

Perspectives

Review of International Affairs

Perspectives

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‘Civilizing’ the Post-Soviet/Socialist Space: An English School Approach to State Socialization in Europe The Cases of NATO and the Council of Europe

YANNIS S. STIVACHTIS

Abstract: In international society, states recognize the need for collective standards of international conduct if international order is to be maintained. The global application of international norms and standards began during the nineteenth century. In this process, the standard of ‘civilization’ played an essential role in determining which states would join the expanding European society of states and which ones would not. Although the historical standard of ‘civilization’ fell into disrepute, standards of ‘civilized’ behavior continue to exist. Therefore, in an international society the socialization of an out-group state implies its acceptance of the rules, norms and practices that the international society considers to be ‘civilized’. This article investigates the evolution of the standard of ‘civilization’ and its relationship to the contemporary evolution of the idea of democracy and the policy of ‘democratic conditionality’. It examines how NATO and the Council of Europe have sought to ‘civilize’ former socialist countries and Soviet Republics by ‘socializing’ them into Western values and norms as they are related to liberal democracy.

Key words: English School, membership conditionality, civilizational standards, civilizing processes, exporting democracy, NATO, Council of Europe

INTRODUCTION

In international society, states recognize the need for certain collective standards of international conduct if international order is to be maintained. The global application of international norms began during the nineteenth century through the process of the expansion of the European society of states and its gradual transformation

into the contemporary global international society (Bull and Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992; Watson, 2009; Buzan and Little, 2000; Stivachtis, 1998 & 2003). In this process, the standard of 'civilization' was essential in determining which states would join the expanding European society and which ones would not (Gong, 1984; Schwartzberger, 1955).

Although the historical standard of 'civilization' fell into disrepute, standards of behavior similar to the historical standard persist in international society. For example, Gerritt Gong (1984: 91) argues that 'the parallels between the old standard of "civilization" and a new "standard of human rights" are intriguing' since they share a common concern for the fundamental rights of life, liberty, property, and individual dignity. Although some scholars have examined and identified new forms of the historical standard of 'civilization' (Donnelly, 1998; Fidler, 2000; Fidler, 2001; Mozafari, 2001; Gong, 2002; Bowden, 2004; Bowden, 2009; Hobson, 2008), what is missing from the literature is an investigation of the relationship between the idea and policy of 'democratic conditionality' – as practiced by various international organizations – and the historical standard of 'civilization'.

The purpose of this article is to discuss precisely this relationship by examining how European institutions, namely NATO and the Council of Europe (CoE), have sought to 'civilize' former socialist countries and Soviet Republics, or, to put it differently, to 'socialize' them into Western values and norms as they are related to liberal democracy (Stivachtis, 2009: 25). Yannis Stivachtis (2008: 80) has argued that

'despite the major changes that have occurred, the standard of "civilization" has remained an international practice as well as a benchmark against which the attitudes and policies of states are assessed. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the EU policy of "membership conditionality".'

However, the European Union (EU) will not be a subject of investigation in this article. This is for two reasons: first, the case of the EU has been extensively examined by several scholars; and second, the author of the present article has dealt with it in other publications.

The process of socialization of a non-member of a society implies that prior to exporting their norms the members of the society accept their own standards as reflecting 'civilized' behavior. Therefore, in an international society the socialization of an out-group state (Merlingen and Ostrauskaite, 2005) implies its acceptance of the rules, norms and practices that the international society considers to be 'civilized' standards of behavior. As a result, candidate states which cannot or are unwilling to fulfill the required standards are 'named' and 'shamed', and also receive characterizations such as 'backward', 'rogue', etc.

To avoid any misunderstanding, this article does not argue that the governments of NATO and CoE Member States and the officials of these organizations deliberately seek to impose the European civilization on the peripheral countries. Rather, what the article claims is that governmental officials and organization administrators are unaware of the genealogy of their policies, practices, and standards. Member States are acting to ensure that the organizations in question can still meet their mission with additional members, who might be differently oriented. In an effort to achieve 'effectiveness,' Member States have resorted to using standards and practices that have an homogenizing effect. However, these standards of behavior are nearly identical to the historical standard of 'civilization' (Stivachtis, 2008). Consequently, the process of organization enlargement closely resembles a mere continuation of old practices that have previously been internationally condemned. In other words, new concepts are used to describe old practices but the practices themselves remain unaltered.

One may argue that it was the post-socialist/Soviet states which voluntarily asked to join NATO and CoE and, therefore, they should adhere to the norms and standards of those organizations. However, as Stivachtis (1998: 194) has pointed out, it is the logic of anarchy that determines the options available to states when they try to pursue their interests, and the real question is 'Who is in need to join?'. For example, during the historical expansion of international society, the Ottoman Empire joined the European society of states in order to maintain its territorial integrity. Japan, on the other hand, sought to fulfill the standard of 'civilization' in order to assure a most prominent position for itself in world affairs. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern European states and former Soviet Republics were left with no viable alternatives and, consequently, they sought integration into Western European organizations as a means to achieve their political objectives. Historically speaking, one may observe that those in need have always been the same: namely, extra-European states or states at Western Europe's periphery seeking membership of a European-based international society. Moreover, the logic of anarchy implies that it is also in the interest of regional international societies to expand, as this would increase the territorial space in which their preferred political, economic, and social order applies.

In order to achieve its purpose, the article is divided into three parts. The first section provides its theoretical framework. This section demonstrates the relevance of the English School (ES) of International Relations to the study of NATO and CoE enlargement and focuses on the historical development of the standard of 'civilization.' The second part discusses how liberal democracy has come to be accepted as one of the contemporary forms of the historical standard of 'civilization'. The final section demonstrates how 'democratic conditionality' has been utilized by NATO and CoE to 'civilize'/socialize applicant countries.

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL AND THE EXPANSION OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

One of the main theoretical inquiries of the English School is its inquiry into the historical expansion of international society (Bull and Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992 & 2009). Central to this inquiry is Hedley Bull's distinction between an 'international system' and an 'international society' (Watson, 1990; Watson, 1987). Bull (1977: 9–10) defined the international system as being formed 'when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions to cause them to behave as parts of a whole.' An international society, on the other hand, exists

'when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions' (Bull, 1977: 13).

The system/society distinction constitutes an empirical and practical formula which Bull introduced in order to distinguish the homogeneous relations among a particular constellation of states from the heterogeneous relations of these states with the remainder of the political entities prevailing in the international system. For example, he saw an essential difference between the type of relations among the European states and the type of their relations with the Ottoman Empire. According to Bull, European states formed an international society, while the relations of these states with the Ottoman Empire exemplified state interaction within a broader international system. In this sense, there exists an international society confined within limited geographic boundaries, which is distinguishable from an international system extended beyond the boundaries of society.

Hedley Bull, Adam Watson, and their colleagues (1984) sought to examine how the Westphalian European society of states expanded outwards and was gradually transformed into the contemporary global international society. In this process, extra-European states had to fulfill a set of standards in order to be admitted to the expanding European society of states (Suzuki, 2009; Stivachtis, 1998). For example, Gerritt Gong (1984) demonstrated how the fulfillment of the standard of 'civilization' served as a benchmark for admission into international society.

Because the logic of anarchy works more powerfully over shorter distances than over longer distances, and because states living in close proximity with one another may also share elements of a common culture, homogeneous types of international societies may exist within the confines of a global international society (Buzan, 1993: 341; Buzan, Jones, and Little, 1993). For example, it has been argued that the con-

temporary global international society, which is culturally heterogeneous, includes a number of more culturally homogeneous regional international societies (Stivachtis, 1998: 89).

ES scholars have argued (Buzan, 1990; Buzan and Waever, 2003) that regional institutions underline the existence of regional international societies. Starting from this premise, ES scholars (Diez & Whitman, 2002; Riemer and Stivachtis, 2002) have attempted to use Bull's distinction to examine the relations between Western European countries and the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, which were previously under the control of the Soviet Union. Richard Whitman and Thomas Diez (2002), for example, have argued that the EU initially constituted a regional homogeneous international society embedded in a heterogeneous European international system. Through the process of enlargement, however, this regional homogeneous international society (EU) expanded outwards, gradually transforming the heterogeneous European international system, in which it was embedded, into a more homogeneous regional European international society (Stivachtis, 2008). Conditions placed on candidate states are reflective of the attempt to build EU international society core values within the European international society (Diez and Whitman, 2002: 59). In addition, the development of the EU has been viewed as an example of a planned extension of the civilizing process that would aim not only to create new forms of political community in Europe, which would be more internationalist in outlook, but also to transmit the values associated with this process to the rest of the world (Linklater, 2005b: 385).

NATO and the CoE can also be seen as offering the institutional basis of a regional homogeneous society of states that was initially confined to Western Europe (Stivachtis, 2009: 25). Through the process of NATO and CoE enlargement, this regional homogeneous international society expanded outwards, gradually transforming the heterogeneous European international system, in which it was embedded, into a more homogeneous regional European international society. The idea that NATO and CoE Member States occupy the core of a European international society implies a desire of the core to transmit the rules and values that they share collectively through the process of their enlargement, which may be seen as a new wave of European expansion. Therefore, conditions placed on candidate states are also reflective of the attempt to build NATO and CoE international society core values within the European international society.

Studying the enlargement of NATO and CoE, one may observe that this process is not very different from the process of the historical expansion of the European international society. Like in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Member States had to define the conditions under which they would admit candidate states. As a result, European states which aspired to NATO and CoE membership needed

to meet the political criteria associated with 'membership conditionality'. Like the standard of 'civilization', 'membership conditionality' is an expression of the assumptions used to distinguish those that belong to the expanding NATO or CoE international society from those that do not. Those who fulfill the political conditions set by Member States will be brought inside while those who do not conform will be left outside. This thesis has been most recently supported by Hartmut Behr (2007: 239), who has argued that the accession politics of the EU and the standard of 'civilization' have strong commonalities. Like the non-European states in previous times, candidate states had to learn to adjust themselves to new realities, even at some cost to their own societies.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE HISTORICAL STANDARD OF 'CIVILIZATION'

One of the most significant developments of medieval and modern history was the expansion of Europe that exposed European civilization to the rest of the world (Wight, 1977; Bull and Watson, 1984; Watson, 1992; Watson, 2009). At the time of this expansion, there were already several different homogenized regional international societies. European international society was unique in that it was able to bring all of the external, formally isolated societies together as well. The result was that the superimposition of the European international society unified the world politically, economically, and technologically due to the acceptance, in principle, of European rules and institutions by the non-European states.

'Infidels' or 'savages' helped shape the European identity and the maintenance of order during the process of European expansion, as the international society began to see itself as specifically European in character; cultural differentiation became a decisive influence on international relations. Being able to participate in international society – which was seen as a privilege from the point of view of the European states – presupposed a non-European state's 'civilized' nature. This relationship between European and 'civilized' states was visibly expressed in various international institutions, especially international law, diplomacy and the balance of power, but also in the conduct of domestic politics (Bull et al., 1990: 82).

As the European international society expanded during the nineteenth century, the political communities of Asia and Africa were brought within its confines. In order to be afforded equal treatment and to strengthen their voice in international affairs, many non-European states found it desirable to join the international society. To accommodate the requests of non-European political entities, European states engaged in a process of defining the conditions under which they would admit non-European political communities. Communities that wished to become full members had to meet the standard of 'civilization.' This standard expressed assumptions about who belonged to the dominant expansion of European society and who did

not. Those who could not fulfill the requirements set by the European states were left outside (Schwarzenberger, 1955).

The standard of 'civilization' evolved to include the following political and economic requirements (Gong, 1984: 14–15). A 'civilized' state guarantees the basic rights of life, dignity and property, and freedom of travel, commerce, and religion, especially that of foreign nationals; it consists of an organized political bureaucracy with the means to run state machinery efficiently and the capacity to organize for self-defense; it subscribes to generally accepted international law, including the laws of war, while maintaining a domestic system of courts, codes, and published laws which guarantee legal justice for all within its jurisdiction, whether they are foreigners or native citizens; it maintains permanently functioning avenues for diplomatic intercourse; and it conforms to the accepted norms and practices of the established 'civilized' international society (Stivachtis, 2008).

The historical standard of 'civilization' reflected the liberal norms of European civilization (Tucker, 1977: 9). Many of the standard's requirements were purposively vague and constituted a 'moving target', allowing European states to push for more and more reforms of non-member states. Furthermore, it became increasingly difficult to 'civilize' a state's government and international behavior without embarking on a project to 'civilize' its inhabitants, thereby estranging them from their cultural heritage (Gong, 1984: 22). As such, the standard of 'civilization' became the dominant mode of organizing non-European political communities (Stivachtis, 2008: 74).

Today, the standard of 'civilization' is associated with the unjust colonial system of domination and exploitation; it served to deny equal rights in the international society for the political communities of Africa, Asia and Oceania. To representatives of non-European civilizations, the standard of 'civilization' was an insult, because as Europeans claimed their 'civilized' nature afforded them a privileged legal status, they abused many of their own standards. This led to determined campaigns for its discontinuation.

The idea of civilization in modern international politics started with the effort of the Europeans to relate the concept of 'civilization' to the way in which the modern state ought to function (Stivachtis, 2005). Hence, if the world were to be civilized – an outcome in the interest of the European states – more states had to be created according to the European model. As the European entity evolved, competing claims were made on the proper composition of the modern state, moving from conservatism and monarchies to liberalism and parliaments (Stivachtis, 2008: 75). Moreover, democracy has been viewed as the natural result of the development of the capitalist state; spreading it is seen as an imperative for the spread of the capitalist system (King and Kendall, 2004). Indeed, one of the most important functions of the historical standard of 'civilization' was to protect capitalist markets in foreign communities (Stivachtis, 2008: 76).

European civilizational standards imposed by European states created a confrontational atmosphere between different cultures (Keene, 2002; Keal, 2003). According to the historical standard of 'civilization', the non-European communities had not only to adopt European-made rules but also European values, ethical standards, economic standards and commercial practices associated with liberalism and capitalism (Gong, 1984: 14–15; Tucker, 1977: 9). Thus the standard of 'civilization' came to be seen, among other things, as a tool to spread capitalism and protect its operations in foreign lands (Stivachtis, 2008: 74). Politically, this became an unacceptable reality.

Because the standard of 'civilization' has fallen into disrepute, other standards have risen to take its place. Discussed here is the standard of 'democracy,' which encompasses several other concepts associated with 'civilization' such as respect for human rights, the rule of law, and liberal economic development (Stivachtis, 2008: 76). This, along with its portrayal as a timeless universal concept, provides it with an advantage in explaining the expansion of the new international society. As such, democratization has become a stand-in for the civilizing project.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARD OF 'DEMOCRACY'

Since the creation of the state in Europe, ideological and political developments have centered on its ability to signify 'civilization' based upon its relative level of democratic-ness. John Dunn (1979: 11) has argued that democratic governance has become the benchmark for full international legitimacy in a world where 'a democracy is what it is virtuous for a state to be.' Democracy has taken on the conceptual characteristics of 'civilization,' becoming associated with progress, development, and modernization. According to Hobson (2007: 85), 'the phenomenon of democratic states being considered "virtuous," however, is hardly a new one.' Indeed, the Wilsonian campaign to spread democracy enshrined the Western democratic state upon the highest stage of 'civilized' statehood in a world 'in which every one is trying to show that he is more democratic than everybody else' (Brown, 1920: 175). As a result, in the interwar years, democracy became the impetus in the fight against the totalitarian regimes in Europe and elsewhere – the 'civilized' versus the 'barbarous' (Stivachtis, 2008: 78).

Following World War II, the distinction between the 'civilized' and the 'barbarous' was framed as a competition between 'communism' and 'freedom'. Central to the dynamics of the Cold War were two competing visions of the concept of democracy – liberal democracy against 'people's democracy'. Neither side actively denied 'democracy,' but both sides rather contested its boundaries by attempting to re-describe it in such a manner as to include one camp while excluding the other. Thus to be civilized meant to be democratic and, therefore, free. However, authoritari-

anism and authoritarian democracy were useful when they served Western/US interests. The highest amount of interaction between these opposing poles took place in the Third World context (Bozeman, 1971; Bozeman, 1984).

The West's dominance found expression in the economy, in the military, and, importantly, in the rules and institutions of an international society shaped by Western powers (Clark, 1989). However, as non-Western political communities began to take part in international society, they began to realize that Euro-Atlantic norms and Western ideas were not as universal as they were portrayed (Bozeman, 1960). Acting behind the screen of amorphous interpretations of Western values such as freedom, democracy and law, conflict was brewing in the field of intercultural relations. Non-Western political communities began – consciously and unconsciously – to reinstate native modes of thought and behavior, all the while continuing to pay allegiance to Western concepts and forms. In hearing their words employed in unexpected, foreign senses, Western states started to realize that their transplanted words and institutions had taken on a different meaning, as they now stood for practices and attitudes widely divergent of the paternal norms (Bozeman, 1960: 5). The conflict between the opposing ideologies of liberalism and communism only temporarily subdued cultural differences (Stivachtis, 2008: 79).

The result of the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union and other parts of Eastern Europe has been the introduction of either liberal democracy or partial democracy, while scholars like Francis Fukuyama declared the triumph of democratic liberalism and the end of history. As a result, “models of democracy” were replaced by a “model of democracy” (Hobson, 2008: 86). As it has been suggested, Fukuyama hit upon an important ‘linguistic fact,’ namely, ‘the absence of any universalizable alternative to the language of liberal democracy for the legitimization of political institutions’ (Fenves, 1994: 229).

With the end of the Cold War, ‘democracy’ became much more narrowly defined, in both its practice and its institutions. States that follow the Anglo-American liberal model – now promoted as democracy – are seen as ‘virtuous’ and fully legitimate (Hobson, 2007: 18). Practitioners and international institutions did not lag behind. George H.W. Bush called for a new world order ruled by democratic states, and President Yeltsin quickly reciprocated by declaring that Russia should become a democratic state in order that it might join the ‘community of civilized states’ (Stivachtis, 2008: 79).

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent decline of the communist ideology were also viewed as a triumph of civilization over totalitarianism. Consequently, the democratization of the ‘barbarians’ became an accepted and necessary component of international behavior (Bowden, 2002). Peace, stability and predictability in international relations could only be achieved through the democratization of the non-democratic ‘other’ (Stivachtis, 2008: 79). Thus the model of

liberal democracy began to be promoted not only by individual Western states but also by many regional institutions like the EU, NATO, and the CoE, which are not politically and culturally neutral but reflect the experiences, interests and values of its promoters. As a result, 'democratic conditionality' was introduced to determine which candidate states should join these institutions.

By now, liberal democracy has become hegemonic to the extent that the 'liberal' is regularly dropped out, with this model 'naturalized' as democracy. 'Democratic conditionality' promotes a particular type of democracy, but human rights and civil liberties could also be protected under different types of democratic regimes.

Variations within and between the different models found in Western democratic states largely disappear when democracy is exported, with the type promoted being the one that corresponds closely to the Anglo-American standard. Thus a new standard of 'civilization' based on democracy retains the Western-centrism that marked its initial historical form. Democracy is currently understood and promoted in a similar fashion as its historical version, which reflected the interests and values of the dominant European powers (Hobson, 2007: 19). Consequently, once again a particular socio-political form of organization is promoted that conforms to a model emerging from a core of powerful Western states.

This new standard is not asking states to meet some objective criteria, but it is rather asking 'them' to become more like 'us.' It has been suggested that unlike the historical standard, the new one operates more through 'attraction' than 'coercion' (Mozzafari, 2001: 263). However, democracy's implied 'progressiveness' and universalizing language obfuscate the structures of power that are contained within it. As such, the implications of implementing the liberal democratic model are overlooked. Coercion operates through defining and limiting what democracy is and can be. States that do not conform to this liberal democratic standard are judged to be non-democratic or insufficiently democratic. They are seen as becoming 'ontological outlaws' (Donnelly, 2006). It is what these states *are*, or *are not*, that removes them from 'the civilized world' (Hobson, 2007: 21).

DEMOCRACY: THE STANDARD OF 'CIVILIZATION' IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

With the conclusion of the Cold War and the apparent triumph of the Western model of market capitalism and liberal democracy, there was a 'reinvention of a restrictive international society' (Clark, 2005: 180). A considerable resurgence in the confidence in liberal values, combined with a sizeable power differential favoring certain democratic states, has led to the re-emergence of a more explicit and restrictive standard of 'civilization,' which again largely reflects the values and interests of Western states. Lacking the juridical status of the historical standard, it is in the po-

litical realm that it is primarily found, centered on the principles of democracy and capitalism. Democracy, in particular, is presented as being the most suitable form of governance for liberal capitalism and, in providing a set of socio-political institutions, it has become the framework and mechanism through which Western values and interests are transmitted.

The movement towards a 'restrictive international society' has meant a tightening and strengthening of the principles that inform 'rightful membership,' with the growing belief that the internal (democratic) makeup of states plays a crucial role in bringing about 'rightful conduct' (Clark, 2005). This has led to a renewed emphasis on the socio-political organization of states. Manifested in the policies and rhetoric of individual states, international organizations and NGOs has been a pervading desire for liberal democracy in the political sphere and market capitalism in the economic one. This increasing push towards a far greater level of socio-political uniformity across states clashes with the more pluralist framework inherited from the UN Charter system. In these shifts is reflected an ongoing tension between two versions of liberalism that help define international society: 'liberal pluralism' and 'liberal anti-pluralism' (Simpson, 2004: 272). The former corresponds to classical liberalism, which emphasizes 'the virtues of tolerance, diversity, openness together with an agnosticism about moral truth' (Simpson, 2004: 77). This was more prominent in the post-1945 order, which was based on sovereign equality and independence. It was a pluralist ethic framed in terms of coexistence and not inquiring too heavily into the domestic makeup of states.

Following initially the start of the de-colonization process and later the end of the Cold War, one witnesses the return of 'liberal anti-pluralism,' which is characteristic of the era of the historical standard of 'civilization.' This version of liberalism is imbued with a 'moralistic flavor' and a conviction in the truth and 'right-ness' of liberalism and liberal politics (Simpson, 2004: 78). Moreover, 'liberal anti-pluralism' encourages exclusiveness as well as intolerance towards non-liberal regimes. Once again, the world is inhabited 'by "civilized" and "barbarous" communities, only now it is understood in terms of democracies and non-democracies' (Hobson, 2007: 84).

In the post-Cold War era, marked by this 'liberal anti-pluralism', liberal jurists have gone so far as to claim the emergence of a 'right' to democracy (Franck, 1992; Franck, 1995). This has meant that a much heavier emphasis was placed on labeling, ostracizing, and, when necessary, confronting 'pariah' states that do not conform to the new form of the standard of 'civilization.' Reflecting on this anti-pluralist trend, Donnelly (2006) makes the useful distinction between 'behavioral' and 'ontological' outlaw states. The former 'violate particular international norms,' while the latter 'are outlaws more for who they are than what they have done.' The manner in which international society is reformulating itself with a more explicit and stricter standard

based around democracy leads to states being more easily classified as 'ontological outlaws.' It is what these states *are* – non-democratic – that becomes the essential problem and the basis of their pariah status.

In order to fully comprehend the development of 'democratic conditionality' as a new form of the historical standard of 'civilization', one needs to adopt a historical approach and examine how and why democracy promotion has become central to the practice of international politics.

EXPORTING DEMOCRACY: THE 'CIVILIZING' PROCESS IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

'[D]emocratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right' (Sen, 1995: 5). Western states reassert their unwavering commitment to 'democracy' at home and attempt to promote it abroad. Recently democratized states consolidate through continuous reforms, while non-democracies subject themselves to the application of 'democratic conditionality' by international society. In the process of socialization, the existence of applicable 'civilized' standards is presupposed. The transferal of democratic norms may well be identified as a 'civilizing' process aiming to transform the internal structures and external behavior of non-democratic/'barbarian' states into those of 'civilized' democratic states (Linklater, 2004; Linklater, 2005a; Linklater, 2005b; Arnason, 2001; Albert et al., 2000).

International and transnational actors promoting democracy have tended to provide a stricter meaning of democracy and a stricter conception of democratic governance through offering a version that reflects the standards and interests of the most powerful democracies (Gills et al., 1993). Although there have been important contributions highlighting the less progressive dimensions of democracy promotion (Robinson, 1996), the democratic peace thesis (Barkawi and Laffley, 2001) and the democratic entitlement in international law (Marks, 2000; Smith, 1998), these studies have remained limited in number. As it has been correctly argued (Hobson, 2007: 6), what needs to be investigated is the way these separate, albeit interrelated, discourses and practices feed into and reinforce the preeminent position of democracy in world politics. Of essential importance is to find out what role democracy plays in defining legitimate statehood and, in so doing, help structure relations between democratic and non-democratic states.

Becoming the legitimate form of domestic governance, democracy serves as a contemporary standard of 'civilization' in the sense that it becomes central in determining the limits of international society and constructing relations with those 'beyond the pale of civilization.' Therefore, despite its positive role in opening possibilities for greater levels of international peace, stronger international law and more secure protection of human rights, 'democracy' also promotes processes of exclu-

sion, hierarchy and violence (Hobson, 2007: 5). Thus, a tension emerges from the contradictory ways in which practices and discourses about democracy are being used and promoted in international politics. As a result, more attention needs to be given to democracy's coercive dimension.

A current fundamental debate revolves around the normative question of the merit of the international community's active involvement in promoting democracy. Supporters of democracy promotion claim that it should be the guiding foreign policy paradigm of Euro-Atlantic industrial democracies, saying that such a policy will allow them to 'fulfill their destinies' within international society (Muravchik, 1992). Opponents have argued that the underlying cultural dimension of promoting democracy amounts to democracy promotion being a Trojan horse that implicitly seeks to westernize non-Western peoples. Promoting democracy is seen as a sanitized form of 'neo-colonialism' within international society.

Regardless, an essentially global consensus has emerged in favor of promoting democracy. Therefore, another debate emerged as to what forms of intervention are proper in seeking democracy's spread. Among the alternatives, 'political conditionality' enjoys widespread support as it is portrayed as a 'middle of the road' strategy between the two extremes of the interventionist spectrum (Schraeder, 2002). This can be seen most clearly in the policy of 'democratic conditionality' that is applied by a range of European-based international institutions.

EUROPE, INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY, AND 'DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONALITY'

During the 'civilizing' process, European international organizations can make use of two basic social psychological strategies to civilize/socialize countries into their norms: social influence and persuasion. With reference to social influence, international organizations seek to 'elicit pro-norm behavior through the distribution of social rewards and punishments' (Johnston, 2001: 499). By allocating social rewards, an international organization provides in-group normative support for norm-consistent behavior. By carrying out social punishment, the organization exerts social pressure on those at the receiving end to alter their behavior (Finnemore and Sildink, 1998: 906; Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990; Schimmelfennig, 2000: 125). The desire of the former socialist countries and Soviet Republics to remake themselves in the image of the Euro-Atlantic in-group makes them susceptible to the social psychological effects of being publicly shamed and praised by the organizations that embody the norms and values of the in-group. Moreover, organizational membership or assistance came to be dependent on the adoption of democratic and economic conditions by candidate or assistance-seeking states. In turn, the implementation of these conditions has contributed to the expansion of the capitalist system and the liberal political and economic order associated with it. It is not a co-

incidence that requirements included in the historical standard of 'civilization' are also included in 'democratic conditionality' (guarantees for basic rights, such as life, dignity, and property; freedom of travel and commerce).

NATO AND 'DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONALITY'

The Preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty reveals a claim to common democratic values among the Allies by pointing out that they are '*determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.*' Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has been engaged in a project that politically implements the shared values and norms of liberal democracy that have traditionally been seen as essential to the existence of the security community (Lucarelli, 2005: 85). Further, NATO was able to redefine its purpose and security concept. The outcome was a set of policies that aimed to increase security by diffusing Anglo-American liberal norms (Lucarelli, 2005: 85). Thus NATO's behavior has contributed to creating the conditions for the development of a 'system of democratic security communities' (Deutsch et al., 1957) 'characterized by shared identities, values and meanings provided by liberal-democratic values' (Williams, 2001; Adler and Barnett, 1998: 56). In the process, NATO Member States have pushed neighboring non-members to develop common liberal norms. This has given rise to distinct layers of out-groups in terms of their relation to Member States on the basis of their perceived level of norm adoption (Lucarelli, 2005: 86–87). Consequently, an unequal relationship has been established between the democratic *civilizer* (NATO) and the former socialist and Soviet *civilizees*.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NATO'S 'DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONALITY'

The narrative reconstruction of NATO's identity in the post-Cold War period, as illustrated in the New Strategic Concept of 1991, along the lines of a 'democratic security community' affected not just NATO but also what was demanded of the new partners. Most importantly, it contributed to defining the boundaries of what could be considered 'appropriate' and 'acceptable' behavior. Illustrated by the content of the New Strategic Concept (1991), the reconstruction of NATO's identity into a 'democratic security community' revised the requirements of new members. Importantly, the new identity helped shape the borders of 'appropriate' and 'acceptable' behavior (Lucarelli, 2005: 91; Williams and Neumann, 2000: 361). More specifically, the creation of frameworks for co-operation and exchange, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Membership Action Plan (MAP), has progressively impacted the process of the self/other categorization of the participants.

In the NACC, NATO treated all the NACC non-NATO members as belonging to the same out-group. The launch of the PfP signified the beginning of a categorization process where the partner countries were asked to engage in a self-differentiation process leading to the identification of different out-groups with different interactive practices with NATO itself. The Individual Partnership Program presented by the partner country to a large extent defines its perception of its distance from the in-group. Moreover, PfP activities provide an arena in which communication takes place within normatively set boundaries that define what is 'appropriate' and what is not (Shimmelfennig, 1998).

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was inaugurated in May of 1997 by the Foreign Ministers of the Allied and Co-operation countries meeting in Sintra, Portugal. Military co-operation among participant countries was to be raised to a new qualitative level. Co-operating closely with partner states, NATO Members reaffirmed the commitment to 'strengthening and extending peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and to co-operating to this end on the basis of shared values and principles...' (Lucarelli, 2005: 89). Furthermore, according to the NATO Participation Action Plan of 1994, PfP participants could become full members should they 'remain committed to protecting the rights of all their citizens...' (Lucarelli, 2005: 89).

The NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996 stated that 'protection and promotion of human rights is an integral part of genuine security.' It is through this document that democratic conditionality became an integral part of NATO enlargement. Specifically, the document stated the following:

'In evaluating requests for membership in NATO, the human rights record of the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe should be evaluated according to their commitment to fulfill in good faith the human rights obligations of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the Helsinki Final Act' (Lucarelli, 2005: 89-90).

In 1999 NATO's Security Concept 'implicitly reserved the possibility of entering the Alliance only to democratic states' (Fierke and Wiener, 1999; McGwire, 1998; Gaddis, 1998; Yost, 1998). Thus, broadening the membership of NATO became a part of a much broader strategy to help create a peaceful, undivided and democratic Europe (Moltke, 1997: 2). The Membership Action Plan (MAP), adopted in April 1999, further clarified that:

'Future members must conform to basic principles ... such as democracy, individual liberty ... [and] would also be expected: (a) to settle their international dis-

putes by peaceful means; [and] (b) to demonstrate commitment to the rule of law and human rights' (Lucarelli, 2005: 90).

The MAP signified a further step in the process of self/other categorization. As a matter of fact, a signature of the MAP is possible only if the applicant country has reached the status of an out-group situated close to the in-group of domestic democracy and respect for human rights. This series of steps to merely achieving the status of being considered for accession represents a first step in the civilizing process, as it keeps the barbarous state at arm's length while leaving the sanctity of civilized states intact.

NATO ACCESSION PROCESS

Following a decision to enlarge, accession talks with the candidate countries soon begin. The objective is to obtain formal confirmation from these countries of their commitment to the general obligations of NATO membership and their acceptance of the political (democratic) and legal *acquis* of the Alliance (Moltke, 1997: 4).

Between the request for accession and the actual accession of a candidate state, NATO involves the invited country to the greatest extent possible in Alliance activities. NATO wishes to ensure that the candidate state is as well prepared as possible to undertake the responsibilities and obligations of NATO membership upon its accession. The MAP is designed to put into place a program of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparations for possible future membership. Active participation in PfP and EAPC mechanisms remains essential for aspiring countries that wish to further deepen their political and military involvement in the work of the Alliance. The MAP is divided into five chapters: Political and Economic issues; Defense/Military issues; Resource issues; Security issues; and Legal issues. Within each chapter, the MAP identifies issues that might be discussed and highlights mechanisms through which preparation for possible eventual membership can best be carried forward (MAP, 1999).

NATO 'DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONALITY': THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

NATO has contributed to the promotion of democratic institutional structures by four means: first, by applying 'hard conditionality' (issuing set conditions that should be met according to specific procedures and specified ends); second, by implanting 'soft conditionality' (defining a generally set aim that could be reached in a variety of ways); third, by providing 'technical advice' and 'actual teaching'; and fourth, by providing models to emulate (Lucarelli, 2005). In this case social learning has led to institutional adaptation, particularly in the field of democratic control of the armed forces, foreign policy and defense policy.

Aspirants are offered the opportunity to discuss and substantiate their willingness and ability to assume the obligations and commitments under the Washington Treaty and the relevant provisions of the 'Study on NATO Enlargement' (Moltke, 1997). In pursuit of the goal of closer Euro-Atlantic integration, each candidate country is asked, among other things, to pursue internal policies based on strengthening democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, the principle of separation of powers and judicial independence, democratic elections in accordance with OSCE norms, political pluralism, freedom of speech and press, respect for the rights of national and ethnic minorities, and non-discrimination on political, religious or ethnic grounds. This includes ensuring the adaptation of all relevant legislation in the pursuit of these policies. Therefore, aspirants are expected to describe how their policies and practices are evolving to reflect the considerations set out above, and to provide their views on and substantiate their willingness and ability to comply with other parts of the NATO *acquis*.

In view of the candidate state's foreign policy orientation towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the candidate country is requested to develop legislation based on universal principles of democracy and international law. An important element in reforming the legal system is the participation in the conventions of the Council of Europe, which set up common standards for the European countries. Efforts are being aimed at reforming law enforcement bodies, improving mechanisms to ensure that all state and civil structures obey and adhere to the rule of law, and strengthening the role of citizen's rights protection bodies.

Each aspiring country is requested to draw up an Annual National Program (ANP) on its preparations for its possible future membership, setting objectives and targets for its preparations and containing specific information on steps being taken, the responsible authorities and, where appropriate, a schedule of work on specific aspects of those preparations. The program forms a basis for the Alliance to keep track of aspirants' progress and provide feedback.

Each year the Alliance draws up for individual aspirants a report providing feedback focused on the progress made in the areas covered in their ANP. The program is first subject to consultation between the allies and the candidate in the autumn. Then in the spring this preliminary dialogue is followed by in-depth discussions in the candidate's capital with a NATO team of experts. NATO then issues a report on the progress made in individual countries, which provides the basis for further consultations between NATO and the aspirant country, hence ensuring the link to the domestic political structures. The report helps identify areas for further action. Finally, NATO issues a general report on the MAP for the following NATO ministerial meetings in the spring (Boland, 2002).

This process can be seen as an almost textbook example of combined social influence and persuasion techniques as the setting up of individual goals is achieved

through persuasion and dialogue in a private setting, but the evaluation contained in the general report will amount to either a reward or a degree of shaming if goals have not been achieved. As such, MAP countries are under a significant degree of pressure to achieve the targets set in the ANP.

The dense area of communication is not only functional to the adaptation of the national structures of candidate states to Western standards, but it also provides the framework within which values, norms and ideas are transferred. This takes place in three different ways (Lucarelli, 2005: 98). The first way is through reinforcing control on compliance with respect to the conditionality adopted. The type of democratic conditionality that NATO sets is rather 'soft' compared with the EU conditionality. NATO's conditions are not only more limited in scope but also different in terms of strictness. Usually NATO sets boundaries within which transitions should take place, and then it sets certain objectives, leaving the countries fairly free in the way they want to achieve them. Then it sets procedures whereby the interaction between NATO and the country on that particular objective is frequent and occurs at various levels. Among these procedures are those of control and evaluation that always come after exchanges of opinions and NATO advice have taken place. This implies that although there is conditionality and a verification of the extent to which the country has matched the conditions, there is also the possibility of influencing the transition of the country by intervening with softer communicative instruments that include arguing and persuading rather than dictating (Lucarelli, 2005: 99). In the second way, NATO's position is frequently reintroduced in the bilateral debate through 'technical advice,' which is usually very welcome and does not take the form of a 'teaching' activity on NATO's part. Finally, in the third way, explicit 'teaching' activities take place in the context of courses and seminars that provide forums of interaction among people from different countries.

Democratic norms and the effects of the 'civilizing' process are translated into documents and institutions in the partner country that are in line with Western norms of liberal democracy (Cotter et al., 2002: 257). Finally, NATO has also developed other ways to influence the state concerned. One is represented by its media campaigns. The second is represented by NATO's Science Program, which offers grants for collaboration in civil science between NATO scientists and those in partner countries (Lucarelli, 2005).

NATO's approach to 'democratic conditionality' differs substantially from that of the European Union. NATO has not adopted 'democratic conditionality' with a very clear hierarchical relationship between the norms-deliverer and the norms-receiver as the main form of norms transfer (Schimmelfennig, 2003; Schimmelfennig, 1998; Schimmelfennig et al., 2006). The reasons for this difference could be found in the fact that the *acquis communautaire* of the EU is much larger than that of NATO. Fur-

thermore, the EU is a normatively dense organization and shows a faith in regulatory systems in a way that NATO does not. Therefore, the 'cost' of the 'civilizing' process is higher in the EU than in NATO. However, the desire of the CEES and Visegrad countries to join the Euro-Atlantic in-group has made them susceptible to NATO pressures, as this was also the case in their relations with the EU. Moreover, joining NATO proved to be a step towards joining the European Union, making those countries interested in the EU even more susceptible to the NATO pressures. Finally, the fact that aspirant countries have to fulfill the democratic standards set by NATO creates an unequal relationship between the 'teacher' (NATO) and the 'students' (candidate countries).

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND 'DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONALITY'

The CoE provides a strong institutional framework for learning and democratic norm transfer across Europe. With the exception of the OSCE, the CoE is the first European institution that former socialist countries and Soviet Republics sought to join. There are two main reasons for this. First, it is easier to join the CoE than to join the EU and NATO. Second, accession and observance of the various CoE *acquis* is essential in the EU and NATO assessment of whether a country meets their membership criteria. Particularly, the link in the various EU agreements and initiatives between access to EU funds and compliance with CoE norms enhances the 'persuasiveness' of the normative pressure exercised by the CoE (Juncker, 2006; Schimmelfenning et al., 2006). Thus the governments of EU candidate states wish to avoid the material disadvantages that are indirectly linked to social punishment by the CoE. The link between the CoE's evaluation of their conformity with international norms and their relationship with the EU and NATO enables the CoE to use social influence to promote democratic behavior.

The CoE is armed with a significant institutional mechanism for the 'shaming' of states that do not conform to the standards of 'democracy'. Article 3 of the CoE Charter specifies that the Member States should

'accept the principles of rule of law, enjoyed by all persons within state's jurisdiction of human rights, strive to enforce/safeguard CoE's ideas and principles, and facilitate economic and social progress.'

Article 8 of the CoE Charter states clearly that

'Any Member which has severely violated Article 3 may be suspended from its rights of representation and requested by the committee of Ministers to withdraw under Article 7. If such Member does not comply with the request, the

Committee of Ministers may decide that it has ceased to be a Member as from such date as the Committee of Ministers may determine.'

It is worth noting that a similar punishment applies to states that breach the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). The 'shaming' of Greece during the dictatorship period and that of Turkey later on constitute impressive illustrations of how politically costly this 'shaming' can be.

The main points of the CoE *acquis* can be distilled into five core principles: parliamentary democracy; representation; transparency, responsiveness, and accountability; sub-national democracy and subsidiarity; and participation and civic society (Prachett and Lowndess, 2008: 2). These principles have emerged through an incremental and responsive process rather than through a coherent and stable activity of deliberation. Nevertheless, they provide a base from which to understand the democratic trajectory of Europe.

The resources open to the CoE for influencing democratic trajectories are limited, and its relationships with the development of democratic institutions in individual states are, therefore, complex. The *acquis* reflects not only the democratic ideals that the CoE hopes will be adopted within all Member States but also the realpolitik of pan-European democratic relations and the limitations that this imposes upon the realization of democratic ideals.

The CoE is involved in designing democratic institutions and seeking to make them work. Perhaps its biggest contribution to the development of democracy lies in its role as a third party enforcer. Because it is not part of the 'institutionalized interaction,' it is able to offer reforms that reflect an awareness of competing power relationships but which are not part of them (Peteaux, 2009). The CoE is also in a unique position from which it can make the institutions of democracy extendable to other tiers and policy areas.

The CoE offers a complex array of documents which contribute to its *acquis*. Some of these have full legal status and directly shape the functioning of democracy in Member States. Others are more discursive in nature and have only an informal influence on democratic practices. The potential sources of the Council's *acquis* are multiple (Prachett and Lowndess, 2008: 5), but the most important are: conventions, treaties, charters and declarations; recommendations by the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; reports from other Council organizations such as the Venice Commission; and other background publications. The main source of the Council's *acquis* is its 193 treaties. Although there is no set list of conventions that every country has to ratify as a basis for accession to the CoE, the Parliamentary Assembly gives an 'opinion' on all accession applications which set down the minimum requirements for membership.

While the 'opinion' is different for every acceding country, the requirements placed upon some of the most recent countries to join the CoE provide an indication of what the minimum requirements usually are. The recent requirements include (Gross, 2007: 18): signing and ratifying the European Convention on Human Rights and Protocols 1, 4, and 6; signing and ratifying within one year of their accession the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its protocols, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and the European Charter of Local Self-Government; signing and ratifying within two years of their accession the European Outline Conventions on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and its additional protocols, the Council conventions on extradition, mutual assistance on criminal matters, laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime, and the transfer of sentenced persons, and the European Social Charter, and striving forthwith to implement a policy consistent with the Charter's principles; and signing the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities before accession.

These requirements enable the CoE to immediately engage in public shaming as the primary method of inducing internal changes to new member states. In admitting post-socialist states, the CoE has quite explicitly been actively engaged in a 'project of European construction' (Peteaux, 2009). A poorly behaved state, such as the Russian Federation, is publicly shamed at every opportunity – through media campaigns, documentaries, and even scholarly publications and policy papers. For example, after a blitz of negative media attention from December 2009 to January 2010, Russia consented to Protocol 41, which could potentially bring even more negative attention to the country, simply because the cost of not doing so would appear improper, or 'barbarous', as every other CoE member had assented to it.

The development of democratic institutions is addressed more directly in the proceedings of the various organs of the Council: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the CoE (the Congress).

The proceedings of the Committee of Ministers vary across a range of different texts, from decisions and declarations on particular issues to recommendations to particular bodies or countries, resolutions on particular concerns, and replies to recommendations or questions put to it by the other pillars of the CoE (the Assembly and Congress). From the perspective of the *acquis* on democracy, the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on matters for which it has agreed a common policy are particularly significant. Where they refer to democracy, these recommendations highlight not only the key democratic problems and solutions that the Committee is identifying, but also the broader direction in which

it is aiming to take democracy. The Committee also exercises a role in monitoring the adoption or implementation of its recommendations among member states.

The proceedings of the Parliamentary Assembly vary across a number of categories. The Assembly adopts four types of texts: recommendations to the Committee of Ministers on proposals that Member States might adopt; resolutions that reflect the Assembly's agreed position on a particular issue or question that it has identified and concluded on its own; opinions on questions put to it by the Committee of Ministers; and orders to its committees. Once these texts are adopted by the Assembly, they form a part of the *acquis* and contribute to the CoE's interpretation of democracy.

The Congress's recommendations are normally addressed to the Committee or the Assembly but they can also be directed toward individual Member States, in which case they encourage a particular course of action. The Congress also develops non-binding charters that it encourages local and national governments to adopt. These texts are particularly important to the development of the *acquis* because they often address specific elements of democracy and focus especially upon institutions that support democracy, particularly at the sub-national level. Like in the Assembly, the extent to which adopted texts are discussed between members varies, depending on the topic.

To support the development of adopted texts, the various organs of the CoE also produce a range of reports and publications that set out in more detail the evidence and reasoning behind particular recommendations, resolutions and so on. These reports provide a valuable means of understanding the arguments behind decisions made by the various organs. They give an indication of how recommendations and resolutions should be interpreted and the way in which they relate to other adopted texts. Finally, the CoE also produces documents and reports that seek to clarify or strengthen aspects of democratic practice. Although these reports and other outputs do not have a formal status, they are included in the *acquis* because they provide the background and sense of purpose that is not always apparent in the formally adopted texts of the main pillars.

Recently, the implicit 'civilizational' cultural requirements for the development of satisfactory democratic institutions for new CoE states have proved to be a significant barrier to the development of 'civilized' democratic norms, as was evidenced by the recent frustration of the original Member States over the disagreements among and lack of enforcement by many of the original member states, as well as the recent discourse surrounding the European identity crisis. The most effective available way to intervene in the affairs of new democracies in the post-socialist space is through an appeal to human rights – an implicit standard for any state that considers itself 'democratic'. While many CoE members hardly live up to the ideal requirements in terms of democratic institutions, the continued prestige of the Eu-

ropean Court of Human Rights allows for it to serve as a stand-in for true respect for human rights within the official institutions of the state. This way, citizens of formerly 'barbarous' states can develop a sense of 'civilized' democratic justice.

The desire of the CEES and the Visegrad countries to associate with the Western community of liberal democratic states and join the EU and NATO has made them very susceptible to CoE pressures. Joining the West would also protect them from being shamed, thus preventing their political isolation. At the same time, conforming to the CoE democratic standards has made them active participants in a very important phase in the European/Western 'civilizing' process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to utilize the theoretical framework of the English School to demonstrate that the process of the socialization of the post-socialist/Soviet states into European institutions resembles the process of the historical expansion of Europe. In this context, the idea of 'democratic conditionality' – embodied in the policies and practices of NATO and the CoE – can be seen as a new form of the historical standard of 'civilization'. As Roland Paris (2002: 653) argues, there is a 'new phase in the ongoing and evolving relationship between the core and the periphery of the international system, with the core continuing to define the standards of acceptable behaviour.' Moreover, democracy has become the defining feature of 'what a state should look like and how it should act' (Paris, 2002: 654) and it plays a particularly influential role in determining the makeup of international society. As Hobson (2007: 29) points out, liberal democracy 'decides who is in and who is out, who are "our" *ontological allies* and who are "our" *ontological enemies*, who retains the rights to the protection sovereignty provides, and who may need to be civilized/democratized in the name of peace and progress.'

Because of its determining role as a new form of the historical standard of 'civilization', liberal democracy cannot completely be the progressive force it is presumed to be. Consequently, 'democratic' discourses and practices reinforce and perpetuate existing asymmetrical relations and power imbalances. This is not to say that the application of 'democratic conditionality' by various European organizations is entirely inappropriate. It rather means that 'democratic conditionality' promotes a particular type of democracy, while human rights and civil liberties could also be protected under different types of democratic regimes.

As in the era of the standard of 'civilization', the application of 'democratic conditionality' today has three significant implications for international politics. First, states and organizations that seek to promote democracy and capitalism create and maintain – consciously or unconsciously – a paternalistic relationship with those states seeking admission to or assistance from these organizations, which constitute visual expressions of regional international societies. Second, because these or-

ganizations are historically connected with the West, 'democratic conditionality' has helped to create new hierarchies in the international society, placing the Western states in a privileged position *vis-a-vis* the out-group countries. Third, like the historical standard of 'civilization', 'democratic conditionality' contributes to the creation and maintenance of an international liberal political and economic order. Although current policies are presented with new terms, like 'political' or 'democratic conditionality', such policies do not differ considerably, if at all, from the policies associated with the historical standard of 'civilization'. In other words, the terms may change but the policies remain almost the same.

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Cosmopolitan Entrapment: The Failed Strategies to Reverse Turkey's EU Membership Eligibility

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Abstract: Five years after the opening of accession talks, Turkey's EU membership prospects still provoke great controversy. Turkey-skeptics in Europe regularly voice their opposition to Turkey's EU accession. Based on the concept of normative entrapment, this paper analyzes their argumentative strategies to reverse Turkey's EU membership prospects. The finding is that so far the discourse of the Turkey-skeptics has had only a weak impact on the accession process. No argument has changed the official position of the EU, which still consistently links progress in the accession talks to compliance with basic democratic norms. Especially the European Commission resolutely rebutted the arguments against Turkey's EU accession and acted as a strong defender of the agreed rules of procedure and the cosmopolitan approach to EU enlargement.

Keywords: European Union, integration theories, Turkey, accession talks, discourse analysis

Many political actors were opposed to the opening of the EU accession talks with Turkey. Whereas the literature reveals the motives of the opponents of Turkey's EU accession and the dynamics leading to the opening of accession talks, no systematic analysis of the argumentative strategies of the Turkey skeptics after this historic decision has been made. How did the Turkey-skeptics react to the opening of accession talks? Do they still have the potential to reverse the commitment of the EU to accept Turkey as a new member state, provided that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen criteria? This paper seeks to address this question.

In the political and public discourse, there are two main narratives that take opposing positions regarding Turkey's EU accession. The supporters of Turkey share a value- and norm-based cosmopolitan understanding of European identity. A cosmopolitan perspective aims towards universality, but this depends upon the preservation of diversity (Parker, 2009: 1088). Thus, European states that respect the EU's core values and norms should be allowed to become members. The accession of Turkey in particular is considered as a confirmation of the EU's multicultural identity,

and a strong symbol against the thesis of the clash of civilization. In addition, Turkey's accession is seen as a necessary condition to fulfill the ambition of the EU to become a global actor. The opponents of Turkey's EU membership share a culturally based concept of European identity that defines Europe primarily in terms of culture and geography. They reject Turkey's EU accession bid because they contest Turkey's European identity. Turkey's EU accession is framed as a threat to the European identity. Strategic interests and cost/benefit calculations play a subordinate role in this cultural frame of the EU. Such a cultural approach does not accept that the concept of conditionality should be applicable in the case of Turkey (Parker, 2009: 1090).

Whereas the first frame reflects the official EU position, the second one seems to be prevalent in the political and public discourse (Icener et al., 2008: 219). Important political actors in the EU regularly voice their principled opposition against Turkey's EU accession. In order to assess the probability that these actors are able to change the official EU position even after the opening of accession talks in October 2005 and achieve a rejection of Turkey as a new member state, I analyzed the public discourse of Turkey-skeptics in Germany, France and Austria – the three countries in which the opposition of the (conservative) political elite is the highest – from the decision of 2005 until December 2009 and the argumentative reaction of Turkey's supporters in Europe. I used party programs, speeches and press coverage to assess their argumentation.

The finding is that the argumentative strategies had only a limited impact on the ongoing accession talks. The opponents of Turkey's EU accession achieved a slowing down of the accession talks but no rupture with the official EU approach. None of their arguments had the consistency and coherence necessary to offer an alternative narrative that would be able to win support among the supporters of Turkey or those actors who have no clear shaped preferences as regards Turkey's EU accession. Especially the European Commission played a crucial role in defending the rules of the game of the accession talks.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section one presents the theoretical background for the discourse analysis, and section two analyzes the strategies of the Turkey-skeptics and the reply of the supporters of Turkey's EU membership.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The academic literature on EU enlargement can be distinguished into intergovernmentalist and supranationalist approaches. According to the liberal intergovernmentalist perspective EU member states promote enlargement because they consider enlargement to be in their long-term economic interest (Moravcsik and Vachudova, 2003). The realist intergovernmentalist perspective explains the enlargement preferences of the member states mainly by geopolitical interests

(Skalnes, 2005). In both approaches the governments are the key actors of the enlargement process, and enlargement preferences are explained by a cost-benefit calculation. The acceptance of eastern enlargement by member states which were originally rather skeptical is explained by modified cost-benefit calculations and a convergence of interests. Moravcsik and Vachudova (2003: 50) argue that the costs of eastern enlargement were much more modest than the brakemen of eastern enlargement initially assumed.

In contrast, supranational approaches offer different explanations for the preference formation and the interaction among governments. According to the constructivist supranational perspective, identity shapes the enlargement preferences of political actors to a high degree. Sjursen (2002) emphasizes the moral duty towards the candidate states which were excluded from the European family because of the Cold War. Fierke and Wiener (1999) refer to the promises made during Cold War times. However, despite this reference to a collective European identity, member states' preferences were diverging as regards the scope and speed of eastern enlargement. In order to explain the common decision for eastern enlargement, supranational approaches argue that the interaction among governments is constrained by the influence of supranational actors and by the impact of community norms. Sedelmeier (2005) focuses on the Commission as an instrumental supranational driver of eastern enlargement. O'Brennan (2006) also emphasizes the contribution of the European Parliament. Schimmelfennig (2003) argues that the commitments of the past have been used by the supporters of the eastern enlargement to exercise social pressure on the opponents of eastern enlargement, who were 'rhetorically entrapped'.

In comparison to eastern enlargement, Turkey's EU membership is much more controversial. The opening of accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005 was fiercely debated among the EU member states. Several governments preferred a close association with Turkey in place of the prospect of full membership. During the 1990s, a substantive group of member state governments blocked the decision to give Turkey a general prospect of membership similar to that of the Central and Eastern European countries. The European People's Party framed the EU as a Christian community and categorically excluded the possibility of Turkey's membership. In 2005, before the EU opened accession negotiations with Turkey, Austria and Cyprus threatened to veto the decision. The French government demanded the recognition of Cyprus as a precondition for opening the accession talks. In 2006, after Turkey had refused to extend the Customs Union to Cyprus, some member governments demanded a complete suspension of the accession talks instead of the freezing of eight negotiating chapters which the European Commission had suggested.

The opening of the accession talks with Turkey is a challenge for intergovernmental approaches. First, despite strategic European interests in a close relationship

with Turkey, the preference formation of some governments and other political actors is more based on identity-related explanations than on economic and/or geostrategic interests. The Europeaness of Turkey is contested, and thus, Turkey is constructed as the other (Kucuk, 2009) and excluded because of its identity (Parker, 2009). Dixon (2010) argues that attitudes toward Turkey's entry are rather a function of the perceived threat that it poses to the identity of Europeans; therefore attitudes toward Turkey's entry are less shaped by material interests than by attitudes toward other candidates' entries, as these candidates are considered more European than Turkey. Also de Vreese (2008) points out that the importance of 'soft' predictors, such as feelings of identity and attitudes towards immigrants, outweighs the role of 'hard' economic and utilitarian predictors in understanding public opinion about Turkish EU membership. This confirms sociological explanations of enlargement preferences which focus on 'community' or 'cultural match' (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmaier, 2002: 513) or the threat of immigration (McLaren, 2007).

Second, the diverging preferences have not converged over time. Indeed, the governmental change in Greece and Germany which altered the preference constellation significantly shortly before the Helsinki summit of 1999 is an important explaining factor for the decision to confer candidate status to Turkey (Muftuler-Bac and McLaren, 2003). The member states wanted to safeguard the strategic partnership and to ensure cooperation on important security issues such as the suspended talks on the Cyprus conflict and EU-NATO cooperation (Onis, 2000: 470; Beach, 2005: 226, 242). However, the governments were still split over the desirability of Turkish EU accession, and from 1999 to 2005 the distribution of government preferences has become more negative for Turkey (Schimmelfennig, 2008a: 10). Especially the current governments of countries with big bargaining power such as Germany and France are against Turkey's EU membership.

Therefore, supranational approaches which stress the impact of community norms and the political entrepreneurship of the European Commission are more suitable to explain the opening and the continuation of the accession talks. Schimmelfennig argues that rhetorical entrapment also explains the decision to open accession talks with Turkey (Schimmelfennig, 2008a). Turkey has been considered as a European country with a membership perspective since the Association Agreement of 1963.¹ Article 28 of the Agreement envisaged that 'the Contracting Parties [would] examine the possibility of the accession of Turkey to the Community' as soon as the economic association and the customs union 'advanced far enough'. Although the Agreement did not prescribe an automatic transition from association to membership, it established an unequivocal membership perspective for Turkey. This past commitment was renewed and strengthened with the grant of the candidate status in 1999. The commitment constrained state interaction by obliging the EU to consider applications from European countries according to the standards of liberal

democracy. Therefore, Turkey's application has had to be evaluated on the basis of compliance with the Copenhagen criteria, the sufficient fulfillment of which the Commission confirmed in 2004. Member states that were against the opening of Turkey's EU accession talks for socio-economic or cultural reasons could not legitimately veto the decision but were rhetorically entrapped.

However, such an entrapment can only function efficiently if actors with preferences in line with the community norms continue to use these norms in their reasoning. Apart from the member states in favor of Turkey's EU accession, the European Commission is a crucial player in the normative entrapment mechanism. Whereas the member state governments have to consider the domestic context, including public opinion and opposition parties, the European Commission and the respective Commissioners are less constrained in their argumentation. In the past the European Commission has used its informal power to push the enlargement process and to defend a cosmopolitan view of the EU (Parker, 2009: 1096). The heterogeneous member state preferences provided an opportunity for the European Commission to influence the eastern enlargement process. Through its close monitoring in regular progress reports and its recommendations on how the EU should proceed in the accession talks, the Commission was influential in overcoming resistance against the eastern enlargement (Sedelmaier, 2005). Also in the context of Turkey, the Commission was a crucial actor in the decision to open accession talks. Baun (2000) argues that the European Commission's support for granting Turkey formal candidate status on the grounds that it would encourage democratic reform influenced the decision in Helsinki in 1999 to give Turkey full candidate status. In 1999–2004, Romano Prodi, the then Commission President, and Günter Verheugen, the then Commissioner for Enlargement, were particularly active in driving the process forward. For some governments, the involvement of the European Commission was a means to depoliticize the issue and thus circumvent domestic opposition. In particular, French President Chirac and German Chancellor Schröder were faced with domestic opposition against the opening of Turkey's accession talks. Whereas in the German case, resistance was mobilized only by the opposition parties, Chirac lost the support of his own party. Both could have circumvented opposition with reference to the Commission's reports and argued that the decision to open accession talks with Turkey depended on these reports and was not open to the government's discretion (Schimmelfennig, 2008a: 17). However, Icener et al. argue that the Commission's enthusiasm for enlargement has faded away: 'Whereas Prodi and Verheugen pushed the EU to finalize eastern enlargement and stressed the importance – for political and security-related reasons – of giving Turkey a clear perspective for membership, Barroso and Rehn (...) gave way to a more technical approach that has emphasized consolidation of EU enlargement, rigorous application of conditionality and the need to ensure the EU's integration capacity' (Icener et al., 2010:

214). They conclude that the more guarded approach to Turkey is a reflection of the enlargement fatigue which is highlighted by many politicians and commentators. This conclusion corresponds with other studies, which postulate a weakening of the autonomous role of the European Commission (Peterson, 2008).

In the following discourse analysis I trace the strategies of the Turkey-skeptics to escape from their normative entrapment and the reaction of the supporters of Turkey's EU membership.

THE TURKEY-SKEPTICS AND THE DISCOURSE IN EUROPE

Officially every member state has the right to veto the accession of a new member state, but none of the governments opposed to Turkey's EU membership dared to use this veto right in the past. It can be therefore concluded that the power of the Turkey-skeptics depends on their discursive strength. Provided that Turkey fulfils its obligations, what possibilities do the Turkey-skeptics have to escape their normative entrapment? Given that the principled opposition based on socio-economic or cultural concerns did not manage to prevent the opening of the accession talks, I assume that these arguments will not manage to challenge the dominant norm of 'pacta sunt servanda' in the future either. Therefore, I conclude that the success of the Turkey-skeptics depends on their ability to reframe the context of the accession talks. Framing can be defined as the art of presenting a schema for interpretation by directing attention toward some particular features and away from others (Entman, 1993; Rein and Schön, 1996; Ryan and Gamson, 2006). The Turkey-skeptics need to find a justification for their position which is able to win support in the public discourse. Their possible communication strategies are to frame Turkey's behavior as non-compliant with the accession criteria and/or to find legitimate arguments for the establishment of new accession criteria. I argue that the possibility of successfully reframing a discourse is influenced by five factors. (1) An argument has to be perceived as consistent in the public discourse. An argument is consistent if the appropriateness of the justification principle is not challenged. There has to be a consensus that the justification principle – independent of the context of Turkey's EU accession – is reasonable. Justification principles are abstract concepts, such as the efficient functioning of EU decision making or the democratic accountability of EU governance. (2) The perceived appropriateness of a justification principle increases if it can be presented as the logic consequence of an application of a shared norm and thus be put in line with a 'previous mutual consent and a familiar and tried strategy' (Kohler-Koch, 2000: 517). Shared norms are expressed in treaty articles or official documents of the EU and add legitimacy to the preferences of actors who back their claims by referring to these written norms. (3) The more precisely defined a certain norm or procedure is in the EU, the more difficult it is to offer an alternative in-

terpretation. Given the constraints of the decided accession criteria and procedures, the discretion for interpretation is limited. However, the less specified a certain EU norm is, the more open it is for the promotion of a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and recommendations interpretation. Thus, the best context for framing strategies is the existence of an EU norm of reference and unspecified rules in the case of non-fulfillment of this norm. In such an ill-defined situation, competing interpretations are possible (Kohler-Koch, 2000: 516). (4) A part of the consistency of an argument is that the causal interrelation between a justification principle and a position is not challenged in the discourse. The position has to be considered as the logical and legitimate consequence of the application of the abstract justification principle in a tangible context. (5) An argument that was originally made in one context has to be coherently applied in another context. Otherwise the credibility of the argument and its advocate is weakened.

These five criteria are applied in the analysis of the arguments that are most frequently used by the Turkey-skeptics to justify a breakup or at least a delay of the accession talks: the absorption capacity of the EU, the privileged partnership, the public opinion, the Armenian question, the deficits in the reform process and the Cyprus conflict.

ABSORPTION CAPACITY

One main argument of the Turkey-skeptics is justifying the rejection of Turkey with the lacking absorption capacity of the EU. The efficient functioning of the institutional architecture is a mutual consensus (criterion 1). The absorption capacity is part of the negotiating framework (criterion 2),² but it is not further specified and thus offers room for different interpretations (criterion 3). Therefore, arguments based on the absorption capacity are a promising argumentation strategy. Instead of blaming Turkey for not fulfilling the requirements, the Turkey-skeptics are trying to find the obstacle within the EU. With the ratification problems of the Constitutional Treaty after the negative referendums in France and the Netherlands in 2005, and the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in the Irish referendum in 2008, this argument won prominence in the public discourse. An exogenous event³ apparently supported the efforts of the Turkey-skeptics to establish a new barrier for Turkey's EU accession. A variant of the absorption capacity argument is the construction of a contradiction between deepening and widening, which is, however, no mutual consensus (criterion 1). With reference to the absorption capacity, Austria's Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel argued that while the EU's promises to Bulgaria, Romania and the Balkan countries must be respected, Turkey should be considered a 'case apart'.⁴ Contrary to previous eras, when Germany was a supporter of deepening and widening at the same time, Chancellor Angela Merkel considered deepening and widening as mutually incompatible, attributing the failed referendums in France and the Nether-

lands to enlargement. As a consequence, she argued that the EU should focus on the definition of its final borders.⁵ In the European Parliament election campaign Hans-Gert Pöttering (EPP), the President of the European Parliament until 2009, said, '...the EU now needs a breather – a phase of consolidation. Our priority now is for the Lisbon Treaty to enter into force and be filled with life.'⁶

The supporters of Turkey rebutted the claim of the Turkey-skeptics. They did not accept the linkage between the norm of the efficient functioning of the institutions of the EU and Turkey's EU membership (criterion 4). First, they argue that the EU must be able to absorb Turkey when Turkey finally joins the EU but not already today. Thus, they point out that absorption capacity is not static and can change over the long-term horizon until the possible accession of Turkey (Emerson, 2006). Douglas Alexander, the then European affairs minister of Great Britain, pointed out that the failure to adopt the Constitution is not an impediment to further enlargement (in Emerson, 2006: 3). Second, they argue that deepening and widening are not necessarily opposed to one another. Olli Rehn, the then Enlargement Commissioner, said, 'Widening versus deepening is another false dichotomy. History has proven that further political integration and rounds of enlargement have mostly gone in parallel.'⁷ Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca also showed that the apparent contradiction between widening and deepening is an elite discourse which is not backed by citizens' views: 'Although the elite repeatedly mentioned opposition to Turkey's membership as a reason for constitutional opposition in France and Netherlands survey analyses do not confirm this' (Ruiz-Jimenez and Torreblanca, 2008: 29).

Given these argumentative inconsistencies, the Turkey-skeptics did not manage to establish the absorption capacity of the EU as a new norm which would enable the EU to move away from its past enlargement decisions. Although the risk of institutional stalemate is an accepted justification principle, the conclusion of the Turkey-skeptics to break with the membership option for Turkey is not accepted by other member states. At its June 2006 meeting the European Council debated the absorption capacity. Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and France were the key countries that pushed for the labeling of the concept in the conclusions as an additional criterion for whether the candidate countries will enter into the Union. Draft conclusions referred to the concept as an additional criterion for entry, but they were, however, watered down in the final text by the opposition, primarily from the UK, Spain, Italy and the new member states (Emerson, 2006). The final conclusion stated that the EU will 'honor its existing commitments and emphasized that every effort should be made to protect the cohesion and effectiveness of the Union. It will be important to ensure in future that the Union is able to function politically, financially and institutionally as it enlarges, and to further deepen Europe's common project.'⁸ The Commission was invited to prepare a report on enlargement that would take into account the perceptions of the citizens. On 8 November 2006, the Com-

mission adopted a strategy for the EU's enlargement policy which stressed that the EU's integration capacity was determined by the EU's own capacity to maintain the momentum of European integration and concluded that it is first and foremost a functional concept.⁹

Now that the Lisbon Treaty has been ratified, the absorption capacity argument will be further weakened because the institutional reforms will make a stalemate in the decision making procedure less probable.

PRIVILEGED PARTNERSHIP

Privileged partnership does not exist as an EU norm (criterion 2). Only the European Neighborhood Policy can be classified as a tool for offering privileged partnership to countries without an EU membership option. As there is no shared norm, no competing interpretations of this norm are possible (criterion 3). However, the privileged partnership offer for Turkey, introduced primarily by the German Christian Democratic parties, is mainly justified with the claim of the lacking absorption capacity of the European Union – and thus with the shared norm of the efficient functioning of the institutions (criterion 1). 'Our goal is a privileged partnership, since Europe must not be overstretched', Edmund Stoiber, the then CSU chairman, declared.¹⁰ In the European election campaign of 2009 French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized their position in favor of a privileged partnership for Turkey instead of EU membership, 'arguing that any misguided expansion might endanger the EU's operational effectiveness'.¹¹

The supporters of Turkey dismiss this idea. First, they argue that the privileged partnership is an empty concept as it includes no improvement to Turkey's current status. Enlargement Commissioner Rehn stated, 'Turkey already has a customs union with the EU, participates in many EU programs and is a member of NATO, (...). Those who talk continuously about privileged partnership are creating a vicious circle of reversed commitment, weakened conditionality and stalled reforms.'¹² Second, they point out that the proposal of a privileged partnership puts the EU's credibility at stake. 'The regular talk on privileged partnership only erodes the EU's credibility and weakens the conditionality in Turkey. Thus it reduces the political incentive for reforms and causes political backlash among ordinary Turks', said Rehn in the same speech. Martti Ahtisaari, the former President of Finland, stated, 'In 1999 we said that Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to other candidate states. So it's the credibility of the EU that is at stake.'¹³

Being in a weak argumentative position, French President Sarkozy tried to use his bargaining power to stop the progress of the accession talks. In June 2007 he prevented the opening of the chapter on economic and monetary policy, arguing that it could clear the way for Turkey's eventual membership in the Euro and had

particular political and symbolic resonance.¹⁴ However, a few months later, in August, Sarkozy offered France's EU partners an end to the blockade of the accession negotiations with Turkey. Sarkozy said that if the EU members agreed to set up a committee of wise men in order to clarify the frontiers of the EU, France would no longer oppose the opening of new chapters of negotiations between the Union and Turkey in the coming months and years.¹⁵ Nonetheless, he demanded that five chapters that he considered as incompatible with the alternative of a privileged partnership should be opened only at the very end of the negotiation process.

The idea of a committee of wise men can be interpreted as a face-saving measure. It did not turn out to be a tool for framing the public discourse according to Sarkozy's preferences. The idea of a 'reflection group of wise people' did not win much support. Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn warned against undermining legally binding agreements pertaining to accession negotiations and the Committee, providing an excuse for leaving Turkey out. In December 2007 the idea was emptied of substance. The mandate of the High Level Reflection Group excluded an involvement in institutional reforms, the EU's financial framework or existing policies.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has realized that the privileged partnership strategy is a blind alley. Although she still prefers a privileged partnership, she stands by the commitments of the EU: 'There is a principle we follow in government: *pacta sunt servanda*. If a previous government and the EU decided to initiate accession negotiations with Turkey, then it is our duty to follow through on that.'¹⁶ The new conservative-liberal coalition has also decided to support open-ended EU-Turkey negotiations and favor a 'privileged partnership' in case they fail.

PUBLIC OPINION

The Turkey-skeptics are trying to establish public opinion as a new criterion for Turkey's EU membership, arguing that such an important decision cannot be taken without the consent of the people, and as people are largely against Turkey's EU admission, the country cannot become a member. Thus, they justify their rejection of Turkey with democratic principles and try to base their opposition on a mutual democratic consensus (criterion 1). France and Austria announced that they would let their citizens decide on Turkey's EU membership in the future rather than choosing parliamentary ratification. Until now, no enlargement had been ratified via a public referendum. Thus, the use of a referendum cannot be presented as a logic consequence of a common norm (criterion 2), and it is not specified what the consequences of a negative referendum in one or two countries would be (criterion 3). Wolfgang Schüssel, Austrian Chancellor in 2006, argued that the absorption capacity of the EU would be tested in

a referendum.¹⁷ Similarly, Alfred Gusenbauer, Austrian Chancellor in 2008, and his successor Werner Fayman (both SPÖ) announced a referendum on Turkey's EU membership.¹⁸ France's former President Jacques Chirac introduced an automatic referendum on future EU enlargements shortly before the 2005 referendum on the European Constitution.

The supporters of Turkey start off by pointing out that public opinion is influenced by the discourse of the political elite (Steenbergen et al., 2007; Brader, 2009), and therefore a referendum is not necessarily a democratic tool. Thus, they reject the linkage between public opinion and Turkey's EU membership (criterion 4). The Green member of the European Parliament Joost Lagendijk pointed to the fact that, according to Eurobarometer, 40 percent of people are undecided on the issue of enlargement. Therefore, he said that public support can be influenced, but the process requires political leadership.¹⁹ Hence, the democratic merits of the proposed referendums in France and Austria are contested. Michel Rocard, a former Prime Minister of France and a member of the Independent Commission on Turkey, a group of senior European politicians and academics, denied that a referendum on this question is a democratic tool: 'A referendum is an opportunity for the media to manipulate symbols. (...) Before posing questions like that, one has to be sure that the facts are well understood.'²⁰

The development of public opinion in Austria points out the interplay of elite discourse and public attitudes. Until 2002, there was very little difference between Austrian views towards Turkey and Austrian views towards any other EU candidate, according to a report of the European Stability Initiative (ESI): 'The current public mood does not have its roots in the distant past. Rather, it is a reflection of the recent behavior of the Austrian political elite, and the direction in which they have chosen to take the public debate' (European Stability Initiative, 2008: 1). According to the report, the turning point was the 2004 decision of the SPÖ (Austrian Social Democrats), at the time in opposition, to attack both the Freedom Party (then led by Jörg Haider) and the ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) for 'going soft' on Turkey by failing to block the opening of accession talks. This was followed in December 2004 by the decision of the ÖVP Chancellor to promise a referendum. Until then, all the major political players had supported a sober discussion of the pros and cons for Austria of each individual enlargement decision. With these two steps, that consensus was destroyed. The report concludes that a new cross-party consensus emerged in favor of deferring any serious debate and opting for an eventual referendum instead.

The credibility of the advocates of a referendum is also weakened by the incoherent application of their argument (criterion 5). Austrian supporters of a referendum on Turkey do not demand a referendum for the candidate state Croatia. Instead, the political elite in Austria strongly support the accession of Croatia despite a re-

luctant public opinion. In spring 2007 only 28 percent of Austrians supported further enlargement of the EU (in comparison to 49 percent in the EU-25). Opinion polls from 2002 showed that opposition to Croatia's accession was almost as large as the opposition to Turkey's accession. However, the firm and continuous support of Croatia by Austria's political elite positively impacted on public opinion. 'By 2005, the weight of opinion had completely reversed, with a solid majority supporting Croatia, combined with a hardening of opposition for Turkey' (European Stability Initiative, 2008: 5).

The fact that a referendum on the accession of a new member state is not primarily considered as a democratic tool but as a tool to prevent the accession of Turkey is shown by the debate on the constitutional reform in France. Under former President Chirac, an amendment was introduced into the French Constitution requiring that a referendum be held prior to a country's EU accession. In spring 2008, the French government backed by President Sarkozy drafted a reform proposal that would have made referenda no longer compulsory. It would have given the President the right to decide whether the parliament or the citizens decide about the accession of a candidate state. This move was interpreted primarily as an attempt to guarantee the EU accession of Croatia.²¹ Therefore, the reference to public opinion was not applied coherently here either (criterion 5).

The Turkey-skeptics in the National Assembly demanded the maintenance of an automatic referendum for countries that represent more than five percent of the overall EU population, a position that was rejected by the French Senate.²² The final compromise envisages that a referendum on EU enlargement can be prevented by the parliament. If the members of both chambers vote for or against a candidate with a three fifths majority, a referendum is no longer necessary. President Sarkozy would have liked to put at his discretion whether the people would be asked to decide, but he could not enforce his demand.²³

The Turkey-skeptics did not manage to frame a referendum on Turkey's EU accession as a democratic tool because they could not credibly communicate that the democratic aspect is their priority. Additionally, the failed referendums in France and the Netherlands (on the constitutional treaty) and in Ireland (on the Lisbon treaty) showed the democratic limits of a referendum on complex issues. The experience with the failed referenda on the constitutional treaty also shows that a negative vote (especially in a small country) cannot prevent the continuation of the European integration process if the vast majority of the political elite favor a certain outcome. Therefore, the removal of the automatic referendum in France will also have an impact on Austria, which could become the only country to apply a referendum. But adding a second 'no' is different to being the only country (and a small one at that) that rejects the membership of Turkey.

ARMENIA

Armenia claims that the Ottoman army killed 1.5 million Armenians during World War I and labels these killings as genocide. Turkey denies that the deaths of Armenians during the deportation between 1915 and 1917 can be called genocide as the killings were not governmentally orchestrated. Turkey justifies the deportation by arguing that Armenians cooperated with Russia, its wartime enemy. In 2005 Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdo an suggested setting up a commission of international experts to explore the events of the past. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the UN on 9 December 1948, defined genocide as harmful acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Many countries classified the killings as genocide. The French parliament approved a bill making it a crime to deny that Armenians suffered genocide.

Coming to terms with history and an open debate about the failures of the past is a consensual norm in the EU (criterion 1). However, this norm is not clearly specified in the accession context (criterion 2). The negotiation framework only mentions that Turkey's progress on the path to EU membership will also be measured against the requirement of an unequivocal commitment to good neighboring relations. However, the commitment to good neighboring relations is not a clearly specified norm, offers no clear instruction for action and is thus a good starting point for framing strategies (criterion 3).

Opponents of Turkey's EU accession tried to establish the recognition of genocide by Turkey as an accession criterion. French President Sarkozy and former President Jacques Chirac insisted that if Turkey wants to join the European Union, it should accept the genocide.²⁴ Chirac compared the killings to Nazi Germany's holocaust.²⁵ Sarkozy insisted that it is a moral responsibility of a country to acknowledge its history.²⁶

Supporters of Turkey did not accept the link between the commitment to good neighboring relations and the acceptance of genocide (criterion 4). Louis Michel, the then European Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, replied that no new conditions for Turkey's membership in the Union can be brought in: 'There are some people who want to change the rules of the game during the game.'²⁷ The German Foreign Ministry, led by the Social Democrat Frank Walter Steinmeier in 2008, stated, 'the government welcomes all initiatives aimed at the further processing of the historical events of 1915–1916. An evaluation of the results of this research should be undertaken by historians.'²⁸ Dominique de Villepin, the then French Prime Minister, distanced himself from the French bill. He said that it is 'not a good thing to legislate on issues of history and of memory'.²⁹

The opponents were unable to establish the Armenian question as a new barrier for Turkey. Although the European Parliament discussed the inclusion of the recog-

nition of genocide in its progress report of 2006, it finally opted to omit a clause calling for recognition of the Armenian genocide. Joost Lagendik (Greens/EFA) criticized a draft of the Eurlings report because it included a clause in which the recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey was described as a precondition for Turkey to join. He stressed the importance of being 'critical but fair' towards Turkey.³⁰ The recent efforts of Turkey and Armenia to restore their diplomatic ties were praised in the 2009 progress report of the European Commission and will further weaken the argument of the opponents.³¹

REFORM PROCESS

Every fall, the European Commission publishes a progress report on the candidate countries in which it scrutinizes the progress in the application of the accession criteria, the so-called Copenhagen criteria, which reflect the political values of the EU (criterion 1). Thus, specified EU norms exist (criterion 2) with clearly defined procedures and consequences in the case of non-fulfillment (criteria 3). The discretion to interpret the procedures is limited. After the opening of accession negotiations in 2005 the Commission observed a slowing down of the reform process in Turkey. The progress reports pointed out deficits as well as achievements. The most recent progress report (of 2009) also mentions deficits but is more optimistic in its assessment than the previous ones. The report mentions further progress as regards the reform of the judiciary, civil-military relations, and cultural rights for Kurds, such as the opening of a public TV channel broadcasting 24 hours a day in Kurdish nationwide.³² Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn concluded, 'I am encouraged by the historic steps Turkey and Armenia have just taken towards normalizing their relations. This process should now lead to full normalization as soon as possible.'³³

Despite the mixed picture of the progress reports, the Turkey-skeptics regularly focused only on the deficits mentioned in the progress reports in order to demand a breakup of the negotiations. In 2009 the Turkey-skeptics once again used the publication of the report for statements against Turkey's EU membership. Manfred Weber, CSU European parliamentarian and deputy leader of the European People's Party (EPP), called for a halt to the accession negotiations: 'If the Commission itself is skeptical in its assessment of the accession talks with Turkey that means that there is disillusionment and stagnation.'³⁴ Andreas Mölzer, head of the Austrian FPÖ delegation in the European Parliament, argued 'that the only correct conclusion which can be drawn from the so-called progress report is the immediate termination of the accession negotiations with Ankara. The continuation of accession negotiations is a waste of time and money because Turkey is apparently immune to reform.' Instead he called for negotiations on a privileged partnership.³⁵ Christine Muttonen, Europe spokesperson of the SPÖ, argued that 'given the now documented facts in the report, the privileged partnership is the more realistic and bet-

ter target'.³⁶ According to the Austrian Ernst Strasser (EPP) 'there is absolutely no progress. With this catalog of shortcomings the EU membership of Turkey is not imaginable.'³⁷

The supporters of Turkey reject the argument that deficits in the fulfillment of the political criteria and the slowing of the reform process legitimate a break up of the accession talks (criterion 4). First, they argue that a slowing down does not mean that Turkey has left the reform path. According to the negotiation framework only a serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law would justify a suspension of the negotiations. Rehn pointed out that Turkey has not departed from the reform process: 'In the public debate, one may get the impression that Turkey has been backtracking. This is not the case. Turkey has continued political reforms, even though their pace has slowed down during the last year.'³⁸

Second, the supporters see deficits in the accession criteria as an inducement to improve the situation by supporting the reformers in Turkey. The supporters of Turkey agree that the country should only become an EU member once the criteria are completely met – but the EU should help Turkey to fulfill its obligation and decide on Turkey's eligibility at the end of the negotiations. Rehn recalled the EU's impact on the ongoing democratization of Turkey: 'We have to respect existing commitments. Conditionality means that the countries have to respect the criteria to the letter. But conditionality only works if the countries can trust in the EU's commitment to eventual membership, even if that is many years away.'³⁹ Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland, argued that the decision about membership is a question for the future and not for the present: 'The process will take years anyway, and each national government will decide in the end whether the outcome of the negotiations is acceptable. Many things can change until then.'⁴⁰ Barroso traced the same logic: 'Turkey is not ready for accession now, but it should not be concluded that the situation will be the same in ten years.'⁴¹ Therefore he demanded that the decision about Turkey's membership should be taken at the end of the negotiation process and not at the beginning.⁴²

CYPRUS

Cyprus has been divided since the Turkish military intervention in 1974. Turkey justified the intervention as a response to the Greek military junta-backed coup in Cyprus, which aimed to annex the island to Greece. Since Cyprus gained independence from Britain in 1960, the Greek and Turkish communities had been unable to establish a stable political structure there. In 1983, the Turkish-controlled northern part of the island declared itself the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), but it was recognized only by Turkey. Repeated efforts to reunite the island under the auspices of the UN failed. The most comprehensive attempt to resolve the conflict

was the Annan Plan in 2002. It aimed to bring the island's two communities into a loose confederation of two equal constituent states based largely on the Swiss model. However, in April 2004, the Greek Cypriots rejected the plan in a referendum while the Turkish Cypriots approved it. In May 2004, Cyprus became a full member of the EU. The EU obliged Turkey to extend the customs union to the Union's ten new member states, including Cyprus, as a condition to opening accession talks with Turkey. In July 2005, Turkey signed an additional protocol to the Ankara Agreement that extended its customs union to the new member states, but at the same time Ankara issued a declaration saying that its signature did not indicate its recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. In order to honor the yes-vote of the Turkish part of the island, the Council of Foreign Ministers decided in April 2004 to provide financial aid to and open trade with the isolated northern part. However, until today direct trade between the EU and Northern Cyprus has not been realized. The delivery of the 259 million Euro financial aid package, which was decided upon on 27 February 2006,⁴³ and which was intended to encourage the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot Community, is being carried out very slowly. Up to April 2009, contracts have been signed for only about 30 percent of the 259 million Euros available.⁴⁴

The negotiation framework states that Turkey's progress in its accession talks will be measured, among others, by its 'continued support for efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem within the UN framework and in line with the principles on which the Union is founded (criterion 1), including steps to contribute to a favorable climate for a comprehensive settlement, and progress in the normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and all EU member states, including the Republic of Cyprus'.⁴⁵ A clearly specified EU norm exists here (criterion 2). However, the negotiation framework does not further specify the consequences of the ongoing stalemate in the Cyprus conflict (criterion 3) and offers room for different proposals.

The Turkey-skeptics use Turkey's refusal to fulfill its obligation of the Additional Protocol to justify their rejection of Turkey's accession. German Chancellor Merkel tried to convince the member state governments in September 2005 that the opening of accession negotiations with Turkey should depend on its recognition of the Republic of Cyprus.⁴⁶ When Turkey let the December 2006 deadline for the implementation of the Additional Protocol pass, Cyprus threatened to veto the continuation of the accession talks.⁴⁷ Sarkozy and Stoiber demanded a complete suspension of the negotiations. Stoiber argued that it is not possible for Turkey to become a member of the EU family when it does not respect the family member Cyprus.⁴⁸ French Prime Minister Francois Filon argued in 2008 that 'it is not possible that a country could want to join the European Union while its army is occupying the territory of another EU country'. However, in the same press conference his justifica-

tion of the privileged partnership on the grounds of Turkey's size reveals that Cyprus is a pretext argument.⁴⁹

The supporters of Turkey also stress the need to implement the Additional Protocol, but show a greater comprehension of Turkey's position. They reject the linkage between Turkey's position on Cyprus and a stop to the accession process (criterion 4) and show a greater willingness to accept the Turkish demand to connect the opening of Turkish ports and airports with a settlement of the Cyprus issue. First, they point out that the EU has not fulfilled its promises to facilitate trade with Northern Cyprus as promised after the referendum in April 2004. Joschka Fischer, the then German Foreign Minister, said, 'Ankara and not the EU have a legitimate claim here'.⁵⁰ To punish Turkey, despite its crucial role in the positive referendum in the Turkish part of the island, would be extremely unfair, Fischer argued. Also, the European Commission repeatedly reminded the governments of their promises of the post-Annan period (Christou, 2009). Rehn stated, 'I also encourage the member states to take the next step and adopt our proposal from 2004 on direct trade between the EU and the Turkish Cypriot community'.⁵¹ Second, supporters of Turkey refer to the Helsinki decision of 1999 in order to point out the ambiguous role the EU played in the Cyprus conflict. Initially Cyprus was asked – in line with the accession criteria – to overcome its internal division before joining the EU. But when Simitis, the then Prime Minister of Greece, threatened to block the whole Eastern Enlargement, the member states decided to give up this precondition.⁵² Third, the supporters of Turkey argue that imposing deadlines on one side is not a helpful way of resolving the conflict. Ahtisaari said, 'If there are difficult situations, then it might be appropriate to find an interim solution and see how things develop'.⁵³

The Turkey-skeptics were not able to make Turkey's recognition of Cyprus a precondition for the opening of the accession talks. They also failed in their demand to completely suspend the accession talks in December 2006. The European Council agreed instead to follow a Commission recommendation to suspend talks on eight out of 35 negotiation chapters because of Turkey's refusal to implement the Additional Protocol. Additionally they decided to review the fate of the eight negotiation chapters at the end of 2009. The Turkey-skeptics could not enforce further sanctions in December 2009 as a response to the ongoing refusal of Turkey to open its ports, but the unsolved conflict remains a sufficiently strong argument for the Turkey-skeptics to at least slow down the accession talks. However, the new rules of the Lisbon treaty could create a new dynamic. Trade agreements now require the approval of the majority in the European Parliament and a qualified majority among the EU member states. All pending trade agreements, including the free trade proposal with Northern Cyprus, have automatically been transferred to this new decision mechanism. When the free trade proposal is adopted, the Turkish government,

which always made the link between free trade and the opening of its ports, could open its harbors and ports to Cypriot planes and vessels.⁵⁴

ASSESSMENT OF ARGUMENTS

The Turkey-skeptics have not been able to redefine the rules of the game. Indeed, all the justification principles brought forward by the Turkey-skeptics, except the statement that widening is against deepening, were accepted as valid by the supporters of Turkey's EU membership (criterion 1). However, the link between the abstract justification principles and the position to reject Turkey's EU accession did not win support (criterion 4). Both strategies, the framing of Turkey's behavior as non-compliant with the accession criteria and the establishment of new accession criteria, have so far failed.

Some EU norms and procedures are clearly specified (criterion 2) and set clear rules for a case of non-fulfillment (criteria 3). The negotiation framework states that only a serious and persistent breach of the political criteria legitimizes a break with membership prospects. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Turkey-skeptics were unable to offer an alternative interpretation which would win support in the political discourse. The possibility of reframing the discourse was greater in a context in which the justification principle was accepted by the supporters of Turkey, and the non-existence of EU norms and procedures left room for alternative interpretations. This was the case with the demand for the acceptance of the Armenian genocide and the reference to public opinion. The greatest opportunity to reframe the discourse is given in a context in which a specified EU norm exists, but the consequences of its non-fulfillment are not further specified (shaded area in Table 1). Such a context supplies the Turkey-skeptics with a legitimate starting point for an argument and leaves room for different interpretations. This was the case with the absorption capacity of the EU and Turkey's obligation to extend the customs union to Cyprus. However, the opponents were also unable to frame less specified norms and procedures to their advantage. The consequences of the institutional stalemate after the failed constitutional treaty and the consequences of Turkey's refusal to extend the customs union to Cyprus were open questions, but the solution offered by the Turkey-skeptics, breaking with the membership prospects of Turkey, did not gain much support in the debates inside the EU. The debate about the absorption capacity did not lead to a further specification of the frontiers, and Turkey's refusal to extend the customs union to Cyprus was only sanctioned by the suspension of eight chapters.

Some arguments were further weakened by incoherent application (criterion 5). For example, whereas some actors denied Turkey's accession with reference to a negative public opinion of it, the same actors supported Croatia's EU membership despite a similarly reluctant public opinion. Actors who argued against Turkey by claiming that widening is antithetical to deepening, or with the reference to the absorption capacity, simultaneously favored the inclusion of all the Balkan states. In-

deed, even if Turkey is a greater challenge because of its size, every new member state increases the heterogeneity of the EU.

The European Commission in particular actively rebutted the arguments of the Turkey-skeptics and played a crucial role as an agenda setter: It framed the absorption capacity as a functional and non-static concept. It denied that widening and deepening are contradictory. It stressed that the public acceptance of enlargement depends to a significant degree on the communication of the governments. It insisted that the rules of the game cannot be changed during the game and recalled the EU's commitments on the Cyprus issue. Thus, the European Commission was able to use the constellation of heterogeneous member state preferences to provide political leadership and defend the cosmopolitan approach to EU enlargement. As a result the official position of the EU has not changed since the start of the accession talks; no new accession criterion has been introduced.

Table 1: Synopsis of the consistency and the coherence of the arguments

Justification principle	1: Appropriateness of justification principle accepted by supporters of Turkey	2: Argument based on a clear specified EU norm	3: Specified consequences in case of non-fulfillment	4: Link between justification and position accepted by supporters of Turkey	5: Coherent application in another context
Efficient functioning of the institutions	+	+	-	-	+/-
Widening is against deepening	-	-	-	-	+/-
Public opinion has to be respected	+	-	-	-	-
Genocide has to be respected	+	-	-	-	x
Copenhagen criteria have to be respected	+	+	+	-	+
Customs union with Cyprus has to be respected	+	+	-	-	x

CONCLUSION

The failed attempts of the Turkey-skeptics to stop the accession negotiations show the constraining weight of past policy choices and the path dependency of enlargement politics. Even resolute opponents of Turkey's membership such as French President Sarkozy or German Chancellor Angela Merkel could not change the principle of 'pacta sunt servanda'. The European Commission in particular defended this principle and acted as a resolute supporter of Turkey's EU accession and a defender of the conditionality principle. The European Commission continues to use the community norms to rebuff the attempts of the Turkey-skeptics to reverse the EU's commitment to Turkey's EU accession and remains an important autonomous actor in the enlargement discourse.

Normative entrapment will also bind the EU to its commitments in the future, provided that Turkey fulfills its part of the obligations. Thus, the most realistic scenario for the future of the accession talks is that progress will continue to be made, but slowly. However, without a justification acceptable for all member states and with successive EU presidencies pushing for the opening of further negotiation chapters, the delaying strategy of the Turkey-skeptics will become increasingly difficult to sustain, provided that Turkey fulfills its obligations. Thus, the normative entrapment seems to foster a cosmopolitan Europe (Beck and Grande, 2007) which overcomes parochial boundaries. Therefore, Turkey's membership prospects are much stronger than the public discourses in Europe and Turkey let us assume. If the Turkish political elite were able to more effectively disclose the true position of the Turkey-skeptics in the EU, which in fact is relatively weak, it could help to boost support for EU accession in Turkey, which has dropped significantly in recent years.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁴⁵ See FN 2.
- ⁴⁶ Letter of Angela Merkel and Edmund Stoiber, available at: www.cdu.de/doc/pdf/05_08_26_Brief_Tuerkei.pdf.
- ⁴⁷ 'Sarkozy für komplette Aussetzung der Türkei-Gespräche', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 December 2006.
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Forum on ‘Central Europe’: Introduction

MICHAL KOŘAN

The idea of assembling together various pieces reflecting the notion of ‘Central Europe’ originated in Prague in May 2010 during the Second Symposium on Czech Foreign Policy. Throughout a meeting dedicated to the question of Central Europe in the U.S. foreign policy under Barack Obama, the debate rather quickly turned to the very concept of ‘Central Europe’. The bottom line of the discussion was embodied in a suggestion that the concept ‘Central Europe’ might as well vanish in the not so distant future as well as in the question of what to do about that. The striking feature of these issues is the stubbornness with which they kept surfacing for (at least) the better part of the last half a century. This feature eloquently illustrates the unspoken need of the Central Europeans to somehow sustain their Central Europeanness while there is no ‘complementary desire in the West’, as Europe ‘got used to living without Central Europe’ (Holm, 2000: 10).

The above quotation comes from a volume called *Central Europe: Core or Periphery?*, which was published a decade ago as a collection of texts stemming from a conference and debate held in the Czech castle Štířín under the auspices of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Lord, ed, 2000). Not surprisingly, the debate revolved around the principal question whether there actually exists something like ‘Central Europe’ and what its potentials might be. Some of the participants were rather clear in their message: Central Europe has gone to oblivion somewhere between 1938 and 1989 until it (re)appeared after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe to become a vital and essential part of the whole continent (Hroch, 2000; Lord, 2000; Pick, 2000; Shöpflin, 2000). Some suggested that ‘Central Europe’ ‘moved away from Prague, Warsaw and Budapest in the direction of Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius and Kiev’ while ‘the representation of the Czech lands, Poland and Hungary as “Central Europe” may continue to co-exist with a representation of these countries as Western European ones’ (Neumann, 2000: 218). In turn, this means that the politically urgent desire for ‘Central Europeanness’ of the 1980s gave way to a newly acquired and in many ways more positive self-identification. Many of the observers also agreed on a political understanding of ‘Central Europe’ according to which ‘Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic utilized the culturally expressed idea of Central Europe for political purposes: accession to NATO and the front seats in the line for the EU’ (Todorova, 2000: 226). Despite the fact that the contributors did not quite hold similar views on the role and significance of Central Europe, they mostly

agreed that – in terms of identity – the constitutive ‘other’ of ‘Central Europeanness’ was presented by Eastern Europe and/or the Balkans. What is also to be found throughout the book is the stress on the determining role of the anticipated EU accession of the Central European countries. Last but not least, many analysts implicitly equated the Central European region with the countries that compose the Visegrad group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia).

Ten years after the publication of *Central Europe: Core or Periphery*, the Forum on Central Europe in this issue of the journal *Perspectives* still basically revolves around the same basic themes. Yet, the context changed quite substantially, and also the overall development since the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 put the entire discussion into a new light. Jan Růžička initiated the launching of the forum by his thought stimulating presentation at the May 2010 symposium. His main suggestion is that the Central European countries should abandon the Atlantist concept of Central Europe as a region whose existence is mostly anchored in a special relationship with the United States. Otherwise, the external (Western) perception of Central Europe will move to perceiving Central Europe as ‘Eastern’ Europe. J. Růžička also puts forward empirical evidence of this dynamics already taking place (see Růžička’s contribution to this forum – Růžička, 2010). In other words, Western references to the countries of the region shift from Central Europe to Eastern Europe. According to Růžička, the reason for this is that this self-understanding hinges on a view of transatlantic relations which is deeply embedded in the Cold War and its constitutive confrontation with the Soviet Union/Russia. It is also important that the process of the vanishing of Central Europe would be the ‘case irrespective of the quality and extent of cooperation and the strength of Central European identity within the region itself. Identities are not only self-referential but also have to be accepted by others’ (Růžička, 2010: 74). This statement refers without a doubt to the Visegrad cooperation, which in recent years displays signs of quite remarkable success (see, e. g., Kořan, 2010). Růžička stresses that should the concept of Eastern Europe replace the concept of Central Europe, the change would represent a significant loss. Růžička suggests that the best way of avoiding this loss is to attempt to derive the Central European identity and self-understanding not only from Central Europe’s position in transatlantic relations but also from its role in Europe itself. Rick Fawn (see Fawn’s contribution to this forum – Fawn, 2010) objects that ‘Eastern Europe’ has not replaced that conception of ‘Central Europe’, not only in the view of the Central Europeans but also in that of the American policy-makers and/or observers. Yet, he agrees that for some purposes the conception of Eastern Europe is occasionally used by their Russian counterparts and by West Europeans. Still, Fawn suggests that the term ‘Eastern Europe’ has a connotation and even an identity that is largely distinct from what was previously referred to as ‘Central Europe’.

What is more important, though, is that Fawn also stresses the fact that 'Central Europe', as (re)conceived in the early 1980s and then operationalized after the 1989 revolutions, has been vanishing because of the success of the respective countries and thus for that reason any sense of its disappearance should be celebrated. This is so because becoming members of the EU and NATO made Central European post-communist countries 'both functionally and existentially part of "Europe"', which gave these countries a new geocultural identity (Fawn, 2010: 81). Even though the conception of Central Europe could afford to disappear as a result of successful domestic transformations and foreign policy, it has not. Fawn namely points at the large extent of the merge of the conception of Central Europe with the sub-regional state-to-state Visegrad cooperation. Besides that, Fawn notes that the 'transatlantism' is not an unambiguous and ubiquitous policy doctrine; instead, it is but one of several foreign policy choices.

Paul Luif (see Luif's contribution to this forum – Luif, 2010) complements this vital debate by analysing the position of Austria, which somehow finds itself both *within* Central Europe (historically) and *outside* it (politically). Luif shows the missed opportunities and the difficulties Austria experiences today when trying to form partnerships among its 'natural' partners, the neighbors in Central Europe. These difficulties are all the more striking as during the Cold War Austria was highly regarded as a beacon of liberty by the citizens in the Communist neighboring states. The article points at the fact that in the first half of the 1990s, Austria's foreign policy oriented itself clearly towards Western Europe with only slight political attention devoted to its northern and eastern post-communist neighbors. Also, Austria's sacred neutrality drives it apart from the Central European countries, whose mutual political cooperation was greatly boosted by their common fate in joining the NATO. Another clear division between Austria and the other Central European countries concerns economic development. Furthermore, an additional great obstacle in developing a common (sub)regional identity which would include Austria lies in the persistence of firmly established and enduring stereotypes. Even though it will be difficult for Austria to compensate for the missed political opportunities of the past, he concludes that the 'Danube Strategy, which will be implemented in the EU from 2011 on, could help the Austrians to strengthen their relations with their neighbors in Central Europe. The full opening of the Austrian labor market and the diminishing "wealth gap" in Central Europe may well enhance the comprehension of Austria among the neighbors' (Luif, 2010: 107).

When put together, the three elaborate contributions, however different in their approaches as well as in their arguments, seem to highlight four important features of the contemporary debate about and the very role of 'Central Europe'. First, the historical development and previous functions of the actual version of the conception have little to say in regard to the most recent state of affairs as the conception

stems from its current political understanding and purpose. This is followed by the second feature, the assertion that under these conditions 'Central Europe' is a volatile and versatile term affording for even quite substantial transformations in a relatively short span of time (we most likely recently experienced this situation). Third, the political understanding and purpose of 'Central Europeanness' has to a growing extent been aligning with the Visegrad sub-regional cooperation, which serves as a natural 'hub' and point of reference for other countries depicting themselves as 'Central Europeans'. And fourth, the endurance and sustainability of the Central European identity is increasingly deeply interlinked with the European integration and the 'European' sense of identity of the Central Europeans (as opposed to, for example, the previous notion that was linked to a special position in transatlantic relations).

All four of these assertions point to an important development that seems to be taking place right now. During the past two years or so, many observers have pointed at the process of the 'fading romance' between the CEC and the U.S. (see Gati, 2008; see also CEPA, 2010). This process should not be overestimated, as a strong interest in preserving the U.S. involvement and presence in the CE region persists among the CEC's elites. Yet, in the context of the more general changes (perceived or real) in the transatlantic relations it is necessary to address these questions in the most thorough manner possible. For it is true that several important changes became clearly visible in the past several months. In July 2009, Poland made an important and progressive decision to include the ESDP/CSDP (European Security and Defence Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy) among the priorities of its EU presidency programme, and as of today the Polish government still holds on to this priority. Consequently, Poland successfully started to build a CEE coalition in order to gain support for its decision (Hynek, Handl, Střítecký, and Kořan, 2009: 271; see also Central Europe Digest, 2009). Also Poland's traditional guardedness towards Russia is giving place to a progressively pragmatic and cooperative stance which is more in line with the European mainstream – and also with the attitude of the new U.S. administration (Aslund and Kuchins, 2009; see also Sestanovich, 2008). The other CEC might follow this example should Poland's profits from the change appear to be attractive. That the process of the 'Europeanization' has not been limited to the Polish case can be seen in the turn in the most recent political thinking of the Czech Republic. As for the V4 cooperation itself, especially since 2009 the Visegrad group has acquired an important new dynamics which has practical and beneficial consequences for the cooperation in many concrete areas (Kořan, 2010a). Also, due to the intensive communication during the pre-accession period, solid communication networks among political representatives and diplomatic and bureaucratic actors have been established. This dense interaction network contributes to socialization and to the formation of a quasi-Visegrad identity which further enhances conditions for the V4 cooperation (Kořan, 2010b). Another

very important tendency can be detected in the rhetoric of the Visegrad group's (V4) leaders. Traditionally, the V4 was conceived as a tool for promoting rather narrow regional interests within the EU (among other things). Strikingly, the V4's elites significantly changed their stances and recently began to speak of the V4 countries as 'good Europeans' who try to boost the sub-regional cooperation in order to *energize the whole EU*.¹ All this illustrates important changes in the self-understanding of the Central European region. We hope that the three following articles will provide a fertile ground for further thinking about Central Europe, its role, its future and its challenges.

ENDNOTES

¹ This was made clear, for example, by all the V4 Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their meeting in Bratislava in September 2010.

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Forum on ‘Central Europe’: From Eastern Europe to Central Europe and Back? On Regions, Transatlantic Relations, and Central Europe

JAN RŮŽICKA

Abstract: This essay explores the impact of transatlantic relations since the late 1990s on understandings of Central Europe as a region in international politics. It argues that developments in transatlantic relations and especially the Central European countries’ positioning in them have been crucial in bringing about the return of the label Eastern Europe. The essay examines the sources of this change, in particular the view of transatlantic relations deeply embedded in the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union/Russia. The final part of the essay discusses why the shift in terms of references to the region matters and what could be done to halt the vanishing of Central Europe. Here the essay proposes to ground Central Europe not only in transatlantic relations but also firmly in Europe.

Key words: Central Europe; transatlantic relations; Eastern Europe; regions

This essay has its origins in a talk given during the 2nd Czech Foreign Policy Symposium held in Prague in May 2010.¹ The session of which the original presentation was a part carried the title ‘Central Europe in the New U.S. Foreign Policy’. Conceived broadly, the event offered an invitation to participants to comment on recent relations between the United States and the countries of Central Europe. While leaving large areas open to the speakers’ imagination, the title quite clearly prompted us to set forth in the quest for questions and answers in the direction of US foreign policy. After all, we were supposed to say something about the place of Central Europe in that policy. Given the increased profile and attention that Central Europe has received in US foreign policy on at least some occasions during the last decade or so, there certainly appears to be sufficient material to study. One could begin with the NATO enlargement commencing in the late 1990s, go through the transatlantic dispute over the war in Iraq, which dominated the years after the terrorist attacks in

September 2001, and conclude with the attempt to build up the US missile defense shield through the participation of Poland and the Czech Republic, which set the tone roughly in the last five years. These developments would undoubtedly offer enough material for a theoretical and empirical analysis of US foreign policy towards Central Europe.

Interesting though such an analysis might be, it is one of the arguments put forward here that the heightened engagement between the United States and Central European countries has had its greatest impact not on the United States or even individual countries of Central Europe, but on Central Europe as a regional idea. As a result, the essay aims to probe the following question: How have transatlantic relations since the late 1990s changed understandings of Central Europe as a region in international politics? This overarching question gives a rise to two preliminary questions. The first one is conceptual and asks about the nature of regions. What are regions and how is their existence to be understood in international politics? From this conceptual question follows a more particular one, namely, 'What is Central Europe?'

Only with these two questions answered can one begin to present an argument about the impact of recent US foreign policy on Central Europe. This argument itself is nestled within a larger framework of transatlantic relations, of which US-Central European relations are but a subset. In fact, developments in transatlantic relations and especially Central European countries' positioning in them have been crucial in bringing about the change in the understanding of Central Europe as a regional idea. The core of this transformation can best be summed up as the waning of Central Europe and the return of Eastern Europe.

This argument consists of three parts. First, the essay asks how the resurgence of the term Eastern Europe is to be explained given the effort that has gone into establishing the idea of Central Europe as a distinct European region. In this respect I point out the different origins of the two regional ideas and show their uneasy coexistence. The decisive element in this part is the conceptual space that one regional idea leaves for the other without the possibility of either one of them ever fully taking over. Thus Eastern Europe leaves and even creates room for Central Europe, whereas Central Europe presupposes the existence of and maintains space for Eastern Europe. There cannot be one without the other because the two are inextricably linked.

The second part of the argument examines more precisely the role of transatlantic relations in the waning of Central Europe and the return of Eastern Europe. There is a surprising paradox at work here, which needs to be analysed. One of the driving forces behind the idea of Central Europe has been the striving for the possibility of actively taking part in transatlantic relations. Why should it then be that when this goal was seemingly achieved, it coincided with the resurgence of the dreaded label Eastern Europe? The proposition offered in response to this question draws on a

particular understanding of transatlantic relations which many among the Central European foreign policy elites brought with them once they became a part of transatlantic relations themselves. This particular understanding hinges on a view of transatlantic relations which is deeply embedded in the Cold War and its constitutive confrontation with the Soviet Union/Russia. While this somewhat anachronistic conception of transatlantic relations is understandable because of the Central European historical experience, its implications for the idea of Central Europe are dire. The confrontational view of transatlantic relations (with the accompanying idea of a rather overly unified West) preserves the status of Central Europe as a space in between Western Europe (Germany) and Eastern Europe (Russia), which is so excellently captured in the German term *Zwischeneuropa*.

Finally, the third part of the argument is built up around the joint questions whether the waning of the idea of Central Europe matters, and if so, why. This part shows that the fading of the idea indeed does matter, especially in the light of the effort that has gone into establishing the term Central Europe. The essay outlines some potential implications connected with the continued vanishing of Central Europe, chief among them being further confrontation in relations with Russia.

The essay concludes with a few brief remarks on what could/should be done by Central European countries if they wish to halt the waning of the idea of Central Europe. Three options are considered. First, there exists the possibility of dropping the term Central Europe altogether. The second option, which is the opposite of the first option, is further deepening of and insistence on the idea of Central Europe. Finally, the third option rests in an attempt to ground Central Europe not only in transatlantic relations but also, and perhaps even predominantly, in Europe. The conclusion leans towards this third option.

In line with the long tradition of writing on Central Europe, this text is an essay commenting on broader political themes concerning the region rather than a full-blown research article. While it uses conceptual apparatus from the field of International Relations and provides empirical illustrations for the claims it contains, the main purpose of the essay is to point out political developments that have gone largely unnoticed but carry potentially far-reaching consequences for the region. Thus the essay aims to stir both scholarly and political debate. It offers questions and hypotheses that could be developed into fuller research projects. First and foremost, however, the essay is a provocative reflection on the state of Central Europe as a regional idea and its political implications, both foreign and domestic.

REGIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The study of regions and regionalism is a well established practice in the field of International Relations (for a very useful recent overview see Fawn, 2009). Since that is the case, it goes almost without saying that there is a good deal of disagreement

about the question of what is a proper scope for a regional study in international politics (Paasi, 2009).

Simply put, regions can refer to both supra-state as well as sub-state levels. Joseph Nye, who was among the first to draw the attention of IR scholars to regions and regionalism in distinguishing the former from the latter, put emphasis on institutionalization. Whereas he conceived of regions as 'a limited number of states linked by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence', his understanding of regionalism was based on 'the formation of interstate associations or groupings on the basis of region' (Nye, 1968: vii). On the other hand, many of the writings on the so-called 'new regionalism' in (Western) Europe focus on the sub-state level, where the term captures newly emerging modes of governance within nation-states that are used to accommodate political, economic and cultural demands, which are often cast in ethno-nationalist terms (Keating, 1998: especially 72–110; for a critique of the 'new regionalism' see Lovering 1999). In both supra-state and sub-state instances regions can denote areas that span across state boundaries (for example, Silesia or the Basque Country). Although regions can be perhaps more readily identified when there is a noticeable degree of regional institutionalization, this element is not necessary in recognizing a region. As discussed in more detail below, Central Europe is precisely one such region. In the 1980s, proponents of this idea articulated its existence irrespective of the absence of any formal regional institutionalization.

The breadth of possibilities in studying regions certainly says something about the role of regions in international politics. It is especially helpful in grasping processes of regionalization, which refer to 'the growth of societal integration within a region and to the often undirected processes of social and economic interaction' (Hurrell, 1995: 39), or processes of regionalism, denoting how a region 'moves from using such its (chosen) shared identifiers to more formalised interactions and even institutionalisation' (Fawn, 2009: 12). Identification of these processes nevertheless presupposes the existence of regions and an ability to identify them. Thus one is still left stranded with the question 'What are regions?' Here authors seem to agree in their calls for flexibility in defining regions, for:

'there are no "natural" regions, and definitions of "region" and indicators of "regionness" vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation. Moreover it is how political actors perceive and interpret the idea of a region and notions of "regionness" that is critical: all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested' (Hurrell, 1995: 38–39).²

The importance which Hurrell gives to the socially constructed and politically contested nature of regions is indeed crucial. It is not only that regions can be made up,

in the words of Emanuel Adler, of 'people whose common identities and interests are constituted by shared understandings and normative principles other than territorial sovereignty' (Adler, 1997: 253), but they, and the meanings attached to them, can become the subject of international politics, which states aim to manipulate. In turn, these meanings have implications for the standing of states with regard to other states.

The theoretical position underpinning this essay is therefore relatively simple and straightforward (this, however, does not prevent it from being potentially quite contentious). Regions as understood here are socio-political constructs projected by various actors (state and non-state) onto the geopolitical space, which is not restricted to but rather dominated by states. Regions are socially and politically constructed, exactly because what makes them possible are processes through which space *and* meaning become attached to each other.³ Central Europe conceived as a region is no exception to this claim and, in fact, serves as a primary illustration of this position in the rest of the text.

WHAT IS CENTRAL EUROPE?

The question of defining Central Europe is as intractable as the previous one about regions. In the framework of this essay there is little point in revisiting the question substantively and carrying out yet another 'search for Central Europe' (Schöpflin and Wood, 1989). This has been done better elsewhere and in scopes that were greater than what this essay either could or needed to achieve (see, for example, Ash, 1986; Graubard, 1990; Wandycz, 1993; Křen, 2005). Rather than as an invitation to painstakingly make arguments concerning what constitutes Central Europe and what does not, where it begins and where it ends, the question of what is Central Europe is critical for this essay in the political sense with which it was formulated, as this sense brought about the 'revival' of Central Europe.

The idea of Central Europe was articulated by a group of intellectuals in the mid-1980s with the specific political aim of wresting a 'kidnapped West', as Milan Kundera called the area between Germany and Russia, from Communist control (Kundera, 1984).⁴ Increasing the awareness that there existed a part of Europe which not only was 'kidnapped' by the Soviet Union but also formed an integral part of the West opened up the possibility of bringing the region back to life and restoring its place in the West, where it belonged both culturally and historically, in the opinion of Kundera and others who joined the debate. In other words, speaking of Central Europe was the means of addressing, countering and changing a historical aberration which occurred in the period post-1945, when lands covered by countries such as Czechoslovakia, Poland or Hungary became Eastern Europe.

In his essay Kundera merely presented the most radical statement of this political project. At the core of his argument stood the claim that the lack of freedom in Cen-

tral Europe was more than just a problem of those living in the region and the preservation of its cultural heritage. The situation of Central Europe concerned, or ought to have concerned, the West. This was so because if Central Europe had always been its part, then the West's fate was at stake too. As Kundera put it when writing about the revolts of 1956, 1968, and 1970, '[w]e can no longer consider what took place in Prague or Warsaw in its essence as a drama of Eastern Europe, of the Soviet bloc, of communism; it is a drama of the West' (Kundera, 1984: 33).

Conceived in this way, Central Europe stood for the 'good' values of the West. The region formed the West's eastern border and represented an antithesis to and indeed a defense against the imposed Eastern European values.⁵ Others who took up their voice in the debate pretty much shared this sentiment. That the idea of Central Europe served the specific political purpose of challenging the Eastern European hegemony was attested to by the fact that it could only take place freely in the underground or outside of the region itself. Anecdotally it was evidenced by such futile attempts to reject it as when the official daily of the Polish communist party felt the need to run an article denouncing 'The Myth of Central Europe' (cited in Ash, 1986).

In so far as Central Europe suffered and survived under the communist yoke, the idea could not fully flourish absent a radical political transformation in the region's countries. The revolutions of 1989 epitomized such a radical change, as they allowed Central Europe to bloom and provided its inhabitants with the opportunity to reclaim their political place in the West (Ash, 1991). The motif of 'the return to Europe' underlying the revolutions and the ensuing political transitions attests that this was a clear goal. Symbolical measures such as the US State Department and the British Foreign Office establishing Central European units offered a recognition of this effort (Ash, 1999: 348). But the frustration with which, for example, Václav Havel called for the dropping of the label post-communist as a signifier for the countries of the former Soviet bloc suggests the difficulties in shaking off the label of Eastern Europe (Havel, 1994).⁶

Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s the idea of Central Europe as a political project took on two dominant varieties. The first one came in the form of the project of formal integration into transatlantic and European political structures. Significantly, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO (i.e. the transatlantic political and security arrangement) years ahead of their accession to the European Union. The second expression of the Central European idea was the deepening of structures of regional cooperation within the region, especially the building up of the Visegrád Group (Růžicka and Kořan, 2006). The process of regionalization, despite its occasional halts and actors' unwillingness to cooperate, led one observer to conclude that 'a definition of borders of central Europe can now be identified through regional co-operation' (Fawn, 2001: 66).

Both of these political dimensions of the idea of Central Europe have been quite successful. Integration into Western structures has been achieved and regional cooperation continues to expand. On the face of things, Central Europe has fulfilled its objectives. In recent years, however, the political concept of Central Europe has been vanishing. It has increasingly given way to the term which it had explicitly challenged – Eastern Europe. This is not so much in the region itself, where the term Central Europe is still used quite extensively and serves as a strong point of reference, but rather in the West, to which, lest one forgets, it was addressed in the first place. After all, the debate about Central Europe really started only once Kundera's article was reprinted in the *New York Review of Books*.

The claim about the waning of the concept of Central Europe immediately raises a number of questions. In what follows, the essay specifically addresses three of them. First, how is this development to be explained? Second, what role have transatlantic relations played in this turn? And why does it matter? Before proposing answers to these questions, the claim about the decline of the idea of Central Europe needs to be illustrated.

BACK TO EASTERN EUROPE?

By the waning of the idea of Central Europe is here meant a process by which references to the countries of the region shift from Central Europe to Eastern Europe. Clearly, there are several plausible ways in which this could be demonstrated. One could conduct quantitative and/or qualitative discourse analyses of various actors in order to observe whether there has indeed been a change in the way they approach the region. Alternatively, one could carry out comparative case studies of discourses with regard to specific issues of importance to the region. Yet another option might be following the commitment of actors within the region to the idea by measuring such things as the frequency and level of their contacts or the allocation of financial and other resources to regional cooperation. All of these would probably yield different results, though.

This section aims to briefly illustrate the change in terms of references to the region in some of the leading British and US newspapers. In particular, I have gone through the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, and the *Times* in the case of the United Kingdom and the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in the case of the United States in order to track the references to both Central Europe and Eastern Europe. This is meaningful only in so far as it can be ascertained that the two refer largely to the same countries and areas. Thus, if references to the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia used consistently the term Central Europe but not Eastern Europe, there would be little value in contrasting and studying these references. In other words, a degree of overlap between Central Europe and Eastern Europe in terms of what places they refer to is necessary. The period under examination cov-

ered the last ten years – from the middle of the year 2000 until the middle of the year 2010.

What comes out of this analysis, which is only sketched out here, is the presence of two noticeable trends. First, there has been a growing number of references to both Central Europe and Eastern Europe over the course of the decade. This shift became especially palpable in the years 2006 and 2007. The second trend has been the rise in the number of references to the region as Eastern Europe. Both of these trends can be exemplified in the discussion surrounding the plan to install portions of the US missile defense shield in the Czech Republic and Poland.

As the news of talks between the US and the Polish and Czech governments about the possible missile defense sites began to leak into the press, first in 2004 and then more extensively in 2006, they referred to the possible new missile defense installations in Central Europe or often simply in Europe (*Guardian* 27 July, 2006; *Times* 16 August, 2006). This was also the tone of a longer report in the *New York Times*, which nevertheless in discussing potential European sites went out of the way to point out that ‘the establishment of an antimissile base in Eastern Europe would have enormous political implications’ (Gordon, 2006). With the growing Russian opposition to the plan, references to Eastern Europe started to crop up with increased frequency. When the Czech government publicly confirmed its negotiations with the United States in January 2007, reports and analyses spoke increasingly about a US missile defense project in Eastern Europe (*Guardian* 22 January, 2007; *Washington Post* 28 January, 2007; *Daily Telegraph* 2 February, 2007; *New York Times* 10 February, 2007). A *New York Times* editorial called the ‘plan to station parts of a missile defense system in Eastern Europe’ misguided (*New York Times* 24 February, 2007). In a span of less than a year the issue was firmly located within references to both Central Europe and Eastern Europe, the latter frequently carrying negative connotations and disagreement with the plan, while the former was usually deployed when the Central Europeans’ point of view was taken into account (*Guardian* 9 February, 2007; *Washington Post* 27 April, 2007).⁷

A set of controversies surrounding the missile defense plan (between the United States and Russia, the U.S. and some of its European allies, the Central Europeans and Russia, the Central Europeans and some of their European allies, as well as between different sides within Central Europe itself) restored and firmly entrenched the discourse of Eastern Europe. Following the presidential change in the United States in 2008, the extensive review of the missile defense plan, and President Obama’s announcement of substantial changes in the US approach to the issue, there could be no doubt that the matter concerned Eastern Europe, not Central Europe (*New York Times* 29 August, 2009; *Guardian* 18 September, 2009; *Daily Telegraph* 18 Septem-

ber, 2009; *New York Times* 18 September, 2009; *Washington Post* 18 September, 2009). The resurgence of the term Eastern Europe was also buttressed by the perception that the Central Europeans were once again left to their own devices (Asmus, 2009; Krauthammer, 2009). Thus the decision to recalibrate the missile defense reinforced the feelings of victimhood that have always been part of the debate over Central Europe. The circle became fully closed – from Eastern Europe to Central Europe and back – but with one great exception. Since 1989 the Central Europeans have been able to shape their situation to an extent not imaginable in the mid-1980s. Therefore they themselves bear some of the responsibility for the developments.

SOURCES OF CHANGE

As any other complex process in international politics the waning of Central Europe and the resurgence of Eastern Europe is a result of multiple causal factors. It can partly be ascribed to the recovery of Russia as a major international player. The demise of the 1990s foreign policy consensus in the countries of Central Europe is another factor (Drulák et al., 2008). The EU enlargement process often carried the specification of being the ‘Eastern enlargement’. Another element must be the recognition that the two terms, Central Europe and Eastern Europe, share an uneasy co-existence. Yet another reason rests with the particular understanding of the terms and their positioning within transatlantic relations by the Central Europeans. This section probes the latter two dimensions. It first untangles the relationship between the ideas of Central and Eastern Europe. It then goes on to analyse the Central Europeans’ place within transatlantic relations.

The idea of Central Europe as articulated in the 1980s incorporates a confrontational take on Eastern Europe, because the latter provides something against which the former can be juxtaposed. In other words, the idea of Central Europe requires that it be set in opposition to Eastern Europe (Feher, 1989; Neumann, 1999: 143–160). While the positive aspects located in Central Europe draw on the cultural and political heritage shared with the West, the negative aspects of existence are traced to the East. The more the idea of Central Europe is grounded in opposition to Eastern Europe, the greater the potential for confrontation between the two.

The belief in Central Europe’s function as the eastern border of the West, to refer back to Kundera, means that Eastern Europe is always lurking around the corner. Since the geographic area of Central Europe has for long been subjected to control by larger external forces in the form of great powers, Eastern Europe can reappear and reassert itself quite quickly. The idea of Central Europe was revived and became influential during a period when the tensions between the West and the East eased in the second half of the 1980s and especially after the end of the Cold War. It is

more than a coincidence that the rise of the U.S.-Russian tensions, witnessed up until recently throughout much of the past decade, correlated with the waning of the concept of Central Europe. But it is not only a particular correlation of internal and external forces that remains decisive for the existence of Central Europe as a region in international politics. The strain between the two ideas is a constitutive part of attempts to establish Central Europe. Once Europe is conceived in terms of distinct regions, thinking about Central Europe as an idea also maintains space for Eastern Europe.

Just as it is possible for actors to draw on Central Europe as a resource to be used in international politics, so too can other actors make use of the idea of Eastern Europe to achieve their goals. This dynamic has been at work as Russia in particular objected to the Central Europeans' positioning within transatlantic relations since the 1990s. Besides the ability to draw on the idea of Eastern Europe, which formed one of the preconditions of such a maneuver, it could do so because of the particular way in which the Central Europeans approached and acted in transatlantic relations. Three issues are at play here. The first one stems from the view of many Central Europeans in which transatlantic relations are deeply grounded in the Cold War and its fundamental confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union/Russia. This view dovetails well with the origins of the idea of Central Europe. The ability to participate in the Western political structures as opposed to those of Eastern Europe was postulated as one of the measures signifying the survival of Central Europe. In this kind of thinking, Central Europe is alive when it can actually take part in Western political deliberations as opposed to merely feeling that it is part of the West.

The second issue derives from the first one. Taking the Cold War confrontation as the fundamental building block of transatlantic relations and seeing them through this prism preserves the possibility of dividing Europe into different regions. In short, it reinforces the potential salience of Eastern Europe. In this respect, it is worthwhile repeating the previous point about the rise of Central Europe correlating with the decline of Cold War tensions. While there might be good historical reasons for conceiving transatlantic relations in this way, making these reasons a basis of foreign policy in the first decade of the 21st century is questionable. For precisely the strong push for transatlanticism to dominate the foreign policies of Central European states enables the return of the concept of Eastern Europe. These policies reflect their originators' understanding of transatlanticism, which is in line with its historical origins in the 1940s, a context that includes confrontational terms in relations with Russia. The Russians themselves, in turn, are all too happy to contribute to this confrontation. This is so because the confrontational posture returns them, at least rhetorically, to the position of status and recognition which they lost following the end of the Cold War.

Thus what might appear as a paradox, namely the growth in significance of the concept of Eastern Europe at a historical point when the Central Europeans became active participants in transatlantic relations, can be explained with reference to the specific understanding of transatlanticism and its role in the foreign policies of the countries of Central Europe. As to the extent of its domination, there are obvious differences between the four countries, but it is the strongest in the regionally decisive case of Poland, while exercising a strong influence in the Czech Republic as well (Drulák et al., 2008).

While the Central Europeans attempt to act as 'proper' and 'good' transatlanticists, because they conceive of transatlanticism in a particular historical way, this produces results which are at odds with the purpose of the political concept of Central Europe. The contestation that gave rise to the transatlantic area and with it the U.S. involvement on the European continent referred to the space of Central Europe as Eastern Europe. And so, the emphasis on a specific understanding of transatlanticism brought back with it Eastern Europe, strongly challenging Central Europe. This is an important source of the waning of the concept of Central Europe.

Finally the third issue accompanying the waning of Central Europe has its roots in developments within the transatlantic relations themselves in the past decade. In particular, the transatlantic quarrel over the war in Iraq split Europe.⁸ Although it would be grossly misleading to think of that split in terms of Western and Eastern Europe (in both there were countries which supported the war as well as countries which did not embrace it), or Donald Rumsfeld's division of the continent into the Old and the New Europe, which the New Europe embraced rather enthusiastically and uncritically, the division contributed to the revival of the concept of Eastern Europe. Those criticizing the stance of the Central European countries and the support they gave to the United States could denigrate them for behaving as obedient Eastern Europeans. One only needs to recall the dismissive remarks made by the French President Jacques Chirac. The transatlantic split and the Central Europeans' positioning in it were simultaneously compounded by the suggestions that the U.S. military posture in Europe might be reconfigured in favor of Central/Eastern Europe, the involvement in the CIA's extraordinary renditions flights and, perhaps most importantly, the negotiations about Poland and the Czech Republic's participation in the missile defense plan.

While large disagreements similar to the one over Iraq occurred in transatlantic relations before, the Central Europeans found themselves in this predicament for the first time. They were puzzled by the realization that the West, into which they strenuously tried to reintegrate themselves following the fall of Communism, could be so bitterly divided. Once they encountered the strong disagreement, they sided, for a host of reasons, both good and bad, with the strongest actor, namely the United

States. However, in doing so, they found themselves not shaping the discussion but rather becoming its object, which further relegated them to a situation structurally similar to that of the old Eastern Europe.

CONCLUSION

Having identified the resurgence of references to the region of Central Europe as Eastern Europe, one is pressed to ask whether, and if so why, this change matters. This, of course, depends on the question how much ideas matter in international politics. A crude materialist view might dismiss the change as insignificant. It would hold the perspective that the shift is irrelevant for the realities on the ground, such as the US military presence in Central Europe, are far more important than how some region is being referred to. A less cavalier attitude to the role of ideas in international politics calls for a more measured reaction. Discourses and ideas carry their own implications, even though they might have limited impact. That is the attitude adopted here and it provides the basis for three points presented in answer to the question why the shift matters.

First, should the concept of Eastern Europe replace the concept of Central Europe, the change would represent a significant loss because of the large effort that went into building up the idea and the label of Central Europe, which would be wasted. Second, becoming Eastern Europe once again would question the Central Europeans' belonging to the West. This would be the case irrespective of the quality and extent of cooperation and the strength of the Central European identity within the region itself. Identities are not only self-referential but they also have to be accepted by others. Third, the loss of the concept of Central Europe potentially accelerates the tensions with Russia (and perhaps with Western Europe as well) and ultimately puts the Central Europeans into a position of greater dependence on the United States. In addition, it risks pushing the Central European states back towards Russia, something that they have desired, for very good reasons, to avoid. This is so not because they would prefer such a development, but because the Russian dominance over Eastern Europe, as opposed to Central Europe, was historically established. Barring a great shift in discourse and its meaning, Eastern Europe means a degree of Russian control.

The change from Central Europe to Eastern Europe is not a foregone conclusion. Despite structural constraints in international politics, actors do have the ability to pursue their interests as well as values and shape their environment. The Central Europeans are not powerless in positioning themselves and their region in international politics and ensuring its survival. An argument could be made that this goal might paradoxically be best served by dropping the idea of Central Europe entirely and simply using Europe as an appropriate point of reference. While it would be worthwhile to explore this change, it would, however, seem to be counterproduc-

tive, especially in light of the implications that the waning of Central Europe could have for the countries of the region. A second option, holding on to the idea of Central Europe ever more firmly, has been shown to carry its own limitations. What I wish to underline is the third option, which stresses that existing and potential problems in the relations of the Central European countries with Russia can be better dealt with by putting an emphasis on anchoring the countries both in Europe and in transatlantic relations. The organizing principle of the region built into the concept of Central Europe, which rests in an understanding that the region is a part of a larger idea such as the West, remains well suited to achieving this goal provided that the confrontational element it contains is limited and kept under control.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ I would like to thank Michal Kořan for inviting me to participate in the symposium and for commenting on an earlier version of this text.
- ² For similar conclusions advocating openness when defining regions, see Fawcett, 2004; Fawn, 2009.
- ³ A good example of such a practice of creation and re-creation can be found in Carter and Turnock, 1999. The conflation of region as conceived in social and cultural terms with geographical notions is apparent from the title of their work – ‘The States of Eastern Europe: Volume I – North-Eastern Europe’. Their introductory chapter then makes matters even more complicated as the authors operate with a concept of Central Europe in which they include Slovenia but exclude Austria without even mentioning it, while also singling out Slovakia as a maverick. This illustrates well the extent to which regions are a product of giving meanings to space.
- ⁴ Kundera published his essay originally in French as ‘Un Occident kidnappé’.
- ⁵ For an earlier statement of a similar thesis see Halecki, 1952.
- ⁶ Havel wrote about the term ‘post-communist’ as a form of apprehension, longing for the old secure order, stigma and inability to understand the East differently than in the past. To stress his point he added that ‘we also do not call the United States a former British colony’.
- ⁷ Sometimes the two could be combined as in a story in the *Guardian* which carried the headline ‘War of words as east Europeans welcome US missile shield’ while the text consistently referred to the Central Europeans (*Guardian*, 20 February 2007).
- ⁸ This tendency was reinforced by the approach which the George W. Bush administrations (especially the first one) adopted towards NATO in general. It was relegated to a secondary role in US foreign policy as a tool to be drawn on only when and as it suited the administrations’ interests. I owe this point to one of the referees.

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FORUM: FROM EASTERN EUROPE TO CENTRAL EUROPE AND BACK?

- Růžička, Jan and Michal Kořan (2006) 'Totgesagte leben länger: Die Visegrád-Gruppe nach dem EU-Beitritt', *Osteuropa* 56 (10): 27–40.
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Forum on ‘Central Europe’: ‘Central Europe’: On the Move? And at Whose and What Cost?

RICK FAWN

Abstract: Responding to Jan Růžička, this article addresses what has happened to the term ‘Central Europe’, whether ‘Eastern Europe’ has replaced it, and the extent to which ‘Eastern Europe’ has become something other than the former socialist satellite states. It further considers how much these conceptual terms are used by different actors today. The relations of these terminological changes are then transposed to recent developments in US- and Western-Russian relations to determine the insights they may offer on the contemporary position of post-communist states in wider European security.

Key words: Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Visegrad, Atlanticism, Western-Russian relations

To ask where ‘Central Europe’ is now – or at any point in time – is to ask essential and challenging questions not only about the well-being of that region (its exact definition notwithstanding) but also about the state of Europe’s political health more widely. Those who might disagree with such a proposition probably do so from a strategic position of relative comfort and security.

It is to all our benefit, therefore, that Jan Růžička asks and observes what he has in ‘From Eastern Europe to Central Europe and Back?: On Transatlantic Relations and Central Europe’.¹ Indeed, Růžička’s comments show already that any discussion about the concept of ‘Central Europe’ is necessarily a much wider one.

Among the many points Růžička’s paper offers, the most important concerns the correlation of time between the disappearance of the term ‘Central Europe’, its (re)replacement by ‘Eastern Europe’, and the increase in US/Western-Russian tensions and insecurities.

These developments need consideration separately, in their own right – they are each important. But, to reiterate, the timing is the most intriguing. Růžička has also done the rest of us a service by allowing others to provide some of the empirical details. This article will thus tackle these matters together: what has happened to the term ‘Central Europe’, whether ‘Eastern Europe’ has replaced it, and whether ‘East-

ern Europe' has become something else; whether these conceptual terms can be found, in usage, and – importantly – by whom; and the relation of these terminological changes to US- or Western-Russian relations. This paper will also give at least some of the empirical material to give us a sense of what changes may have happened, and why.

Before that, a summation my own position, and thus a reply directly to Růžička's assertions, is offered to provide guidance for the structure and contents that follow.

In short, my view, first, is that 'Central Europe', as (re)conceived in the early 1980s and then operationalized after the 1989 revolutions, has largely but not entirely disappeared *because* of success, not failure, and in that way any sense of its disappearance should be celebrated. Second, however, much still remains of 'Central Europe', and those forms and those uses (which are not necessarily synonymous) are examined. Third, 'Eastern Europe' has not generally replaced that conception of 'Central Europe'. 'Eastern Europe' has not replaced 'Central Europe' for the Central Europeans (which we would hardly expect), American policy-makers or observers (although they have intermittently used the conception of 'Eastern Europe' for some purposes), their Russian counterparts, and West Europeans (although they use the conception of 'Eastern Europe' on some occasions). The latter two provide instances for some differentiation among the countries of the former, that is, socialist-era, Eastern Europe, which may particularly well indicate some of the concerns that Růžička's article raises. Finally, however, even though the concepts are not necessarily used as Růžička fears, which we should be thankful for, an aspect of his fears is determinable – that is, the Central European reliance on the United States (rather than Western Europe or the EU) for military security from Russia. On this particular point Růžička is suggesting that 'Eastern Europe' (as opposed to 'Central Europe') denotes a return of the subordination of the region to a superpower. On this point the present article will conclude that the Central Europeans are more of an actor in both the EU and transatlantic relations than we might expect. The article further suggests that the actions of Central European states, generally and in terms of what might more narrowly be called 'transatlanticism', are legitimate forms of foreign policy behaviour, and especially of *independent* foreign policy. That makes them less subordinate than the old conception of 'Eastern Europe' suggests. But this behaviour may well contribute to – but does not cause – Russian apprehension towards this region, and hence concern for a reappearance of the strategic vulnerability that 'Eastern Europe' may suggest.

'CENTRAL EUROPE'. MOVED BEYOND SIGHT? AND WHY THAT IS GOOD

I was especially delighted to read of Růžička's own interest, an interest that hopefully also generates wider awareness of the debate on 'Central Europe'. He is abso-

lutely right that regions are 'socio-political constructs projected onto geopolitical space'. This is a wider phenomenon and one that is arguably central now to the study of world politics.

A specific reason to study conceptions of 'Central Europe' is, simply, that the history of the use of 'Central Europe' in the last 30 years deserves commemoration and celebration. It became an understated yet extremely powerful tool for the repositioning of a European region, without, of course, that region physically moving anywhere. To forget the role of the term 'Central Europe' is to forget a fundamental aspect, indeed a strategy, that post-communist governments used to transform the European security architecture.

Růžička rightly reminded us of the émigré Czech (or would he prefer Moravian?) writer Milan Kundera's evocation in 1983 of 'Central Europe', in contradistinction to 'Eastern Europe'. The latter referred to a region torn from its rightful geocultural place, 'kidnapped' and dragged to an alien and barbaric East (Kundera, 1983).

We might of course detour to say that this idea was already raised in the 1950s in Oskar Halecki's seminal work on the subdivisions of Europe (Halecki, 1950).² Kundera need not therefore have been novel in his point, but he struck an important cord. 'Central Europe' became an essential term to redefining where the peoples of (to take Růžička's specific reference to certain countries) Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland belonged in post-Cold War Europe.³

And while from our current vantage accession to NATO and the EU may seem a given, it was certainly not in 1990. 'Central Europe' was part of an ultimately articulate and forceful re-presentation of that region to the West. This connotation signaled a region that not only shared Europe's history and values but had also contributed to their formation and development. Central Europe was fundamentally different from the old (socialist-era) Eastern Europe.

So for Central Europe (and the Baltic and part of, for a lack of a better term, South-eastern Europe) to enter NATO and the EU between 1999 and 2009⁴ was a seismic change for them and for Europe. Being part of those institutions, and thus both functionally and existentially part of 'Europe' and the Euro-Atlantic area, gave these countries and their populations a new geocultural identity. 'Central Europe' (and indeed for some of the Southeast, also the 'Balkans') could rightly disappear.

In this way, a very fine collection on the immediate post-1989 Central European transformation, written in 1990 and published in book form in 1991, could be called *Eastern Europe... Central Europe... Europe* (Graubard /ed./, 1991).

As one of the architects of post-communist Czech foreign policy wrote, already in the early 1990s 'Central Europe' rejected the alternative, previously historical conceptions for the region, such as *Zwischeneuropa*, the idea of being in-between other powers, or of serving as a bridge. Rather, integration into the 'Western, Atlantic community' was the unambiguous aim (Winkler, 1997: 110).⁵

If 'Central Europe' has (to some degree) become less conspicuous, it is the result of a foreign policy triumph by the post-communist Central European leaderships. Central Europe could afford to disappear. But it has not.

HOW CENTRAL EUROPE STILL EXISTS – AND FOR THE BETTER

Some confusion can rightly occur about the post-accession/current use and meaning of 'Central Europe'. This is due to several developments. The first is that, to a substantial degree, the Central Europe of the 1990s became synonymous with state-to-state Visegrad cooperation – that is, one form of regional cooperation.⁶ And the overall successful, if occasionally halting and low-key, cooperation embodied by Visegrad contributed enormously to the region's entry into NATO and the EU. As but a couple of examples, Solidarity leader and post-communist Polish President Lech Wałęsa called membership of NATO and the EU the 'tangible fruits' of the Visegrad cooperation (Wałęsa, 2006: 81), and a senior Hungarian diplomat wrote that the Visegrád cooperation could claim 'historic success in its efforts to win the trans-Atlantic community's embrace' (Simonyi, 2006: 96).

Many expected that both 'Central Europe' and especially Visegrad – again, the latter as inter-state cooperation – would evaporate after the EU accession of all four states in 2004. Instead, quite clearly, Visegrad has gained new life and serves as one (not the only, but still one) platform for coordinating Central European interests inside the EU (Dangerfield, 2008). And Visegrad expressly wants to (continue to) build a 'Central European' identity – and, specifically, by that name. Almost certainly the most visible set of activities (precisely because of their public outreach) by Visegrad is the work done by its subset, the International Visegrad Fund (IVF), which strives to promote – and fund – grassroots proposals to build and publicize this identity.⁷ Csaba G. Kiss could figuratively ask the following question in the 1980s, and answer it in the negative: 'A book of readings on Central Europe? Does such a thing exist? Sadly, no' (Kiss, 1989). IVF is coming close to exceeding what Kiss asked about – and what Kiss went on to say was 'needed'.⁸

Despite concerns raised in Růžička's article, the term 'Central Europe' is also in another type of circulation. We cannot offer systematic assessments from all the world's press here, but even some indications of the use of 'Central Europe' indicate that the 1990s reassertion has stuck and that the term has not disappeared.

To be sure, journalists (indeed, anyone) might be sloppy with their use of geo-cultural expressions. The point is not that they may be inaccurate, or even ill-informed,⁹ but that enough of the influential ones are no longer using 'Eastern Europe' in its 'old' connotation and, better still, are employing the desired 'Central Europe'. Even a few examples, therefore, are indicative of this positive trend.

In terms of outside reporting, after EU accession the phrase 'Central Europe' was used in *The New York Times* in reference to the (re)assertion of nationalism when Vladimír Mečiar won the first round (but no more) of the presidential ballot in Slovakia.¹⁰ When the Czech Republic assumed the rotating presidency of the EU, it was stated that its accomplishment was being the first post-communist state or first ex-Soviet satellite to do so, but not the first 'East European' state to do so.¹¹ But enough references to 'Eastern Europe' can be found, especially when negative assertions are made. So Slovakia is 'the Detroit of *Eastern Europe*' (Bilefsky, 2009, emphasis added).

Enough of the Central European region's media use the term 'Central Europe'. The leading Polish news agency PAP referred (in the English language) expressly to 'Central Europe'.¹² Tying together our points of Central European cooperation and Central European identity, the Czech media report in September 2010, for example, on their Polish counterparts' reference to 'Střední Evropa', whereby Central Europe is referred to as 'the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and Slovaks'.¹³

We will return to whether the use of 'Eastern Europe' is being used coincidentally with the rise of tensions with Russia in a later section 4. For these specific discussions, however, it is relevant to note other continuing uses of 'Central Europe': it continues as a name.

The Central European Initiative (CEI) – now with a membership of 18 countries – could have chosen any name – indeed most other organizations of this sort choose geographical and thus (ideally) neutral names – such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (which extends far beyond the shores of that sea, to Albania in the west and Azerbaijan in the east).

The Italian-led CEI, dated from November 1989, went through several initial names as its membership expanded. The grouping used as a springboard for that 1989 cooperation a sub-state level initiative that had begun in 1978 and used the geographic marker of Alpen-Adria. The state-level initiative became *Pentagonale* when its membership expanded from Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Yugoslavia to include Czechoslovakia, and then it became *Hexagonale* when Poland joined. (The start of the Yugoslav wars of secession then paralysed the initiative, which was later reborn as CEI.) The choice of Italian numerical adjectives suggested that names that do not contain the phrase 'Central European' might have continued; they were certainly employed initially. Ultimately, however, the group chose and remained with the name Central European Initiative.

That timeframe might fit with Růžička's assertions about changing perceptions – Central Europe had both vitality and a different geopolitical utility then than now. The EU chose to use both an actual produce of post-communist Central European cooperation (from Visegrad) and the name Central Europe when it launched the economic and trade cooperation for the Balkans in 2006. The name was CEFTA-2006

– taking the Central European Free Trade Agreement, originally launched in 1991 under Visegrad, and giving it a an entirely new membership (the three-cum-four original signatories having all entered the EU in 2004).

Similarly the European Commission chose the name Central European Free Trade Agreement for its Balkan initiative. Here it could have adopted anything, but instead it took a marker from, dare we say it, the ‘other’ Central Europe.¹⁴

From sections one and two we can see that the term ‘Central Europe’ continues, both in usage and in diplomacy. The Kundera ‘Central Europe’ of the 1980s/Central Europe of the 1990s is still recognizable, and has not become substantially, at least in name, ‘Eastern Europe’ again. But that is not necessarily the core of Růžička’s argument or concern. To progress we all need to ask what has come of ‘Eastern Europe’ and what that means for security thinking in the pan-European space.

WHAT IS ‘EASTERN EUROPE’ TODAY, AND HOW DOES THAT MATTER?

Despite suggestions otherwise, we may have more consensus – policy, media and (as much as there is such) popular – on what is the ‘new’ Eastern Europe. By that we mean how the term has been used since the end of the ‘old’ (but unambiguous) use of the term for the eight socialist regimes west of the USSR.

Bluntly stated, this new Eastern Europe constitutes those countries that are outside of the EU and NATO and west or south of Russia. Central Asia is well-enough recognized now in the five post-Soviet republics; and they share political similarities (and an absence of communist-era Central European-style dissidents) that make them a different conceptual category altogether.

To show that such a categorization exists, note that the United Nations now defines ‘Eastern Europe’ strictly as former Soviet republics, calling this area of operation ‘Eastern Europe and Central Asia’.¹⁵ The Russian Federation also seems to want to extract itself from this region – noting that it has ‘graduated’ (the Russian Foreign Ministry’s own term) into a donor to UN operations in this region.¹⁶ The difficulty ‘with Eastern Europe’ probably mostly lies in regard to the Caucasus, but fortunately, this is well outside the necessary limit of the present discussion.

What is more important is the selective, and thus value-laden, use of the term ‘Eastern Europe’. Even a modest investigation gives some sense of the strategic concerns Růžička’s article suggests.

First, the (re)use of Eastern Europe helps to indicate differentiation between the former socialist states. Some of the Eastern Europe to which Růžička refers might well be parts of the 1980s Eastern Europe that never quite made it to ‘Central Europe’. In the 1990s officials, especially those from Romania and Bulgaria, made comments as to whether the progress of the Visegrad states was a marker of success against

which their own countries could be judged, or whether membership of Visegrad would indicate their own advancement (Fawn, 2001).

But strategic vulnerability was also ascribed or indicated by being labeled as 'East European'. Here Růžička's reference to Jacques Chirac's comments in the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq War needs specific elaboration. Chirac rhetorically placed post-communist states in various levels of closeness to the EU; and those levels, as Chirac implied, each deserve less attention and more punishment. The French president named the post-communist countries' support of the United States for the impending war 'not really responsible behaviour'. He then declared that these countries generally 'missed a good opportunity to keep quiet'. To indicate their subordinate position (hence Růžička's suggestion of the 'old' 'Eastern European' connotation), Chirac warned the post-communist states that their position was 'dangerous' because their entry into the EU had not been ratified.

Next, tellingly, Chirac specified the lack of choice among accession hopefuls, declaring: 'When you are in the family... you have more rights than when you are asking to join and knocking on the door.' What was even more fitting to the strategic analogy of the old Eastern Europe was that Chirac offered the states that were not expected at that point to join the EU in 2004 a particular chastisement. Bulgaria and Romania were told that '[i]f they wanted to diminish their chances of joining Europe, they could not have found a better way.'¹⁷ But if differentiation among post-communist countries was made in 2003, it does not seem to hold strongly now. It is also possible, however, that these two countries have had to show particular deference to the United States, especially on their opposition to the ratification of the International Criminal Court (see Linden, 2004).¹⁸

What that meant for Russia's strategic perceptions of Romania (and Bulgaria) – as Central Europe or as Eastern Europe – seemed, at best, ambiguous. One senior Russian military commentator suggested that the placement of American interceptors in Romania or Bulgaria was acceptable to the Kremlin in a way that the installations in the Czech Republic and Poland were not – the former were at least further removed from Russia (see Kulish and Berry, 2010). In that way Romania was less 'Eastern Europe' than it used to be!

But it is also important here to invoke more of what US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said in 2003 in reply to such European resistance and reactions to the post-communist countries' support for the US position. Rumsfeld famously commented about 'old' and 'new' Europe. But what he said therefore is infrequently stated. He said that in NATO 'the center of gravity is shifting'. By this he meant the new importance of the post-communist member states. He was empowering, or noting the empowerment of, the post-communist states. If so, they were similarly even less 'Eastern European' at the time than ever before due to their impact on NATO (and the EU).

Based admittedly on a small sample, a slight trend nevertheless emerges in how and when Russian governmental statements refer to Central Europe as either 'Central Europe' or 'Eastern Europe'. Speaking neutrally, Russian president Vladimir Putin in 2005 spoke of 'the strategy of development for Russia's relations with [the] countries of *Central Europe*, including Slovakia'.¹⁹

Even when Russian officials have been condemnatory of post-communist states' foreign policy, they have recognized them as 'Central European'. Take, for example, the statements of Vladimir Voronkov, Acting Russian Permanent Representative to the OSCE following the August 2008 conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia. Voronkov named the countries that opposed Russia's position on the war as the 'Anglo-Saxon countries, as always'. He then clarified that by stating: 'I mean the US, Britain and their allies in *Central Europe*.'²⁰

At times, however, 'Eastern European' has crept into Russian official statements. A Russian Foreign Ministry official commented on the loss of visa-free travel to Russian citizens because of the expansion of the Schengen area to EU accession countries. Russian travel became 'greatly complicated', he said, 'due to the entry of our neighbors from the Baltic countries and *Eastern Europe*'.²¹

An additional consideration of the use of 'Eastern Europe' is that the 'old' East Europeans have been among the most successful in getting that term to refer to other countries, namely former Soviet republics located geographically in Europe, and excluding Russia. This includes routine statements by Baltic and Central European leaders in Western countries describing Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova (and occasionally the Caucasus) as 'Eastern European'.²²

The terminology extends to the fundamental policy initiative of the EU towards these countries, entitled, of course, as the 'Eastern Partnership'.²³

At the heart of Růžička's assertion remains the question of whether 'Central Europe' has disappeared and 'Eastern Europe' reappeared in parallel with the decline in Western-Russian relations. It is to that that we now turn.

HOW ATLANTICIST ARE THE CENTRAL EUROPEANS? AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR TERMINOLOGY AND WHAT DOES THE TERMINOLOGY TELL US ABOUT STRATEGIC RELATIONS?

Again, Růžička's suggestion of the change in geoculture terminology and that process's connection to the wider changes in East-West relations is a powerful and important proposition. 'Central Europe' and 'Eastern Europe' both serve roles (they affect policy choices) and provide indications (of how actors read a given situation).

Indeed, considering Růžička's observation of the change in terminology and in Russian-Western relations, it is probably essential to recall that Kundera's reinvigo-

ration of 'Central Europe' was also about fundamental features of Russia's cultural and political heritage.

Kundera was appreciative of the arguments that communism had distorted Russian development, that it had (as much as Marxism was a 'European' idea) pushed Russia further away from Europe. But, in invoking Central Europe in contradistinction to 'Eastern Europe' and Russia, Kundera fell very much on the side of the argument that viewed communism as *reinforcing* the long-term Russian historical trends to move away from Europe. As prominent analysts of Kundera's work summarized, Kundera believed communism was 'reviving the part of the Russian heritage that was *always* hostile to such courtships with Europe, and bent on fulfilling long-standing imperial ambitions' (Schöpflin and Wood, 1989: 141).

Perhaps then part of the larger security issue is not so much about the Central Europeans, but about non-Russian transformation. A brief digression might be helpful. Part of the debate on 'Central Europe' was the role and place of Germans (as people) and Germany (as a state actor). All of that was, remarkably, settled in 1990 with German unification.²⁴ Instead of joining the growing screams of anxiety, including the ones emanating from France and Great Britain, over the unification of some 80 million Germans, Czechoslovak president Václav Havel calmly asserted that an undemocratic Germany of just two million people was a threat, while a democratic Germany of any size was not.

This reasoning, by extension, could apply to Russia. Yes, Russia is geographically enormous but with a tortured history, one in which betrayal and invasion by outsiders is a dominant theme. But the Kundera reading of Russia suggests that a post-1991 Russia may well also remain outside Europe (even if Russians speak, again, of a series of post-1991 betrayals that essentially exclude them from 'Europe'). In other words, some of the security issues that force us to think about 'Eastern Europe' now may well be the result of a lack of transformation in some parts of wider Europe and the lack of convergence across Europe. It is not a result simply or specifically of events and actions initiated by Central Europeans.

If a reading of 'Central Europe' versus 'Eastern Europe' remains valid at all, it may well help us to understand some of the transatlantic dimensions upon which we now elaborate.

But do we not need to know more about what is 'good transatlantic behaviour'?

'Transatlantic' sounds like it excludes important aspects of post-communist foreign policy that were/are more wide than just the opposition transatlantic/American, even if US or NATO activity may have comprised large parts of that foreign policy. Many post-communist countries were and are supporters of and contributors to international peacekeeping operations, as well as EU operations.

Referring to 'transatlanticism' might then also exclude the Central Europe contributions to NATO operations against Serbia in 1999, as these were fully NATO op-

erations. Nevertheless, both the new NATO members and the aspiring ones made considerable sacrifices, and went against the grain of their public opinions, to facilitate NATO operations.²⁵ To be sure, post-communist countries wanted to make themselves useful to NATO to show that they could be 'good' alliance partners by supporting the going norms. A very illustrative example was the title a US Ambassador to Hungary gave to an article: 'How NATO joined Hungary' (Blinken, 1999).

The big questions of transatlanticism might seem to concentrate on operations and issues outside of NATO agreement: support for the Iraq war and the US missile defence installations in Central Europe. We can take each in turn.

Just how transatlanticist were the Central Europeans on the Iraq war, and for what reasons? First, it seems difficult or inaccurate to speak of these countries as monolithic actors. As in other countries, their opinions and, indeed, policies were split. Poland was one of the few countries that joined the Anglo-American war against Iraq, rather than the UN-sanctioned operations thereafter. The Czech position – and, arguably, in hindsight a very sound one – included deployment of a force to Kuwait but making its operation in Iraq contingent on a UN Security Council resolution that would authorize the use of force. Such a resolution was not produced, and the Czech forces did not move across the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Contributing to the post-war operation is a different matter, and to that many post-communist states contributed, although some limited the duties of their personnel to civilian support operations.

Central Europe as a whole could not be said to have gone to war. True, three Central European presidents or prime ministers signed what became known as the 'Letter of Eight'. But this was a generally-phrased call to deal with Iraq; it was not, for example, a legislative resolution (as was required and passed in the UK and in the US Congress) approving the application of force.²⁶

Those in Central Europe that did express support for the US position – hence those we might think of as good 'transatlanticists', certainly had reasons for it. And it is in those reasons that we find the concept of 'good transatlantic' behavior. Not necessarily among those reasons, let alone the primary one, was a sense of having to bandwagon with the United States, that is, to placate it. Rather, those reasons included support as payback for previous (real or perceived) US support in the fight against communism, and a belief that force was justified to remove a murdering tyrant.

As for the position of the then-Czech president Václav Havel, his memoirs seem to stress the poor information that was given and the dishonesty of the case made, but he nevertheless also states that the motivation behind the invasion was morally correct: 'the whole thing was not done in the best way'. 'Why didn't they just tell the truth, which was that a [sic] decent people in the world could no longer sit by and watch someone committing genocide?' (Havel, 2008: 167).

Being 'transatlantic' is not purely or even largely tantamount to sycophancy towards the United States. Those who supported the US efforts regarding Iraq, even if they share the same regret now at the tragic outcome, did so for a common larger purpose: active solidarity with the United States for the liberation of those under tyranny.²⁷ Such a view may have been misguided. The earlier Cold War history of US support for beleaguered, occupied Eastern Europe was summarized by one scholar as 'the myth of liberation'.²⁸

The point here is that this 'transatlanticism' was one of foreign policy choice. To the extent that Central Europe supported the United States over war against Iraq (and this is, on a state level, clear in the case of Poland), the Central Europeans were not supplicant actors.

Is that true also of ballistic missile defence (BMD)? The proposal to place a radar system in the Czech Republic and a corresponding set of missile launchers in Poland was originated by the United States. It was not a measure those countries proposed or sought. Apart from the proposal being American, it was also delivered to the two countries in, at least, a very clumsy, if not dirigiste, manner. Radek Sikorski, a Polish émigré who had returned to post-communist Poland and someone with huge sympathy for the United States, and who has served for years as Poland's Minister of Defence, wrote the following of the measure in 2007: 'in a region where goodwill toward the United States depends on the memory of its support in resisting Soviet colonialism, this was particularly crass. If the Bush administration expects Poles and Czechs to jump for joy and agree to whatever is proposed, it's going to face a mighty crash with reality.'²⁹

Apart from diplomatic mismanagement, missile defence seriously risked making Central Europe more insecure. While the project was presented as dealing with Iran, the Russian government immediately labeled the proposal as a threat to it. Russian countermeasures included plans to install missiles in Kaliningrad Oblast, thereby placing new Russian armaments immediately adjacent to Poland. Better still, President Barack Obama's unilateral measure to rescind missile defence then signaled to the Central Europeans that they were cut adrift. A leading group of Central European analysts summarized the implications for the region thus:

'Since the end of the cold war, there was – until Obama's decision to trade the third pillar of the BMD for a more general strategic bilateralism with Russia – a general feeling that the region was secure due to its strategic and political importance to the USA.

The biggest shock came when Obama announced his plan to cancel the US plans to build the third pillar of the BMD in September 2009. Since Obama's inauguration, there has been a growing feeling in many CEE countries that they are being left behind by his administration, be it for the sake of better Ameri-

can relations with Russia or because the USA simply reconsidered its strategic commitment in CEE to engage in other – more important – parts of the world’ (Hynek, Handl, Střítecký, and Kořan, 2009).

BMD showed Central Europe’s strategic vulnerability several times over. First, it was a measure that was brought to, even forced upon them. Second, it was a measure that then alarmed the Russian Federation, and enough to provoke tangible threats that could then weaken Central European security, and for the first time since the dissolution of the USSR. Third, the unilateral withdrawal by the Obama administration of the system – and that, in turn, as a measure to reassure Russia – signaled not only the lack of Central Europe’s control over its own security but its subordination to greater security interests.

Central European (and Baltic) leaders began fearing in 2009 that the Obama administration would sacrifice their security interests in order to ‘reset’ relations with Russia. In an open letter to the US president in July 2009 an honors list of former political leaders and commentators from the region noted both their region’s common post-Cold War ideational vision with the United States and the risks taken to support the USA in practice. They further warned of Western acceptance of Russian security plans that amounted to, without using the word, appeasement of Russia. The result of such acquiescence to Russian tactics could lead to dire consequences: ‘The danger is that Russia’s creeping intimidation and influence-peddling in the region could over time lead to a de facto neutralization of the region’.³⁰ ‘Neutralization’ might be better than the imposed role of a satellite state of the Cold War, that of the political conception of ‘Eastern Europe’, but hardly desirable. That idea of ‘Eastern Europe’ could be found in some commentaries on the letter, which deemed its language as ‘stereotypically’ and damagingly invoking past depictions of the region as unstable and insecure.³¹ The letter, its language, its implications, and some of the reactions to it do suggest that the old conception of ‘Eastern Europe’ might have re-emerged. Policy options always operate in constraining political environments. Fortunately, post-communist countries still retain tremendous political capacity and skill and, despite some limitations, operate in a series of both bilateral and pluralized institutional international relationships.

CONCLUSION

To ask about the whereabouts of ‘Central Europe’ should always be appropriate. The historical strength of that term alone – frankly, its transformative power – is one that demands that it be remembered and commemorated. But at least part of the point of Central Europe is that it is different things at different times – it changes without physically moving. If it is in lower circulation now than in, say, the 1990s or even the early 2000s, this is almost certainly an extremely good development. That

means the fulfilment of historical, political, economic and strategic interests of its members.

Whether it has now disappeared entirely is, as I have tried to suggest, very debatable. Asking whether it has rests on what sub-questions we ask, and how we look. We can find Central Europe alive and well in various forms.

But perhaps more importantly from the questions at hand: has Eastern Europe come back, and come back to mean the Central Europe of the past two decades? And, furthermore, is this partly a consequence of the increased tensions between the United States (or, more widely, NATO) and the Russian Federation?

I have tried to suggest that the term 'Eastern Europe' has now, in contradistinction to the very important and intriguing points raised by Růžička, come to have a largely distinct connotation, or even identity, through its use by many actors and analysts. And that identity is different from 'Central Europe'. Nevertheless, 'From Eastern Europe to Central Europe and Back?' offers us important observations on the timings and uses of these terms, and cautionary notes for our understanding of wider European security.

ENDNOTES

¹ I am grateful to the British Academy and to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for grants that provided material for this article. I also appreciate the comments and attention of the journal's referees. See Jan Růžička, 'From Eastern Europe to Central Europe and Back? On Regions, Transatlantic Relations and Central Europe', in this issue.

This article responds, however, to the original version of Jan Růžička's article as submitted at the Second Symposium on Czech Foreign Policy held in May 2010 in the Czech Foreign Ministry.

² Halecki's version, however, was written at the height of Soviet consolidation of control over Eastern Europe and could not provoke a similar intellectual response as Kundera's. For a very recent discussion of the connections between Halecki and Kundera's conceptions, see Troebst, 2010, esp. p. 80.

³ For some debate on where 'Central Europe' started and ended, see esp. Matvejević, 1989: 183–190.

⁴ NATO membership was gained by the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1999; by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania in 2004; and by Albania and Croatia in 2009. EU membership was gained by the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004, and by Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. Hence the dates 1999–2009 in the text.

⁵ At the time of that publication, Winkler was Head of the Planning and Analysis Section of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Quotation from the English version of the text in this bilingual publication.

⁶ An elaboration of how far 'Central Europe' extended in the 1990s is given in Fawn, 2001.

⁷ See visegradfund.org/.

⁸ Among IVF's publications is the magnificent volume *The Visegrad Group: A Central European Constellation*. The book has been cited above.

- ⁹ Thanks especially here for the concerns raised by one of the journal's referees.
- ¹⁰ 'Central Europe's New Demagogues', *The New York Times*, 14 April 2004, p. 26. The text of the editorial referred once to 'Eastern and Central Europe' and then only to 'Central Europe'.
- ¹¹ The Czech Republic was called 'the first former Soviet bloc country' to lead the EU in, for example, *The New York Times*, 27 March 2009.
- ¹² 'Central Europe's energy security discussed in Bratislava', PAP News Wire, 14 September 2010.
- ¹³ 'Střední Evropa má šanci mluvit jedním hlasem, píše polská Rzeczpospolita'. Available at: zpravy.idnes.cz/tiskni.asp?r=zahranicni&c=A100616_152131_zahranicni_btw (last accessed 27 September 2010).
- ¹⁴ This is obviously a reference to, and adaptation of, the title of Jacques Rupnik's book on socialist Eastern Europe – *The Other Europe*.
- ¹⁵ See www.unfpa.org/worldwide/eurasia.html (last accessed 3 September 2010).
- ¹⁶ See 'Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Yakovenko Meets with Thea Fierens, Director of UNFPA's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office', at www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/D032AE490357FF8CC325771300340B4B?OpenDocument (dated 27 April 2010, last accessed 3 September 2010).
- ¹⁷ This is discussed in Fawn, 2006, esp. p. 468.
- ¹⁸ By focusing on Bulgaria and Romania, the article cannot comment on the totality of post-communist states, but it gives insightful coverage of various determinants of policy in those two countries (which was 'influenced by the allies' own level of unity, the nature of visible costs, and domestic politics').
- ¹⁹ 'Interview with Radio Slovensko and the Slovakian Television Channel STV, The Kremlin, Moscow, February 22, 2005', at www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/24E8358110233E31C3256FB2004ED901?OpenDocument (dated 24 February 2005, last accessed 3 September 2010). Emphasis added.
- ²⁰ 'Interview of Vladimir Voronkov, Acting Russian Permanent Representative to the OSCE in Vienna, Published in the Newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta on August 20, 2008', at www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/02182B12F22A1C20C32574AC004BB463?OpenDocument (dated 20 August 2008, last accessed 3 September 2010). Emphasis added.
- ²¹ 'Briefing by Russian MFA Spokesman Andrei Nesterenko, March 25, 2010', at www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/EE1E44DCE114AA3BC32576F5002536F4?OpenDocument (last accessed 2 September 2010).
- ²² See, for example, Baltic News Service, 2010 .
- ²³ The Eastern Partnership is now an EU policy under the European Neighbourhood Policy. The 'Eastern Partnership', however, has clear origins in Central Europe, rather than in the EU as a whole. Even though the program was first introduced jointly by Poland and Sweden, the Czech claim to the origins is strong. Michal Kořan writes that the basis of the Eastern Partnership 'was laid out already in 2007 under the Czech V[isegrad]4 presidency with the support of all four V4 countries. The initiative was then taken over by the Polish and the Swedish diplomacy' (Kořan, 2010: 120; Tulmets, 2010: 214).
- ²⁴ For a brief discussion on a gigantic, complex discussion, see Rupnik, 1991.
- ²⁵ Some elaboration is given in Fawn, 2001b.
- ²⁶ See 'United We Stand...', 2003.
- ²⁷ Essential reading for this view is Asmus and Vondra, 2005.

- ²⁸ Nevertheless, I was struck, at least, by how a photograph of US Vice-President George Bush with Lech Walesa in 1987 in communist Poland featured as part of the commemoration in 2009 of the events of and leading to 1989.
- ²⁹ Radek Sikorski, 'Don't Take Poland for Granted', *The Washington Post*, 21 March 2007, p. A15. He further showed the contrasts in Polish reliance on the USA and benefits from the EU: 'Few in the United States realize that Poland, to name one example, is receiving \$120 billion to upgrade its infrastructure and agriculture under the current seven-year E.U. budget. By comparison, American military assistance to Poland amounts to \$30 million annually, a fraction of what we spend on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan that we regard as acts of friendship toward the United States'.
- ³⁰ Valdas Adamkus, Martin Butora, Emil Constantinescu, Pavol Demes, Lubos Dobrovsky, Matyas Eorsi, Istvan Gyarmati, Vaclav Havel, Rastislav Kacer, Sandra Kalniete, Karel Schwarzenberg, Michal Kovac, Ivan Krastev, Alexander Kwasniewski, Mart Laar, Kadri Liik, Janos Martonyi. Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Adam Rotfeld, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Alexandr Vondra, Lech Walesa, 'An Open Letter to the Obama Administration from Central and Eastern Europe', various publications in English on 15 July 2009; see, for example, wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6825987,An_Open_Letter_to_the_Obama_Administration_from_Central.html.
- ³¹ See, for example, the commentary by Jan Jireš in *Mlada fronta Dnes*, 18 July 2009.

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Forum on ‘Central Europe’: Austria and Central Europe

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Abstract: The article attempts to explain why Austria, a small country in the center of Europe, has difficulty in finding partners among its neighbors. After World War II, in spite of the war’s destruction and four power occupations, Austria became a prosperous country. During the Cold War, it was regarded as a beacon of liberty by the citizens in the Communist neighboring states. But the country oriented itself towards Western Europe just when the Iron Curtain fell. As an EU member, Austria could not find close partners. The reasons for that were basically domestic quarrels among the political elites and a public opinion that expressed negative attitudes towards some neighbors.

Key words: Austria, Central Europe, foreign policy, neutrality, EU, subregional cooperation

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the position of Austria in Central Europe. Historically, the different nations of Central Europe, here seen as the area between Germany and Russia, lived together in various political configurations. In the 20th century, smaller states replaced the Habsburg Monarchy, among them the mostly German speaking state of Austria. For a long time many of its citizen thought that this state was not viable. Practically all political parties of the interwar period wanted an ‘Anschluss’ to Germany, at least until Hitler took power in Germany. The realization of the ‘Anschluss’ by force in 1938 brought death and destruction; with it the idea of a union with Germany was practically finished. As one of the outcomes of World War II, Austria was re-established as an independent state again. After 1945, the Austrians succeeded, in spite of grave difficulties, in creating a stable, prosperous country with which its citizens willingly identified.

The present article looks beyond Austria’s borders and asks what role Austria played or could have played in Central Europe, in particular after the end of the Cold War. It starts with a historical analysis, discusses the effects of EU membership and then presents some statistical data. The article shows the missed opportunities and difficulties Austria has today in finding close partners inside the European Union, in particular among its ‘natural’ partners, the neighbors in Central Europe. It attempts to explain why these problems occurred, as during the Cold War Aus-

tria was highly regarded as a beacon of liberty by the citizens in the Communist neighboring states.¹

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO AUSTRIA'S POLICIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The four Allies of the anti-Hitler coalition promised to re-establish an independent Austria already in 1943. The political and economic situation of Austria after the end of World War II was awful, though. Besides the destruction caused by the war, the country was occupied by the victorious Allies and divided into four zones like Germany. Therefore, the main task of Austria's politicians after 1945 was to strive for economic recovery and end the four-power occupation. The developing Cold War, the 'iron curtain' on its eastern border and the Marshall Plan aid all lead to a clearly Western orientation in the Austrian politics and economy.

The State Treaty of 1955 ended the four power occupation. The Soviet Union's quid pro quo for leaving eastern Austria was the status of neutrality, which Austria established through a constitutional law; neutrality was not included in the State Treaty. In particular the senior member of the 'grand coalition' government at that time, the conservative ÖVP (the Austrian People's Party), saw this status as a chance to increase the contacts with the neighbors in the East, whereas the junior partner in government, the SPÖ (the Socialist Party, since 1991 the Social Democratic Party of Austria), was much more oriented towards the West, in particular the United States. When in 1956 a loosening of the Communist regime in Hungary became visible, Chancellor Julius Raab (ÖVP) mentioned in a positive way the common history of Austria and Hungary. The Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution ended this attempt to improve relations with a country of the Communist bloc (Marjanović, 1998: 80).

The Party Program of the ÖVP from 1958 supported 'military neutrality' but did not regard it as a 'straitjacket' for Austria's foreign policy. The tasks of its foreign policy were to enable Austria to participate in 'Europe's economic integration' and at the same time to support the efforts toward a 'revival of the many centuries of economic and cultural relations with the peoples of the Danube region' (quoted from Kadan and Pelinka, 1979: 134, translation PL). This was an early manifestation of the idea to 'balance' the political and economic integration with Western Europe through a 'Central European regionalism', which included especially the 'successor states of the Danubian monarchy' (Angerer, 2002: 45).

Like many other Socialist politicians, Bruno Kreisky, Foreign Minister from 1959–1966 and later Chancellor (1970–1983), was rather cautious early on concerning Austria's relations with the Communist countries. But later he supported the liberalizing policies in these states. In 1965 he maintained that Hungary and Czechoslovakia did not count themselves as part of 'Eastern Europe', but more ac-

curately as 'part of Central Europe' (Kreisky, 1965: 649). With his experience in Sweden during World War II, Kreisky also proposed some kind of regional cooperation among the democratic states in Central Europe that would be similar to the one that was achieved for some time already in northern Europe (Kreisky, 1968: 133).

Typical for Austria's neighborhood policy in the 1960s was the 'travel diplomacy' to the states of the Communist East. The first such visit of an Austrian foreign minister was the trip by Bruno Kreisky to Poland in March 1960. Chancellor Josef Klaus, under the ÖVP government, continued these diplomatic trips to the East (Kramer, 1997: 722). In the 1960s the cultural relations with the East improved as well. Václav Havel and Milan Kundera came to Vienna at this time upon the invitation of the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur (Marjanović, 1998: 84). When in June 1967 Czechoslovakia broke off its relations with Israel after the Six Days War, Austria acted as representative of the country in Israel. But the friendly relations with Austria quickly deteriorated after the crushing of the Prague Spring in August 1968 by the troops of the Warsaw Pact.

During the first phase of the SPÖ government (1970 till about 1975), Europe and the Conference for Security and Cooperation (CSCE) were a priority for the government. The neighborhood policy concentrated on the official relations with the governments in the East. From the mid-1970s, the foreign policy of Bruno Kreisky was 'globalised' (see Luif, 1982). The Austrian government started initiatives to reduce tensions in international relations, in particular in the North-South dimension. It was members of the big opposition party, the ÖVP, who already in the 1970s had contacts with the dissidents in neighboring countries. Among them were Erhard Busek, who later became Minister for Education and Vice-Chancellor, and Alois Mock, who later became Foreign Minister (Marjanović, 1998: 97/98).

At the same time as Milan Kundera (1984) and György Konrád (1984) started to write about the 'tragedy' and the 'dream' of Central Europe, two exhibitions in Austria² gave new impetus for thinking about Austria's role in the center of Europe (Marjanović, 1998: 100). Erhard Busek, the then Vice-Mayor of Vienna, wanted to make the city into a 'hub' for Central Europe. Austria would get a 'chance for its future' in and with Central Europe (Busek and Brix, 1986: 173). Another politician from the ÖVP wrote about the 'sense of togetherness' which would reach across the ideological 'blocs' in the center of Europe (Ettmayer, 1985: 52).

The Left in Austria was rather skeptical concerning these debates on Central Europe. For SPÖ politicians and researchers close to the SPÖ, the notion of 'Mitteleuropa' was seen as an instrument of German expansionism in the tradition of Friedrich Naumann (cf. Baumann/Hauser, 2002: 30-42). Therefore, they even preferred to use the word 'Zentraleuropa' instead of 'Mitteleuropa' (Kreissler, 1993).³

Thus, the new grand coalition government after the elections of 1986 was split (Marjanović, 1998: 114). Erhard Busek, now Science Minister, intensified Austria's cultural contacts with the neighbors in Central Europe. Foreign Minister Mock saw the Austrian engagement with its neighbors as a complement of his striving to achieve EU membership. But for Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (SPÖ), the notion of 'Mitteleuropa' had no 'practical political relevance' (AZ: 23. 12. 1989). He saw 'a certain risk' in dealing 'constantly with Eastern Europe'; EU integration would be more important for Austria's economy (Vranitzky, 1990: 107). In Eastern Europe, the SPÖ still maintained relations with the (Communist) governments. Even a few weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall (9. 11. 1989), Chancellor Vranitzky visited Prime Minister Modrow in East Berlin. One reason for these contacts was the large debts East European companies had with Austrian nationalized firms, which were the fief of the Socialists.

The Conservatives supported the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. In contrast, the SPÖ's Central Secretary, Josef Cap, warned against a notion of 'Mitteleuropa' which would hide an almost 'unimaginable big power idea' and which would strive to make 'Slovenia and Croatia new Austrian provinces in a way' (Die Presse, 14. 10. 1990, quoted in Marjanović, 1998: 133/134).

AFTER THE COLD WAR: VISEGRÁD AND AUSTRIA'S EU ACCESSION

In 1989, the idea of 'Central Europe' was for the first time transformed into practical politics when just after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, at the initiative of Italy, the 'Quadrangolare' with Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia was created. With Czechoslovakia joining the group in May 1990, it became the 'Pentagonale'. Finally, with the membership of Poland and the break-up of Yugoslavia, it was renamed the 'Central European Initiative' (CEI). Successive enlargements extended the number of its member states to 18 in 2010 – 9 EU and 9 non-EU countries located in East-Central and South-Eastern Europe. The Executive Secretariat of the CEI is now in Trieste, Italy. It has little political influence in the region. Its activities are basically designed to complement strategic programs pursued by other international organizations, in particular the EU.⁴

In another new Central European grouping, founded in February 1991 at the initiative of Hungary, two other countries, Czechoslovakia and Poland, did take part but not Austria. The first meeting of the three countries in Visegrád, about 60 kilometers north of Budapest, could have had a symbolic meaning, as in the Middle Ages, in 1335, a meeting of the three kings of Hungary, Bohemia and Poland took place there. Then, the monarchs settled, on the one hand, the quarrels between Poland and Bohemia and, on the other hand, they decided to organize the trade with Western Europe through Brno-Prague and Cracow (for eastern Hungary), to bypass Vienna and its lucrative staple trade (Lendvai, 1999: 79).

Václav Havel, the new Czechoslovak President, justified a new cooperation in Central Europe in the Polish Sejm already in January 1990:

'We should not compete with each other to gain admission into the various European organizations. On the contrary, we should assist each other in the same spirit of solidarity with which, in darker days, you protested [against] our persecution as we did against yours.

...

For the first time in history, we have a real opportunity to fill the great political vacuum that appeared in Central Europe after the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire with something genuinely meaningful' (Havel, 1990: 80).

The three Visegrád countries wanted to regain full sovereignty, remove the last traces of totalitarianism, create viable democratic structures and a working market economy and make coordinated steps towards their integration into European organizations. Visegrád was no international organization, but a loose forum for consultation. After the break-up of Czechoslovakia, the cooperation stagnated during the era of Prime Ministers Klaus and Mečiar until their resignations in 1997/1998.

In the first half of the 1990s, Austria's foreign policy oriented itself clearly towards Western Europe, since the country had applied for EU membership in July 1989, a few months before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The reason for this application was an economic downturn in 1985 caused primarily by the problems and de facto bankruptcy of the large nationalized industry. After a strong push by the ÖVP, the SPÖ finally accepted the idea of its junior partner in the grand coalition that joining the EU would be the appropriate remedy for Austria's economic woes. The reasoning behind this move from Central Europe to Brussels has been clearly stated by an Austrian diplomat:

'Immediately after 1990 there was a brief debate in Austria whether the real mission of Austria was the "Danubian mission". Whether we should return to the historical Habsburgian dimension of Austrian foreign policy. That was given up after two weeks, approximately. Because it became quite clear that what all our neighbours to the East really starve for is to be part of Western Europe. And their interest in Austria is really that they see it as a vehicle, as a means to promote their "return to Europe". ... [Austria's] most effective Eastern policies are really effective Western policies. As a member state of the EU we could be much more useful to our Eastern neighbours than as an isolated state' (Stefan Lehne, quoted from Clesse and Hirsch, 1999: 256).

Despite this concentration on the EU membership process and in view of the tragic events in Bosnia, Foreign Minister Mock pushed for activities in the CSCE and the

UN Security Council (where Austria was a non-permanent member in 1991/92) as well as in talks with other governments (Kramer, 1997: 735). In July 1992, Austria demanded military actions against Serbia in case the fighting in Bosnia would not stop immediately (Riedler, 1992). In March 1993, Mock told his Danish colleague Niels Helveg Petersen that Bosnia would have to remain an international protectorate for a long time even after a peace agreement (Male, 1993). These suggestions by Mock, criticized at the time by his political opponents as well as by officials in Brussels, were finally implemented – but years later and after a heavy toll on human life, about 100,000 dead as well as more than a million refugees.

Nevertheless, in the process leading to EU membership, Austria had to align to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU. Therefore, it successively reduced its unilateral activities concerning the former Yugoslavia. In March 1993, the accession negotiations to the EU started, and they finished successfully only a year later. With a majority of 66.6 percent (turnout 82.3 percent), the Austrians voted for EU membership at the referendum in June 1994. Austria became a member of the EU (together with Finland and Sweden) on 1 January 1995 (for details see Luif, 1995: 320).

AUSTRIA AS AN EU MEMBER

It was suggestions by business circles that reminded Austrian politicians to look for like-minded partners in the EU so that in a ‘comprehensive strategy’ Austria could realize its interests in the EU’s decision-making bodies (Wirtschaftskammer, 1996: 35). It was large but also small and medium-sized Austrian companies that seized the opportunities of the rapidly growing economies of the transformation countries in Central and Eastern Europe. But in foreign policy, Austria for the most part neglected the neighboring states. This can to a certain extent be explained by the unfamiliar situation in the EU; large parts of Austria’s foreign policy bureaucracy were constrained through the difficult learning processes caused by the complex EU decision mechanisms. During the first Austrian EU Presidency in the second half of 1998, Austria succeeded in starting the access negotiations with the first group of Central and Eastern European applicant countries. But Austria did not propose any new initiatives to speed up the accession process (Hinteregger, 1999).

In the grand coalition, the SPÖ and the ÖVP quarreled on many political issues and thus more or less paralysed the work of the government. There were two difficult issues for the government. First, it had to adjust the country’s budget to the requirements of the ‘Maastricht criteria’. That meant implementing several ‘saving packages’ to reduce the budget deficit to a figure below the 3 percent GDP limit.

The second issue concerned Austria’s external security policy. In the ‘Coalition Agreement’ after the December 1996 elections, the SPÖ and the ÖVP agreed to submit a report to parliament on Austria’s security options. This ‘Options Report’ would examine all security options, ‘including the question of Austria’s full mem-

bership in WEU' (Koalitionsübereinkommen, 1996: 18, translation PL). The idea was that Austria should decide on its future security policy before taking over the EU Presidency. Disagreements on that policy had popped up since 1994. The ÖVP was becoming more and more favorable of Austria's membership in WEU and NATO whereas the SPÖ refused any abandonment of neutrality.

At the end of March 1998, the two government parties could not find agreement on the 'Option Report', NATO membership being the bone of contention. The ÖVP pushed hard for joining the Atlantic Alliance, seeing a window of opportunity when other countries of Central Europe were about to be accepted as new members. Participation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council would not be sufficient. The SPÖ rejected that argument, seeing no security threats for Austria which would require an abandonment of its established foreign policy status and/or neutrality. The Eastern enlargement of NATO would even enhance Austria's security situation, since Austria would be surrounded by NATO members (Switzerland and Liechtenstein being the exceptions); as a consequence Austria could even spend less on defense (Luif, 1998).

During the time Austria discussed its status, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were invited to begin accession talks at the Alliance's Madrid Summit in 1997. On 12 March 1999 they became the first former members of the Warsaw Pact to join NATO.⁵ Hungary had no common borders with other NATO members; an Austrian membership could have closed this gap. Austria was directly mentioned when the United States Senate debated the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to NATO. Senator Joseph Biden rejected the so-called Warner Amendment (which stipulated a three years moratorium for further NATO enlargement) with the following argument: If the Austrian government would change its position on NATO membership before long, could the United States tell the Austrians, 'Sorry, no applications accepted until the year 2002'?⁶

In preparing for their NATO membership, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland had to cooperate closely. In May 1999, at the initiative of President Havel, a summit meeting of the now four Visegrád countries was organized in Bratislava to once again integrate Slovakia into their cooperation after the Mečiar era. Since then, the Visegrád cooperation has become rather functional and effective, even beyond the accession of the four countries to the EU in May 2004. In contrast to these closer contacts among the four Visegrád countries, the rejection of NATO membership by Austria distanced it further from its potential partners in Central Europe.

When in February 2000 a new government was formed in Austria, a coalition of the ÖVP with the populist Freedom Party (FPÖ), the fourteen other EU member states implemented 'sanctions' against the Austrian government. This rather unusual act did not succeed in toppling the government and had to be abandoned by the Fourteen in September 2000. During this difficult period, an Austrian diplomat stated bluntly that 'Austria lacks natural partners in Europe to secure its interests' (Prosl,

2000). Therefore, Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner (ÖVP) proposed a partnership with its neighboring countries in August 2000, pleading for a deepening of the cooperation with Austria’s Central and Eastern European neighbors in a ‘Regional Partnership’. In its first phase, this cooperation should help the neighbors on their road to EU membership. In the second phase, after their accession to the EU, this Regional Partnership could be the basis for a cooperation among the Central European countries to further their interests in the EU, similar to the Benelux of the Nordic cooperation (Ferrero-Waldner, 2001). The first meeting of foreign ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria in the context of the ‘Regional Partnership’ took place in Vienna on 6 June 2001.

The Regional Partnership could not replace the Visegrád cooperation. It is a much looser instrument for collaboration compared to Visegrád. The Regional Partnership has a relevant role to play only in the area of internal security (with the so-called Salzburg Group) and in the relations of the EU with the Ukraine and the Western Balkans (see Luif, 2007). Otherwise, the four Visegrád countries prefer their group for coordinating their positions inside the EU decision-making bodies. Thus in this regard Austria has no close partners in Central Europe, as will also be shown below.

STATISTICAL EVIDENCE ON COOPERATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

One important element supporting or hampering cooperation in Central Europe is public opinion in these countries. Table 1 gives the attitudes of the populations of three countries to the past, the good or not so good old days of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the mid-1990s there was a typical difference between the Austrians and the Hungarians on the one side and the Czechs on the other side: The Austrians and the Hungarians had a more positive view of the Habsburg past than the Czechs. But since the percentages in the ‘Don’t know/no answer’ row are rather large (in particular the percentage for Hungary), many of the respondents had actually no opinion on this question.

Table 1: ‘The Good Old Days’ – ‘The time when your country was part of the Habsburg Monarchy was ...’ (Percentages, 1996)

	Austria	Hungary	Czech Rep.
A (very) good time	44	36	27
A (very) bad time	27	23	55
Don’t know/no answer	29	41	29

Source: Tributsch and Ulram, 2004: 29; original source: FESSEL-GfK/Paul Lazarsfeld-Gesellschaft, *Was bleibt vom alten Österreich* (1996).

More relevant for cooperation among the Central European countries is the 'liking', resp. 'disliking', of the neighboring countries by the populations. Table 2 conveys the attitudes of the Austrians vis-à-vis their neighbors for two years, 1994 and 2003. In both years, not surprisingly, Switzerland garnered the highest percentage of sympathy. Germany lost sympathy during this period, whereas all other neighboring countries gained support among Austrians. The increases in support for Slovenia and Slovakia were rather large. In 2003, Hungary took second place in popularity after Switzerland. The positive and negative attitudes towards the Czech Republic remained practically balanced in both years. The problematic results for Germany and the Czech Republic can at least partly be explained by the 'sanctions' against the new ÖVP/FPÖ government in 2000, when the red-green government in Germany was one of the leading proponents for these actions, which a large majority of the Austrian population rejected. The Czech Republic, alone among Austria's Central European neighbors, supported the 'sanctions'. In addition, questions concerning the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU were hotly debated in Austria, i.e. those of the nuclear power station Temelín and the Beneš decrees. In spite of this fairly negative opinion in Austria towards the Czech Republic, Austria did not veto its accession to the EU.

Table 2: Sympathy/Liking of Neighbors by Austrians (Percentages)

	Like	Dislike	Percentage points difference	
			2003	1994
Switzerland	93	6	+87	+83
Hungary	87	11	+76	+64
Italy	87	12	+75	+53
Germany	81	19	+62	+74
Slovenia	78	21	+57	±0
Slovakia	58	37	+21	-5
Czech Rep.	50	47	+3	±0

Source: Tributsch and Ulram, 2004: 45; original sources: FESSEL-GfK, *Österreichbewusstsein* (1994), FESSEL-GfK, *Österreich und seine Nachbarn* (2003).

Table 3 on page 104 extends this measure of sympathy for a number of countries in Central Europe. It repeats the data of Table 2 for Austria, adding Poland. This country is regarded rather negatively by the Austrians. But further analysis showed that with better information about Slovakia and Poland, the attitudes of Austrians improved, whereas more information did not change the Austrians' views of the Czech

Republic and Hungary. Here ‘firmly established and enduring stereotypes’ seem to exist (Tributsch and Ulram, 2004: 28). Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate how attitudes can change. Italy was for a long time regarded by Austrians as the ‘arch-enemy’ because of the problem with South Tyrol, where even terrorist attacks took place in the early 1960s. Both Tables show that the Austrians’ views of Italy have improved quite dramatically.

Table 3: Comparison of Sympathy/Liking of Neighbors (Percentage point differences for 2000/2003)

	Austrians about	Hungarians about	Czechs about	Slovaks about	Poles about
Austria	—	+86	+44	+79	+53
Switzerland	+87	+82	+85	+83	+57
Hungary	+76	—	+34	+7	+51
Italy	+75	+83	+74	+72	+72
Germany	+62	+62	+24	+46	+21
Slovenia	+57	+21	+51	+37	+26
Croatia	+50	+44	+64	+59	+28
Slovakia	+21	+24	+81	—	+52
Czech Rep.	+3	+24	—	+82	+54
Poland	-7	+36	+37	+46	—

Source: Tributsch and Ulram, 2004: 25; original sources: FESSEL-GfK, GfK-Hungaria, GfK-Polonia, GfK-Praha, GfK-Slovakia, *Österreich und seine Nachbarn* (2000 and 2003).

Table 3 also shows the relatively mixed feelings of the Hungarians towards their immediate neighbors. They are also, together with the Austrians, rather positively disposed vis-à-vis Germany, while the Czechs and the Poles are less so. Switzerland is highly regarded by all Central Europeans. The Czechs and the Poles have quite positive feelings towards Austria, in contrast to the Austrians in relation to their countries.

A clear division between Austria and the other Central European countries concerns economic development. Austria was lucky that the occupation by the Soviet Union in the east of the country ended in 1955. All of Austria could then participate in the ‘Wirtschaftswunder’ of Western Europe. Table 4 on page 105 illustrates the gap in per capita GDP between Austria and its neighbors. Nevertheless, Table 4 shows that the Central European countries are catching up. Austria actually benefited from the higher growth rates of its neighbors – thanks to its companies, which

invested in these countries earlier and relatively much more than, for instance, German firms.

But this still existing gap in income also brought controversies between Austria and its neighbors. The Austrian trade unions feared the competition in the labor market, especially for unskilled blue collar workers. Therefore, the Austrian government insisted on implementing the full seven years transitional period for opening up the Austrian labor market (until April 2011) for citizens of Central and Eastern European countries after their accession to the EU. But this cautious approach brought, on the one hand, harsh criticism from Austria's neighbors and, on the other hand, it was detrimental for Austria; well qualified workers went to EU countries which had opened up their labor market much earlier and bypassed Austria.

Table 4: GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (EU-27 = 100)

	1995	2009
Austria	135	122
Czech Rep.	73	80
Hungary	52	63
Poland	43	61
Slovakia	48	72
Slovenia	74	87

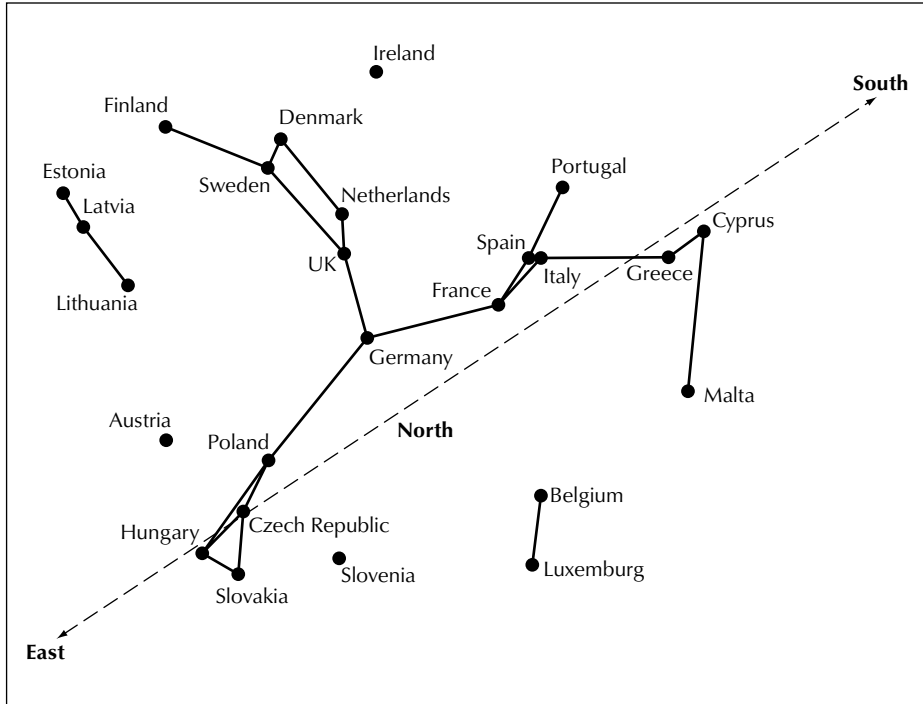
Source: Eurostat, 30. 9. 2010, eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=&language=en&pcode=tsieb010.

Since most decisions of the Council of the European Union are now made by qualified majority (except for those related to the CFSP), small states have little weight vis-à-vis the big countries like Germany or France. Therefore, the smaller states in the EU need partners to influence the Union's decision-making. Even if the partners are not always of the same opinion, simply exchanging information on a regular basis helps to advance the interests of smaller states. As already mentioned, the classic examples of such a cooperation are the Benelux and the coordination among the Nordic EU countries.

Figure 1 is based on interviews conducted with representatives from all the then 25 member states in the eleven working groups of the Council of the EU in February–March 2006. They were asked to mention the member states that they most often cooperate with within the working group in order to develop a common position, but not to give them points or rank them (Naurin, 2007: 8). The data were compiled into a two-dimensional graph, which is given in Figure 1. Those member

states which cooperate most closely with each other (defined as being on each other's top-three lists) are aligned with connecting lines.

Figure 1: The Cooperation Space of the EU-25 in 2006



Source: Naurin, 2007: 16 (the misspelling of Luxembourg is in the original).

In the center of Figure 1 are Germany and France – which is no surprise. Germany connects via the UK to the Netherlands and the three Nordic EU members. France is closely connected with the Southern member states. Germany is also connected to the countries of the Visegrád Group. One can see that both the Nordic states and the Visegrád countries clearly form groups inside the EU. The Baltic states have close connections among each other as well. But the Benelux group seems to have disappeared, with only Belgium and Luxembourg working together in 2006. Three countries among the 25 EU member states in Figure 1 have no close cooperation partner: Ireland, Slovenia and Austria. It appears that, at least in the context of the EU, Austria has a relatively isolated position in Central Europe.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When one asks Austrian officials about close partners of the country, the answer is usually that this depends on the issue area or that the partners change on a case

by case basis. After close questioning, most of them will admit that Austria has no close cooperation partners in the EU. The hope of the Austrian decision-makers in the early 1990s for their country to prove useful for the neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe through Austria's EU membership was not fulfilled. After Austria joined the EU, its politicians were too constrained domestically by the difficulties of the grand coalition government to adjust to EU membership. In relation to its neighbors, issues like the nuclear power plants popped up, which strained the contacts and the EU accession negotiations, in particular with the Czech Republic.

When the first enlargement of NATO after the end of the Cold War took place, Austria was not among the acceding states – thus proving that Austria's neighbors would not need the good offices of the Austrians to integrate into one of the most important Western institutions. After the neighbors joined the EU, Austria's insistence on a long transitional period before opening up its labor market did not enhance its position either.

There is no easy way out. The Government Program 2008–2013 of the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition still mentions the 'Anti-Atom-Politik' (Regierungsprogramm, 2008: 81), although nuclear power is on the way to a renaissance in many parts of Europe, not least in Central Europe. The Program sees the Danube and Black Sea region as an 'important foreign policy dimension' (Regierungsprogramm, 2008: 241). Perhaps the Danube Strategy, which will be implemented in the EU from 2011 on, could help the Austrians to strengthen their relations with their neighbors in Central Europe. The full opening of the Austrian labor market and the diminishing 'wealth gap' in Central Europe may well enhance the comprehension of Austria among the neighbors. Here the Austrian media could play an important role in improving information about events beyond Austria's borders in Central Europe. But it still will be difficult to make up for the missed political opportunities of the past.

ENDNOTES

¹ The article bases part of its arguments on Kiss et al., 2003, and Luif, 2007.

² They were the exhibition of the 300 years anniversary of the Turkish Siege of Vienna (1683–1983) and the one about 'Dream and Reality' in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in 1985.

³ For Erhard Busek, this game of words showed a 'failing in coming to terms with the past' (Busek, 1997: 8).

⁴ See the homepage of the CEI, www.ceinet.org.

⁵ Slovakia and Slovenia became NATO members on 29 March 2004.

⁶ The quote is from Congressional Record: April 28, 1998 (Senate) [Page S3687-S3708], Congressional Record Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]. The Warner Amendment was rejected by a

majority of 59 to 41 votes; the accession of the three countries was accepted by a majority of 80 to 19 votes (Riedler, 1998).

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Reviews

CHARLES-PHILIPPE DAVID AND DAVID GRONDIN: HEGEMONY OR EMPIRE? THE REDEFINITION OF US POWER UNDER GEORGE W. BUSH

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 237 pages, ISBN 978-0-7546-4774-4.

Reviewing academic books quite a while after their publication arguably exposes the work of the authors to a 'hard test', i.e. inevitably, the question then becomes paramount whether the book still has anything to offer, as several years have elapsed and politics almost certainly has taken a different shape to some degree during that time. This is only exacerbated in case the book under review deals with specific socio-historical circumstances like David and Grondin's collection of essays on the impact of the recent Bush presidency on US foreign and world policy. It might seem odd at first glance to ponder anew what the 'Bush revolution' might have meant now that the White House has seen another president for more than one year – a president, above all, who was elected at home and gathered sympathies worldwide precisely because he campaigned on an election platform of 'change', including foreign policy change. Nevertheless, it is still relevant to ask whether the 'redefinition of US power' under George W. Bush, as the book's authors frame their take on the subject, might have a more lasting impact on US foreign policy in general and the United States' global ambitions as well. Luckily for the book as well as for the reviewer (and the reader), the edition at hand offers a multitude of insightful and careful thoughts along those lines, making the publication less time-bounded than expected.

David and Grondin, as has been said, justify their perspective, which was taken with the need to assess the contours of the 'revolutionary change' in US foreign policy under the Bush administration, in a more nuanced way. This, however, does not only aim at a more differentiated understanding of the political process behind the alleged 'Bush revolution' – which was especially visible during George W. Bush's first term because of its blatant unilateralism – but it offers some inroads into a more general subject matter. The question of whether there is a lasting legacy of the developments analyzed at least looms behind such an effort. The same is true for the questioning of the very roots of such phenomena as the fairly aggressive, militarized and, most often, unilateral exercise of power, the will to transform whole regions and the hunt for upholding supremacy. As the editors state, they might even be willing to see the Bush foreign policy not as an anomaly, but rather as an extreme version of a more general logic of US national security that has been prevalent since World War II (p. 13). The redefinition, to pick up the title of the book, then might have been a gradual one that was mostly related to style and not a substantive change of basic orientations. This is a provocative assumption which unfortunately,

however, is not systematically taken up throughout the other chapters. In fact, this might be the only criticism of the whole book: a set of more clear-cut definitions (a definitional base upon which all the authors would agree in order to avoid 'concept shifting') and guiding assumptions (although these would not necessarily be shared by all of the authors) laid out in the introduction would have structured the various explorations along similar lines and could have provided more of a common ground for all of the chapters.

The book – aside from the introductory and the concluding remarks – comprises ten chapters, which are, for obvious reasons, quite different. It is divided into two parts: a more conceptually oriented first part and a more regionally oriented second part. Within the first part, the issue of how one can and should conceptually define US world policy under George W. Bush is of crucial importance. There is, as almost all the authors here stress, a need to differentiate between 'hegemony' – most often taken in a (neo-)Gramscian way to entail a form of leadership based on some degree of consent – and other strategies and descriptive terms of dominance, supremacy or empire. The more regionally oriented second part of the book offers a mixture of assessments of the 'Bush revolution' from the perspective of certain regions around the globe (e.g. the chapter on European reactions by Toureille/Vallet), regional policies of the Bush administration (e.g. Beyerlian on the policy towards Islam(ist) and Arab states; Jourde on policies vis-à-vis Western Africa) and treatments with a relational perspective (e.g. the chapter on the US-Asian relationship in security affairs by Laliberté). The chapter on US-Asian security relations, despite its rather narrow perspective, is especially useful, as it hints at some dynamics which show that any new US policy post Bush might not easily translate into change in the international system because we now see dramatically shifted world political constellations. Although one could interpret the 'Bush revolution' as an attempt to respond to such a seismic shift in global politics, it certainly was not able to turn back the clock. Thus, a simple back-to-hegemony approach might not automatically work either. Beyond that, Clarkson's depiction of the role of the North American 'periphery' (!), Mexico and Canada, presents an insightful study into the regional embeddedness of any US grand design; it is thus a very informative reminder of the fact that there is 'more in North America' than just the bullying superpower.

However, the conceptual dichotomy that forms the very title of the book – *Hegemony or Empire?* – , including the more general question concerning the future options for the US global leadership, is at the center of attention. In the more theoretically oriented part, all the authors agree that the two terms should not be used interchangeably. Vitalis, in his plea for more conceptual differentiation, makes it perfectly clear that such a more nuanced take need not lead to a simple 'either (hegemony)-or (empire)-thinking', since both modes can be at work simultaneously. The analytical distinctiveness of hegemony, however, lies in its description of the in-

tended 'leadership' – which would be neither a simple preponderance nor a crude domination – as a specific mode for getting ahead in international relations. Thus, it might have been more useful to go for a concept such as 'informal empire', which has some analytical power as well, as the editors argue. Nevertheless, up until quite recently, 'empire' in its strict and un-qualified sense has been a very popular term regarding US foreign policy. As David and Grondin explain convincingly, this was mainly due to the fact that the term 'empire' served 'as a shortcut for any form of critique of US foreign policy' (p. 1). Although this understates the self-conscious assertion of the need for and the existence of such an empire under the US flag on behalf of some political actors as well as historians (a fact that Hodzic correctly points out in his essay), the popularity of the idea can certainly be traced to such semantic attractiveness. From an analytical perspective, however, especially the 'territorial dimension' of an empire and the aspect of control in a system of rule made 'empire' a puzzling term of ambivalent value right from the start. Most of the authors agree on that, and David offers a very clear-sighted analysis of this matter in his conclusion.

In an attempt to present a more nuanced analysis of the roots as well as the impact of various Bush policies and the overall grand strategy behind them, the collection also offers some clues for the questioning of the current (post-Bush) US foreign policy. According to Dalby, the 'Bush doctrine' as the epitome of a grand strategy of unilateral dominance is often interpreted as a sudden break with an established set of policies. When viewed within a larger framework, however, it becomes clear that there have been numerous precursors to this doctrine in the strategic debates of the 1990s. Even the neoconservative thinking did not suddenly spring up out of nowhere but evolved throughout several decades, and it tried to impact the foreign policy making even before Bush entered office. In this regard, it might be interesting to turn to the discursive background of the 'Bush revolution' and ask about the lasting impact of the ideational base of this political movement. Ideas spread, meanings defined and thinking cultivated – these issues certainly did not disappear abruptly as soon as George W. Bush left the White House. Indeed, the fact that there was a good deal of continuity between the Bush administration and its predecessors is the baseline of Scott's treatment of the various administrations' stances towards international law. If, on the other hand, there is some consistency and the Bush policies did not present a sudden aberration but are at least partially structured by forces which might not be specific to the two administrations under George W. Bush, such forces might be able to impact upon today's (and possibly tomorrow's) US foreign policies as well.

One such structural force might indeed be the domestic institutional context, i.e. the leeway an administration has been endowed with by Congress as well as the eventually paralyzing powers of the legislative. David explicitly mentions this rela-

tionship in his concluding remarks on 'Empire and Decision-Making' (p. 223), as it certainly merits much more attention for a proper assessment of the opportunity structures and chances of success for any US grand policy design. It is not difficult to see why such an interest in the 'politics of foreign policy making' would be fruitful. Gagnon, in his chapter on Congressional-Executive relations, alludes to that fact (although it is somewhat unfortunate to have a separate chapter on the impact of the legislative branch next to a host of policy-oriented chapters, where 'the US' means 'the administration').

Looking at the domestic context, the institutionalized competition, rivalry, discord and antagonisms, etc. is important in explaining the depth of the change under Bush as well as any further development beyond the Bush years. A second point which also merits further attention is the issue of non-military aspects of foreign policy, or more precisely, the interplay of military and non-military aspects. As most chapters in the book under review focus heavily on the military-related aspects of security policy – and in doing so might reflect the militarization of US foreign policy post 9–11 – such a unidimensional take is hardly necessary. Economics, not least obviously with regard to the global financial crisis, does play a key role in foreign policy. And the relationship between the unilateral redefinition of US foreign policy during the Bush presidency and various economic factors was multi-faceted (at home and abroad, causing specific policies as well as being impacted upon by such policies). Jourde's discussion of US neoliberal policies in Western Africa is a useful reminder in this regard, but it necessarily cannot – and does not aspire to – give the 'whole picture'. Beyond a critical appraisal of other economics-driven militarized foreign policies, one could and should in turn also ask about the sustainability of a military logic as well as the implementation chances of any US foreign policy change in the wake of the current economic performance of the United States.

In sum, the book is far from being outdated. It is as up to date and welcome as it was four years ago. Beyond that, it is highly recommended as both a valuable effort to assess the Bush presidency, especially in its impact on foreign relations, and an opportunity to discuss the legacy of the 'Bush revolution' with regard to future attempts to renew US leadership in global terms. It certainly will and definitely deserves to become a standard work of literature on the US world policy and grand strategy in the 21st century.

Alexander Brand

MICHAEL SEMPLE: RECONCILIATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, Perspectives Series, 2009, 110 pages, ISBN 1-60127-042-9.

Several diverse political and social reconciliation strategies have been applied in Afghanistan since 2001. However, a comprehensive, stable settlement of the conflict with the opponents of the current government is still pending. Therefore, in his newest publication, Michael Semple is concerned with the question of how these approaches have to be reconfigured so as to finally enable an attainable holistic, integrated state-building. To deal with this complex, exigent issue, the author makes use of his 25 years of work and research experience in the regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Furthermore he participated in the post-Bonn Agreement (2001) process, which established the basis for the current Afghan political order, and he worked as a political officer with the United Nations and served as deputy to the European Union special representative to Afghanistan (2004–2007).

The starting point of his work is the statement that a fundamental transformation of the concept of ‘reconciliation’ occurred within the last years of the international peace-building efforts.

As Semple defines it, ‘reconciliation’ was originally applied within ‘post-conflict context[s]’ and was meant to help secure a ‘tentative, preexisting peace’ (p. 1).

Consequently in Afghanistan the process aimed at the eventual creation of a lasting peaceful situation by theoretically and ideally involving all the people at the local level in addition to profiting from the international ‘peace-building’ assistance. Nonetheless, even prior to the appointment of the National Parliament in 2005, a new insurgency arose in 2003.

In the prevailing situation, the government itself, which liked to depict itself as the legitimate and inclusive authority, ‘is now clearly a party to the conflict’ (p. 2), while the now enlarged insurgency is averring that it will revolt not against the Afghan people, but rather against the government’s international supporters instead. Therefore it plans to revolt against those actors who thought of themselves as promoters of the conflicts’ settlement.

The consequence of these developments has been a modification of the expected scope and aims and thus the whole theoretical idea of ‘reconciliation’. For that reason, as a keynote, the author traces the manner of how applied models and measures of reconciliation have to be adjusted in concurrence with the changed practical requirements affecting all the actors. What is demanded of ‘reconciliation’ now is to arrange for the determination of the ongoing conflict while contemporaneously elaborating diversified, adjustable political and other approaches

to create feasible, future-oriented, and peaceful relationships between the antagonistic parties (cf. p. 2).

As the country has experienced a long and multifarious history of internal and external conflict, reconciliation virtually marks an 'integral part of Afghan statecraft and local practice of [ending] war'. (p. 13) To approach the key question then, Semple begins with some exemplary depictions of reconciliation 'devices' that belong to Afghanistan's own 'cultural heritage' (p. 13).

According to his estimation these traditions constitute a valuable source of ideas that to some extent could constructively be integrated into current concepts. Furthermore the traceability of actual reconciliation initiatives gets facilitated by his identification of several parallels between recent methods and those formerly applied by the past regime of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan from the 1978 Geneva Accords and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops until 1992.

Afterwards, he chronologically describes the peace-making initiatives among the warring tribal leaders, the 'mujahideen'. As the major reasons for their failures he outlines the lack of ample international support and the default of the development of external political/security mechanisms, hence creating the conditions conducive for the Taliban's formation.

This first chapter concludes with an assessment of the unsuccessfulness of the latest reconciliation efforts, which was predominantly due to the failure to rehabilitate in particular the former core Taliban members, that provoked the renunciation of their potential willingness to integrate into the new order as well as the preventable reestablishment of their insurgency.

As consequentially every potentially effective reconciliation strategy has to be devised on the grounds of a thorough comprehension of the specific conflict, Semple dedicates his second chapter to an analysis of the development of the revolt after the 2001 international intervention.

A major gist states that 'the' insurgency does not constitute an 'identifiable set of interest groups', let alone a modern political movement, as it does not display a clear structure or articulate a political agenda. On the contrary it is composed of 'a conglomeration' (p. 32) of several diverse and rather self-contained 'commander-solidarity networks', each enjoying a local standing and area-based backing. As these kinds of networks represent traditional social structures, many Afghans turn towards these familiar milieus rather than trusting the official state institutions, which are perceived as 'remote, hostile, unreliable, illegitimate' (p. 33).

Therefore in this situation lies a key dilemma of the intervening international actors. Their predominant contacts and actions only proceed to and via these formal facilities. Thus their acts enjoy only limited acceptance and correspondingly a confined scope, access confined and confined effectualness against these loosely connected but internally robust, well-organized and firmly cohesive networks.

In the third chapter, Semple concentrates on assessing the efficacy of the various reconciliation efforts. For that purpose, as an informative and measurable evaluation criterion, he traces to what extent former armed opposition members reconciled and found conditions facilitating their reintegration and living in territories officially under Afghan government control.

The conclusion of his evaluation is negative as only a small number of the former opposition members reconciled, most of them belonged to the Taliban's civil wing just a few belonged to the military and as very few of the reconciled were 'senior' (p. 40) and/or 'strategically significant' (p. 39) figures with an impact on the current conflict. Furthermore, most of these reconciled through informal channels, like traditional personal patronage.

Moreover, to explain the absence of the participation of the Taliban representatives 'in the new order', in the fourth part he dissects the movement's social and political standing, describing the key factor of its self-evaluation and view of itself as seeing itself as a 'supra-tribal' (p. 43) movement coalesced through its members' common background, values and belief that they are fighting for 'the just cause'. Concerning his definition, the insurgency is neither 'simply a terrorist organization', nor only 'a tribal movement'. Likewise it is not a 'modern party', but a sort of 'vanguardist brotherhood' (p. 44) with a strong identity-awareness, solidarity and 'moral authority' over the general population in several regions.

Therefore, they hold several 'potential claims to some political standing' (p. 45), even though they failed to develop a civil, politically articulating wing parallel to the militant military entity. This notably aggravates the problems of the reconciliation process, as there is no 'credible political proxy' (p. 47) to interact with the government and consistently contrariwise no official administration member who would be a former Taliban insider and could function simultaneously as a contact person and a 'credible stakeholder' for insurgents who are newly willing to reconcile.

A further reason for the perpetuated 'outsider status' of the Taliban (p. 49) (in contrast to the formerly militant Hezb-i-Islami, who are now integrated into the system) and thus another key driver of the conflict has been the 'insider-outsider dynamics'. That is, many of those in power since 2001 benefit from purposefully maintaining the image of the Taliban in which they are still a threat and a 'hostile force'. To this end, they drive out even those who are willing to reconcile (e.g. by investigative propaganda or arbitrary predatory seizure).

In the following fifth section of the book, Semple's descriptive analysis of the major examples of recent reconciliation initiatives concludes that despite governmental rhetoric representing reconciliation as a major interest, in reality it is only appointed as a 'low-order policy priority'. Therefore, most tools available for reconciliation lack efficacy, 'substance and strategic coherence' (p. 53) as well as a comprehensive framework, thus predominantly constituting incomplete, non-ac-

completable attempts or only superficial (presidential [cf. p. 53] / parliamentary [cf. p. 59]) gestures. Also the official 'main', and thus internationally financially backed, governmental reconciliation program has no 'strategic impact' (p. 55). Two other impediments are the international and national actors' inability to find a common vision of a 'successful reconciliation process' and Kabul today wanting 'to be more clearly in charge of all programs' (65). In contrast, many tools that the author assumes to be potentially effective do not receive substantive strategic support and adequate financial backing (cf. pp. 52, 58).

In the sixth chapter, on the base of his reflections on 'lessons learned', Semple derives a summary of practical implications for effective reconciliation. These are, *inter alia*, the following: 1) Due to the non-monolithic character and local dependency of the movement, an area-based network/'group approach' (p. 67) has to be applied. 2) In a 'joined-up approach' (p. 68) not only single aspects but the broad range of factors motivating insurgency participation have to be addressed, demanding comprehensive international and governmental strategic planning and extensive resource investment. To improve the integration arrangements, coevally the economic incentives, provisions of means for livelihood and mechanisms for the former insurgents' security have to be extended to induce more (primarily middle and high ranking) members to opt for rehabilitation. 3) For those reconciling, forms of political/governmental patronage have to be installed, as this informally already contributed to some rare reconciliations of a few senior Taliban affiliated. 4) For an assessment of how effective a reconciliation has been, more comprehensive analysis is required both before and after the reconciliation. 5) A sophisticated complementary balance of military effort and political engagement with the insurgents has to be applied. 6) Additionally the convenience and implications of factors like publicity or obvious international involvement have to be assessed case-specifically.

Furthermore Semple addresses the importance of Pakistan's comprehensive integration in the process (e.g. due to the abundance of several insurgents in Pakistan, the al-Qaida's ties to it and Afghanistan maintaining economic relations with it [cf. p. 38]) and generally states that the current lack of progress is not surprising given that numerous key actors on both sides see (strategic/political/economic) advantages in continuing the conflict.

First and foremost, only an improvement of Afghan governance, a strengthening of the general security structures and a subsequent addressing of all of the 'underlying factors' to promote 'long-term change' can enable a 'general reconciliation'. Therefore Semple finally concludes that adequate initiatives should be 'modest in scope, engaging some of the conflict actors and contributing to conflict management', while the idea of any 'imminent comprehensive peace settlement' is unrealistic (p. 12).

Additionally, in the last chapters, Semple gives an overview of the current international reconciliation support and its implications and ramifications for the con-

flict dynamics (cf. pp. 73–77). Afterwards he presents a more detailed case study of one recent accord, drawing on Afghan reconciliation traditions and providing valuable ‘lessons learned’ – conclusions for governmental as well as international actors. Contemporaneously, it illustrates the ‘opportunities’ and ‘pitfalls’ of nonviolent conflict management in Afghanistan and shows how ‘the lack of strategy and coherence in decision making can have disastrous effects’ (p. 79).

The last pages provide a summary of all the successive conclusions concerning the ongoing reconciliation process as well as its barriers. The final outline divides the key findings into ‘recommendations for the Afghan government’ (p. 92) and commensurate advice ‘for the international community’ (p. 94).

This work constitutes a thorough, detailed analysis of and simultaneously a short, compact reflection on the deeply rooted, complex and enduring conflict. Therefore it is packed with comprehensible depictions of the past, logically traceable prognoses of future developments, various intelligible definitions, illustrative exemplifications, case studies and explanations of the failures as well as successes of specific reconciliatory initiatives. On this basis, it can serve as a substantiated, creditable source for policy makers’, diplomats’ and their advisers’ investigations, as the author derives plausible implications and suggests several consequential recommendations, both general and directly addressed to the politicians. By the same token, academics can profit from reading this volume, as it is qualified for being used, e.g., as a starting point for further immersed, particular research on the individual subjects Semple refers to. However, similarly this topical analysis is recommendable for a general audience, as it provides an insightful overview as well as a deeper understanding of the current conflict.

In general, a clear strength is the book’s well-arranged, reasoned structure, which comprehensibly leads the reader to the author’s final evaluations. Furthermore, as the spectrum of publications and opinions on this issue is broad and disputed, another virtue of this paper is Semple’s well-grounded background knowledge and credible understanding of the conflict, which is, *inter alia*, based on his considerable travelling experiences and interaction with numerous partisans of the multifarious insurgency in both countries.

Still, on the other hand, broader and much more exhaustive reading is indispensable for acquiring a comprehensive background knowledge and a sound understanding of the whole conflict situation. However, as an intention to provide such an exhaustive study never was announced, this constitutes a coherent implication of such a small outline but not an actual minus point.

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