditional security experts but also by scientists, doctors, politicians, or even security amateurs. But when talking about translations, how do we study them? How do we theoretically and methodologically grasp different security logics when security and risks are constantly negotiated among actors? We lack any conceptual and analytical framework to grasp the translations. Therefore, the reviewed book's goal is to create an analytical framework that enables one to study them.

In terms of the book's structure, the book consists of six chapters. The first two chapters portray the theoretical-methodological bases of the translation research. The following chapters analyze 1) translations across disciplines and professions, 2) translations across cultures, and 3) translations across scales, respectively. In the conclusion, the authors explain the potential theoretical and methodological weaknesses when studying translations.

Nevertheless, before we come to understand the content and meaning of this book, it is vital to clarify the book's key concepts. Since it is crucial to understand them, the authors do not underestimate the vivid explanation in the first part of the book; however, the explanations themselves logically occur across the book to remind the reader of the correct meaning to ensure that the reader does not translate the meaning of the book differently. As briefly mentioned above, the authors work with two

core analytical concepts of the entire research – 1) translations and 2) the translation zone. Translations take place between different conceptions of unwanted futures and are often approached from different disciplines or professions, or different national or organizational cultures, or across different scales. On the other hand, translations are produced within so-called translation zones, which are an ambiance where *"different conceptual expressions of how to handle unwanted futures [...] and how new meanings are negotiated [meet]"* (p. 3).

In the second chapter, the authors seek to theorize translation by discussing several theoretical approaches. The book generally draws on several instrumental theories which see translation as mediating objective, hermeneutic theories, emphasizing the interpretation of creative values and social functions. By zooming in on particular approaches, the authors present the meaning of translations across a rather multifaceted scale, starting with the Christian theology, which emphasizes precise translations; moving to the Bourdieusian understanding of translation, which studies how social fields understand practice on its own terms[2], and then to organization theory, which perceives that meaning travelling across actors can move without any change of its content; and ending with Actor Network Theory, which sees translations as all the negotiations which an actor takes to speak/act on behalf of another actor.

In the next steps, based on the theoretical corpus, the authors conceptualize translations *"as whatever happens in the translation zones produced by meeting between different ways of approaching forms of unwanted"* (p. 38), creating their future specific analytical framework to study translations. Regarding the theorization of translations, they approach their analytical framework for the study of translations, where different types of knowledge meet, empirically. Hence, the framework combines characterizations of contrasting systems of meaning revolving around 1) functional differentiation (disciplines and professions), 2) segmentation differentiation (cultures), and 3) the stratification mode (scales). Moreover, the authors are fully aware of the methodological dangers while seeing translations as all the negotiations; therefore, the authors presented the aforementioned triad set-up, which enables them to grasp them.

Following the triad of function, cultures, and scales, the next three chapters analyze translations in specific translation zones to study how the governance approaches the unwanted futures. In each part, the authors collected appropriate empirical evidence that translates the data into so-called tales, which are short empirical presentations of contemporary translations written by various authors from different academic disciplines. The book includes twenty-four tales dealing with different themes, enabling the reader to fully understand translation in everyday practice. The tales, however, are not meant to be some in-depth studies but rather particular empirical material supporting the appropriateness of the authors analytical framework.

Furthermore, if we zoom in on the functional differentiation, the authors analyze how different threats have been perceived by distinct fields of expertise/management – commonly viewed as professions and disciplines. They see professions mainly as the work of experts (intelligence officers) that seek to apply knowledge (doing things practically) and tend to keep a certain level of secrecy in their job; on the other hand, people coming from disciplines (such as scientists) do things in an intellectual way, seek to produce new knowledge and are inclined to openly share the research results. Both groups, in their opinion, live in different conceptual universes; hence, it might happen that the real issue might get transformed into rather different content. In some cases, professions and disciplines do not have to understand each other, which can have a negative impact on security policies. Such a case is illustrated in tale 3.2., in which the authors are discussing the role of anthropologists and military experts within the Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) in the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan, where the anthropologists sought to carry out in-depth cultural studies to fully understand the context while the US Army wanted answers for quick conflict resolutions. The experience of the HTTs shows that in some cases, the translations of unwanted futures across professions and disciplines do not have to reach the desired goals. Besides this, the authors also discuss the growing presence of security amateurs (NGOs, think-thanks), showing that the security knowledge no longer belongs just to experts. However, in some security domains such as cybersecurity, they notice the role of semi-experts (e.g. IT experts) who enter the traditional security structures due to their expertise and work on the verge between the state and the private sphere to combat challenges such as cybercrime.

In the following chapter, the segmentation differentiation between cultures is discussed. Unwanted futures are translated into the sedimented codes of national or organizational culture. As the authors aptly point out, *"the concept of culture denotes collective 'ways of life': Insiders understand why 'we' do stuff in 'our' way; outsiders may need to be instructed, need to study, or they [may] even need to assimilate, to really understand this culture, at first foreign to them"* (p. 104). This chapter finds two main distinctions that are critical to understanding the translation zone across cultures. On the one hand, the distinction revolves horizontally around translations between the national and the organizational culture, where certain hierarchies evolve since some organizations and nations claim sovereignty due to the superiority of their culture. Here authors also study security knowledge from other security colleagues from different cultures since states or organizations look to others to learn inspiration to optimize their managerial practices. This situation is fittingly displayed in tale 4.1., which discusses how the US incorporated the knowledge of torture of their Middle Eastern colleagues in the torture of Middle Eastern terrorists in Guantanamo, since the US believed that this horrifying know-how could bring better results. However, this tale shows how incorporating a different culture can damage the identity of the initial culture. On the other hand, one can cut the distinction vertically and present the universalizing and civilizing mode against individual cultures. Furthermore, the book also briefly elaborates how the national identity can be challenged by the global civil society, resulting in a weakening of the government while it works out of the jurisdiction of the nation-state.

The further chapter that closes the aforementioned triad delves into the stratificational mode by focusing on translations across scales. The unwanted future is translated across scales. An adequate example can be when the state, as a dominant actor, is threatened by an external threat – such as an invading army – which is later on securitized and translated into the lower scales of the simple soldier serving in the trenches. Said otherwise, scale refers to scope as well as a hierarchy. Scales are also co-produced in the production of knowledge. Additionally, as in the previous chapter, this chapter revolves around two main distinctions that are fundamental for understanding the translation zones across scales. The vertical one revolves around translations between higher and lower scales in terms of hierarchy. In the tale in box 5.1, the authors zoom in on

a situation in which the US was translating the global threat of terrorism at the local level in a northern Argentine town situated on the notorious *'frontera caliente'* (the Brazil-Paraguay border), where it was believed terrorists exist. However, such translations were not translated into the language of the local population, who perceived security in terms of appropriate education, appropriate living standards, and further social guarantees. The other distinction collapses the vertical distinction and presents a networking mode existing independently of the previous one. The authors discuss it in this section since they believe society witnesses renegotiations of hierarchy, territoriality, and belonging. Interestingly, they also contemplate the increasing role of superempowered individuals who can stress the authority of a state via extensive transnational networks that are mainly located in the cyber-space[3].

The book, in the end, provides the reader with a conclusion where the authors are fully aware of the potential methodological weaknesses of the research while looking at all forms of politics of unwanted futures. Hence, they want to challenge further scholars interested in security studies to refine the theoretical and methodological basis of translations analysis. To do so, in the short brief 6.1.[4] they sketch a manual for carrying out an empirical translation analysis, which should serve as the yardstick when studying translation analysis and working on future theory-building.

This book is certainly not an easy read for anyone with a moderate knowledge of critical security approaches. The authors realize it. Therefore, they provide the reader with more than twenty short empirical tales. The book is not then interwoven only with theories and methodological attitudes to the study of translations. The authors clearly show how their newly developed analytical framework can apply the knowledge in practice, namely in real everyday situations. This is the crucial added value of the research. The book is also a great example of interdisciplinary writing, which is essential for grasping the security challenges of current times appropriately. In terms of constructive criticism, it is complicated to react to some of the weaknesses when the authors are fully aware of them (e.g. the methodological side of the book). In my opinion, it would be convenient to transform this approach for studying translations into some security school of thought using concepts and knowledge that are characteristic for them. But this idea was refused by the author since they do not seek

to build up another security school but rather provide scholars with an agenda for doing security research. Moreover, some tales could have been longer to support the research argument; nevertheless, the authors seek to provide the reader with more than twenty tales to balance the few in-depth studies. Additionally, the authors mention the growing presence of amateurs and non-traditional securocrats across the book, but they do not assess enough whether it shall be an opportunity or not; I would appreciate if they took a clearer position in this regard. To sum up, as mentioned elsewhere in this review, this book should be a must-read for anyone who studies security practices from a micro perspective and looks for a new analytical approach to grasp this topic, but also for other security scholars and experts.

ENDNOTES

1 As Didier Bigo (2001) points out via his famous metaphor of the Möbius ribbon, the internal and external securities merged.

2 The authors also declare that some of the concepts of the Paris School of security studies, mainly represented by Didier Bigo, served as a source of inspiration since this approach studies the political power of everyday micro-practices of security. The Paris School is also considerably influenced by Pierre Bourdieu.

3 The growing role of the individual has been considerably rethought since the publication *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, written by B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. D. Wilde, who did not admit any significant role to the individual since they believe an individual does not have the power to threaten the state as the key referent object.

4 In the authors' opinion, the analyst has to deal with four key steps when doing translation analysis: 1) Identify the translation zone, 2) identify the claims on authority, 3) ask, "What is the powerful discursive or physical means used to mobilize the translation?", and 4) analyze the stakes and consequences at play.

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Zdeněk Rod is currently pursuing a PhD degree in international relations, focusing on conflict management, at the Department of Politics and International Relations of West Bohemian University in Pilsen. Within his PhD thesis, he focuses on the implementation of security-development nexus approaches in a post-conflict environment. Besides this, he is also interested in the PRC in world affairs and hybrid warfare. He is also a research fellow at the Centre for Security Analysis and Prevention in Prague.

Jaroslav Olša, jr.: 150 Years of Hidden Ties between Koreans and Czechs / 체코와의 숨겨진 오랜 인연, 150년의 교류사

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The Republic of Korea. The name of the country which has been resonating in the minds of the Czech Republic's inhabitants more and more frequently in the last decades. Initially, the infinitely distant and, for most Czechs, almost inaccessible Korea is turning into a country that almost everyone can visit at least virtually or in person to experience its beauty, culture, people and differences. However, this opportunity goes hand in hand with the level of relations achieved between the two countries. These began to take shape in modern history in 1990 with the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. The current Czech Republic has been successfully continuing to develop the bilateral relations for more than 30 years, with the Korean side reciprocating, and has helped to shape them positively in many ways or areas through its activities.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the Czech Republic and the Republic of Korea, a very interesting and, for many readers, certainly beneficial book was published. It was written by Jaroslav Olša, Jr., a former Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Seoul (2008–2014). He is the author of several publications on the history, culture and literature of selected countries in Asia and Africa and on the historical relations of the Czech Republic with various countries – for example, Korea and the Philippines.

The content of this publication introduces the readers not only to the history and present state of Czech-Korean relations, but also to some significant personalities who participated in the creation and subsequent formation of these relations, and some significant events in the relations. The aim of the book is to bring readers closer to the Czech-Korean relations at the cultural, economic, and political level. In particular, it explores the genesis and development of these relationships in the 19th and 20th centuries. Throughout the book there are many interesting pictorial materials, which significantly enliven the publication and offer the reader a picture of both the present-day Korea and its history. The book is written in both Korean and English, but the Czech version is unfortunately missing, and it is not currently available for sale.

The chapters in the publication are arranged chronologically, as the discussion spans from the first references to Korea in Czech translations of foreign language works (especially travel diaries) to current information

on Korea. The first chapter, supplemented by selected newspaper clippings discussing Korea and the front pages of some of Josef Kořenský's travelogues (both from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries), deals mainly with the experiences of travellers who had the opportunity to visit the country. However, as Olša points out, these initial contacts with this distant country did not help to establish closer relations with it, whether political or commercial (p. 13). The author of the publication mentions here individuals such as William F. Lukes, a Czech native who enlisted in the US Navy and took part in the Korean expedition in 1871. The other mentioned travellers include Max Taubles, perhaps the first "Western" journalist to live in the country, and Joseph Haas, a Prague-born consul of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy who visited Korea as part of his profession as early as in the 1880s (pp. 15–17). Although the author describes several interactions in detail, he describes them as "accidental" (p. 11). On page 13, the author mentions some research concerning visits by Czechs in Korea but does not mention its name anywhere in the book. It would certainly be beneficial to mention such information for readers who are interested in this issue.

The years 1901–1910 are the period chosen by the author as the focus of the third chapter (pp. 25–29). Like the previous ones, this chapter concentrates on the representation of Korea in Czech literature, but this time the literature is in the form of publications that deal mainly with the aforementioned Russo-Japanese War. The chapter also presents selected contemporary newspaper articles that give a proper account of the period. These surviving publications or diaries are undoubtedly proof of the interest of the Czech public at that time in the events in these distant lands. Although the publication is written in English and Korean, these Czech language newspaper articles are not translated, which unfortunately means that they will go unread by most of the book's Korean- or English-speaking readers.

The activities of the Czechoslovak Legions in Korea in 1918–1920 are the subject of another chapter of the publication. The author mentions the activities of these legions in Vladivostok and their subsequent assistance to the Koreans during the liberation of their state in the 1920s (p. 31). This is a very interesting and not yet thoroughly researched topic, but it is also a very valuable event in the Czech-Korean relations. The Legionnaires not only supported the liberation of Korea by supplying arms,

but they also mentioned the issue in contemporary newspapers such as *Czechoslovak Daily*. However, it was not only weapons that remained after the Legionnaires, but also many photographs, memoirs, etc. Just as in the chapter before, the newspaper articles in this chapter are only in the Czech language, which seems to be a reoccurring problem in the whole book.

In the following chapters, the author focuses on the cultural aspect of the Czech-Korean relations during the years of 1920–1940 (pp. 53–57). He begins by reprinting some newspaper articles from the time period which deal with Czech literary works appearing in Korea, and discussing these articles, but these articles are once again only in the Czech language. Karel Čapek's works were among the first to be performed in theatres in Korea. This author's works are still popular in Korea today, and many of them have been translated into Korean. Other authors who appeared in the Korean press in those days included Jaroslav Hašek and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. It is clear that art has played, and continues to play, a significant role in spreading awareness of Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic in Korea and vice versa. Therefore, in this chapter the author also mentions many other literary or pictorial works, films, etc. which have contributed to raising awareness of Czech culture in Korea (p. 57). At the end of his publication Olša refers the reader to other literature on Korea, including linguistic literature, which is especially suitable for students of Korean studies, and literature focused on economics, science, military topics or fiction (pp. 125–131). Olša is himself the author of several literary works, so his focus on literature in this book is understandable. He mentions Korean translations of works by famous Czech writers, who are still very popular in South Korea, but correspondingly recalls the exhibitions on Korea which have been held in Prague and the Korean music and films that are popular all over the world (p. 135). In this chapter, the author also mentions countless Korean films, books, comics and musical compositions that have enjoyed great success in the Czech Republic in recent times.

Furthermore, the book does not omit the history and tradition of Korean studies in Czechoslovakia, the genesis of which can be traced back to the 1950s (pp. 59–69). The chapters on this topic are especially devoted to the personalities who contributed to laying the foundations for the teaching of Korean studies in Prague. These were not only Czechoslovaks, but also Koreans who resided in Czechoslovakia during this period. The

most famous personality of this sort of this period was Alois Pultr, the first Czech expert on Korea, who served as the head of the Department of Korean Studies at Charles University. To give another example, one of the most famous experts on Korea of all time was Vladimír Pucek, who wrote several textbooks on the Korean language and culture. In the following years, Czechoslovak students of Korean studies were also able to travel to Korea for study stays, but only to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The post-war military-political situation also marked a major shift in the Czech-Korean relations. Jaroslav Olša, Jr., describes the efforts of the Czechoslovak government to take the position of a "bridge" between the West and the East, which, among other things. Involved dealing with the "Korean issues" (pp. 71–73). However, these efforts came to naught in the context of Czechoslovakia's inclusion into the Soviet-led Eastern bloc. Following the division of Korea into two separate parts after the end of World War II, in 1948 Czechoslovakia established diplomatic relations only with North Korea. The opening of the Czech Embassy in Pyongyang took place in September 1948. This cooperation lasted until the end of the 1980s. It was a cooperation in various areas – humanitarian aid, scholarships for students, cultural cooperation, etc. Until the establishment of the independent Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia's relations with the Republic of Korea were practically at a standstill.

The following part of the book focuses on the development of bilateral relations between the countries in the second half of the twentieth century. The Czechoslovak Republic had almost no contact with South Korea during its pro-Soviet orientation. However, an exception was, for example, the XXIV Summer Olympic Games in 1988, which took place in Seoul. Thus, the first official Czechoslovak diplomatic relations with South Korea were established no earlier than 1990, and a year later an Embassy of the Czech Republic was opened in Seoul (in contrast, Czechoslovakia's relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea declined somewhat at this time). The author describes the following years as a period of "turbulent change" in Czech-Korean relations (p. 107). The author also highlights the year 1990, when a bilateral agreement was concluded between Charles University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, thanks to which students from both countries are still able to go on exchange study stays in the other country (p. 109). Subsequently, the Hankuk University

of Foreign Studies established a study programme in Czech-language studies. Thanks to Korean experts on Bohemia, additional materials for Koreans wishing to study Czech as well as new Korean-Czech dictionaries were also created.

Since the author himself served as ambassador to South Korea from 2008 to 2014, he describes the diplomatic situation between the Czech Republic and Korea in the following part of the book as a direct participant. Olša mentions the year 2015 as a turning point because in this year, several Czech-South Korean official meetings took place in Prague and Seoul. Since 2016, the relations have taken a somewhat different direction, as they started to focus more on closer cooperation within the fields of economy, science and research. The economic cooperation experienced its first boom between 1993 and 1997, but due to the stagnation of Asian economies in the late 1990s, it slowed down again. In the following years, however, this cooperation regained its strength, and in 2010 South Korea took 15th place in the ranking of the Czech Republic's most important trading partners. In recent years, South Korea has been ranked third after China and the United States in the list of the Czech Republic's trade partners outside the EU. To date, however, several dozen Korean companies operate in the Czech Republic. To give some examples of important Korean companies operating in the Czech Republic, we can mention Hyundai, Sungwoo Hitech, Doosan Heavy Industries and Nexen Tire. It is therefore clear that the automotive and heavy industries are a key sector in Czech-Korean trade. However, we must not forget the Czech products that are exported to Korea, especially Czech beer, which is very popular among Koreans.

The publication was drawn up with an emphasis on the historical events that led to the formation of the mutual relations between the Czech Republic and Korea. It is based not only on a number of historical newspaper articles and photographs, but also on a presentation of publications and travelogues from various eras. However, the attached Czech language articles and documents are not translated. Since the book is written for Korean- and English-speaking readers, it would be appropriate to translate these sections into these languages, but the formatting of the book, namely the number of pictures per page, does not really allow for this. The author does not overlook the importance of cultural and public diplomacy,

which greatly contributed to raising both countries' awareness of each other. Economic cooperation is also highlighted in the book. In addition to examples of this cooperation between Czech and Korean companies, Jaroslav Olša, Jr., also provides selected statistical data that improve the information on the involvement of the Republic of Korea in the Czech economy and vice versa. Furthermore, the author underscores the importance of engaging in Korean studies both in the Czech Republic and in Korea as another important aspect in the development of Czech-Korean relations. Korean studies have a long tradition in the Czech Republic and are gradually attracting more and more people interested in this field. Accessible Korean studies programmes are offered by Charles University in Prague (the Korean Studies programme) and Palacký University in Olomouc (the Korean for Business and Commerce programme).

This unique publication is therefore suitable for both the professional and the general public. It focuses mainly on the history of Czech-Korean relations during the 19th and 20th century, but not that much on the recent history. As these relations are currently flourishing, it would be fitting to outline their possible future and opportunities that could strengthen these relations. The book also focuses mainly on culture and art, despite the fact that the Czech Republic cooperates with South Korea mainly in economic and commercial terms. Certainly, it will also arouse further interest in Czech-Korean relations and the countries' mutual future development at the political, commercial, and cultural level. In a way, it is a positive response to stepping into the fourth decade of the successfully developing mutual relations between the Czech Republic and South Korea and their people. However, as this book is not for sale, and it was presented only through the social networks of the Korean Embassy in Prague and is available only in selected libraries, it is difficult for readers interested in this topic to read the book or learn about its existence at all.

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