Visualising the EU in EU Enlargement

Boundaries of Balkanism in EU Accession Discourses

Toward a Conception of Welcoming and Cooperating Patriotisms

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Visualising the EU: the Central and East European Enlargement Experience

ANCA PUSCA

Abstract: Starting with an analysis of the recent launch of EUTube, this article poses a number of different questions about the EU’s visibility, particularly from a Central and East European perspective. Arguing against the more commonly held belief that the EU’s visibility is on the decline, the article showcases a number of alternative examples of visibility whereby other actors, coming from the publicity world, critically engage with problems surrounding the EU such as discrimination, the work-visa regime, the EU Constitution and the CAP reforms. Focusing on the Polish Plumber campaign in France and Poland as well as the Bucgci and Ursus beer campaigns in post-enlargement Romania, the article argues that such campaigns could and should play an important role in expanding the visual horizon of the EU and opening the door to other ‘legitimate’ authors of ‘text’ and ‘images’ pertaining to the EU.

Key words: European Union, visibility/visuality, aesthetics, publicity, enlargement, Central and Eastern Europe, everyday life

INTRODUCTION

Concerns over the EU’s visibility and its perceived decline abound both in the academic literature – coupled with concerns over the democratic deficit – and within different EU institutions which are clearly struggling to build a new image for themselves that will attract younger audiences as well as more technically engaged audiences to its specific policies and larger agenda. With the rise of YouTube, Facebook, and the popularity of the blogosphere, the EU has followed the footsteps of the more recent US presidential campaigns and claimed its own space on YouTube: EUTube. Launched on June 29, 2007, EUTube was envisioned not only as a technically advanced communication tool, but also as a way of narrowing down the so-called democratic deficit by appealing to a much younger audience, the average age of YouTube users being under twenty (Darby, 2007).

The effort is certainly to be commended, although EUTube has failed to make the EU feel ‘loved’ (Darby, 2007; Riding, 2007), partially because of the choice of videos and partially because it came to be seen as nothing but a new propaganda tool in
the hands of the EU. The most popular video on EUTube was, not surprisingly, a celebration of love in European movies, which quickly became confused with a celebration of the promiscuity often associated with ‘European lovers’. The clip drew over four million visitors in the first few weeks, leaving the EU environmental clips the scraps of hardly a few dozen visitors. While this can certainly seem disappointing, from the point of view of the EU, it does point out that the visuality promoted by sites such as YouTube, as opposed to EUTube, is governed not only by a desire to share and communicate but, more importantly, by a lack of hierarchy, whereby everyone can post their own videos and have a say. This is precisely what has made YouTube so popular, allowing it to enter the everyday imaginary and focus not only on the ‘important messages’ that need to be heard, but also on informal and personalised stories that often carry little or no policy significance on face value.

The more important question to be asked, though, is not why EUTube has failed to be as successful as initially envisioned – at least until now – but why the EU feels that it lacks visibility. This inevitably begs not only for a definition of visibility but also for the kinds of elements that enter into the realm of visibility: are we talking about videos, images, and brochures that engage the reader/viewer with a series of different issues concerning the EU, or are we also to include informal conversations, jokes, graffiti, cartoons or ads that also focus on the EU? Clearly, the EU judges its own visibility in relation to the first list and not the second, thus working with a definition of visibility that is inevitably connected to a particular kind of communication: that in which there is only one official source – the EU and its institutions – and several approved outlets – the EU information offices, NGOs working to promote the EU or governmental campaigns seeking support for particular EU policies.

This article will seek to argue that the EU is, in fact, much more visible than it considers itself to be, and, in order to realize that, it needs to expand its visual horizon beyond official sources and approved outlets towards more informal discourses as reflected, for example, in the publicity world. In fact, perhaps the most interesting debates on the EU are taking place in the informal realm through localised discourses. These discourses become visualised through a number of different means, often inscribed into the built environment through the presence of posters, graffiti or ads. While these forms of visuality may not always appear as clear forms of communication (in that arguments are not always made in an order that inevitably leads to a policy proposal), they do play an important role in gathering the opinions – even if they are sometimes unsophisticated – of the European everyday ‘audience’. Unlike the Eurobarometers, these opinions are not constrained by set questions, goals or proposed suggestions. Instead, they seek to channel both frustrations and celebrations through simple slogans, messages or images.

When it comes to the visibility of the EU in the new accession countries of Central and Eastern Europe, one should not be fooled by the apparent lack of signifi-
significant EU visual presence. The few flags around official buildings, the discreet signs on buildings that receive financial support from the EU and the random store and stall names such as Euro Market or Euro Hotdog might easily fool one into thinking that the EU is only present in government buildings and at the borders. The visibility of the EU, however, need not be restricted to official communications, buildings, brochures or audio-visual policy, including digital communication devices such as EUTube or the EU website. In fact, many have argued that the EU is often visualised and imagined differently within different contexts, from border communities (Armbruster, Rollo, & Meinhof, 2003; Komska, 2004) to government offices (Drulak & Konigova, 2007) and popular culture (Kopp, 2007).

Most of the research conducted within these different contexts confirms that symbolic EU images such as EU buildings, flags, euro coins and official communications trigger few major reactions in people (Armbruster et al., 2003; Drulak & Konigova, 2007). Instead, metaphors as well as family discourses, as captured in interviews, stories or films, are much more efficient in communicating people’s conceptualisation and visualisation of the EU. When it comes to the new accession countries, elements of popular culture have been amongst the few avenues to address head on important issues such as discrimination between new and old members as well as the struggle to deal with economic and political reform.

Treating publicity as an important element of popular culture and of the EU’s visibility, this article will look at two main case studies: the Polish plumber campaign in France and Poland and the Romanian beer publicity campaign focusing on the issue of enlargement and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). By arguing that these case studies represent two different forms of visibility, a celebratory as well as a negative and critical visibility, the article will seek to address the difference between pre-accession and post-accession attitudes towards the EU within the new member states as well as the extent to which such publicity campaigns manage to capture important elements of the continuous negotiation between the EU and its member states. Both publicity campaigns use humour to deal with important issues of discrimination and reform, providing a different kind of visibility platform that the EU has until now failed to recognise as a potential ally.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND ‘RESEARCH DESIGN’:
The practice of deciphering signs of ‘popular culture’ as an academic discourse has been quite controversial, particularly outside fields such as cultural studies or sociology (Morris, 2005, 2007; Williamson, 1978). The field of international relations has only relatively recently turned its attention towards such practices through the so-called ‘aesthetic turn’ in IR pioneered by people such as Roland Bleiker (Bleiker, 2001a, 2001b), Christine Sylvester (Sylvester, 2001, 2005), Cynthia Weber (Weber,
2006) and Michael Shapiro (Shapiro, 2006). Their initial interpretations of the connections between art, aesthetics and politics have now been expanded to look at the interconnection between film, photography, museum exhibits and other forms of privileged visibility in informing about the HIV crisis, the war in Iraq, the war on terror, refugee camps, hunger or violence towards women. Using concepts such as Kant’s sublime, Benjamin’s flaneur, Beaudelaire’s aura, Virillio’s integral accident or Ranciere’s political aesthetics, they have opened a new realm of interpretation that privileges the visible and different techniques of visibility over the seemingly factual or the purely textual discourse.

The image, in its different forms, provides a background against which world events are not only represented and interpreted, but also lived and experienced. Film, photography and publicity become legitimate mechanisms for interrogating government policies, important world events and personal struggles with the ‘everyday life’ ramifications of those events across the globe as well. The ‘aesthetic turn in IR’ seems, however, to have had little impact on EU studies in general, partially because most publications within the ‘aesthetic turn’ have chosen to focus on the intersection between visuality and security (particularly US security after September 11) and visuality and crisis (such as the HIV crisis or crisis areas such as Northern Ireland, the Middle East, or the Paris banlieues). Perhaps it is time that this changed. This article does not suggest that it offers a model interpretation of the EU’s visibility as inspired by the ‘aesthetic turn in IR’. It does, however, offer a potential interpretation that seeks to place the EU’s visibility outside of the expected realm of its institutions and what some may call its ‘propaganda machine’.

There are two relationships that need to be further discussed before approaching our case studies: one is the relationship between aesthetics and visuality, and the other is the relationship between aesthetics/visuality and politics. While the idea of the visual is for the most part implied throughout the work of those who consider themselves a part of the ‘aesthetic turn in IR’, the latter is generally implicated in particular acts of seeing that involve a specific goal or target: e.g. seeing an art or photography exhibit, seeing a film, or seeing a poster or a cartoon. The non-specific act of seeing, perhaps the most common one in our everyday activities, – such as seeing the street as we head to and from work while noticing the new announcements of publicity panels – discretely lies somewhere at the intersection between the ‘aesthetic turn’ and studies on ‘everyday life’ in IR. It is here, at this intersection, that this article would like to position itself, both in its particular way of exploring the issue of visuality and the larger question of aesthetics and in its particular way of describing the relationship between a particular visual subject, the EU, and politics.

This implies a certain understanding of visuality as related to everyday routines such as watching TV or walking down the street, as opposed to unique ‘aesthetic’
events such as attending an art or photography exhibit or a film showing. The ‘aesthetic’ in this context should thus be seen as connected to a certain sense of ‘normality’, as opposed to ‘exceptional’ situations. This is particularly important, since the claims made by the two case studies rely upon a ‘relaxed’ approach to the EU and its policies, one in which humour co-exists with more serious concerns over increasing discrimination between old and new member states and the impact of EU reforms such as the agricultural reforms in Romania.

Adopting the original Greek definition of aesthetics as feeling and perception with regard to the surrounding reality, the focus on visuality is justified in light of the prioritising of the visual in today’s world: from television to film to the internet and the printed press, images are everywhere, not just as representations of surrounding reality, but as an intrinsic part of it. As Slavoj Zizek well put it, the hyper-real has now blended into the real (Zizek, 2005). With the visual and the image now an intrinsic part of our everyday life, questions arise about the difference between what remains at some level represented and the so-called material world: has the represented blended into the material world to the point where no difference exists anymore? An important litmus test is perhaps the ability of images to trigger a similar (or even more intense) emotionality to that which is triggered by real-life experiences (Jaguaribe, 2005).

If the relationship between aesthetics and visuality has been established mainly in terms of questions of representation, visual technologies and their impact on everyday life, the relationship between aesthetics and politics has been more closely examined in light of ideological uses of aesthetics (Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch, Brecht, & Lukacs, 1977), propaganda and film making (Elsaesser, 1987; Kracauer, 1965), and more recently, in light of post 9/11 security, modern terrorism and modern wars, media portrayals of wars, gender and security. The visual is thus once again directly implicated in this relationship as the key ingredient in the process of exposure, opinion formation and the establishment of specific visual terrains under which a particular (political) situation is to be examined. Along with the visual, however, the material and the built environment is also directly implicated in the relation between aesthetics and politics: the material of photographs, posters, monuments, street names, paintings, exhibits or strategic buildings all help shape both the way in which we remember history as well as the way in which we manipulate it.

The work of Susan Buck-Morss (Buck-Morss, 2000) and her muse Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, 1968, 1978, 1982) is strategic in establishing the nature of this relationship, especially in the field of international relations. What Walter Benjamin teaches us is that nothing is too insignificant in the process of uncovering how people face history: from the ripple of a dress to how fast people walk to the subjects of early photography and the evolution in the types of leisurely activities that people undertake. History unfolds in the everyday, on the corner of a deserted street as...
well as in the building of a new arcade, in the decay of an industry and the emergence of a new fashion, in the object and, more importantly for the purpose of this article, in the image, and thus, in the visual. The EU is not just a visual subject: it represents a particular unfolding of history and a set of reactions to that unfolding. Thus, one should not confuse the visibility of the EU with the visibility of its symbols, from institutions to flags to coins to the texts of treaties and charters. The visibility of the EU should instead be examined in terms of the reactions to its unfolding, historical as well as physical and territorial.

The two case studies that this article will explore represent two such reactions to the opening of the previous EU borders to include ten new Central and East European countries: 1) a negative reaction of fear and discrimination and 2) a positive reaction of celebration combined with a critical reaction towards the necessary reform process or post-accession political conditionality when it comes to agricultural policy. Both are expressed visually in two different sets of campaigns: the first is the ‘Polish plumber’ campaign that started off as a political campaign for the ‘No’ vote of the French Right against the proposed EU Constitution and was later picked up by the Polish Tourism Board as a way to humour French xenophobia as well as to reestablish a more positive image for their country; the second is the creative Ursus and Bucegi beer campaigns in Romania that take issue with both the celebration of Romania’s entry into the EU as well as with its failure to relate to some of the requirements of the newly imposed agricultural policy. The two case studies are presented not as models of a different kind of EU visibility, but rather as two more prominent examples of the kind of images and issues that could also be seen as integral to the way in which the EU’s visibility is created, negotiated and disciplined.2

THE POLISH PLUMBER AND THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION DEBATE

In the spring of 2005, on the eve of the European Constitution debates in France, an unlikely figure took center stage: the ‘Polish plumber’, a metaphor originally proposed by Philippe de Villier, the leader of the right nationalist group Movement pour la France, and later adopted with a positive twist by Frits Bolkestein – the former president of Shell Chimie France and also a European Commissioner – as well as by Pasqual Lemy – the French head of the WTO and of the Swiss Socialist Party (Maryniak, 2006). The figure of the ‘Polish plumber’ suddenly came to represent the core of the European Constitution debate and the larger fear that the Constitution would warrant an increase in the number of migrant workers from the new eastern members of the EU and, with it, a further loss in jobs for domestic workers (Rudakowska, 2006). The surprising success of the ‘No’ vote in France drew further attention to the increase in feelings of ‘xenophobia’ and ‘nationalism’ and sent a clear message to
the rest of the EU that France was not quite ready to give up on its ‘French plumbers’ - the few that were left.

The metaphor of the ‘Polish plumber’ thus came to signify a divided Europe, one side of which was ready to defend itself against an incoming wave of ‘Polish plumbers’ that, under the Bolkestein directive, would be free to set up their own businesses in France, and the other side of which was calling out for a solidarity among plumbers under the evocative banner of ‘Plumbers of the world, unite’. It was the ‘Polish’ in the ‘Polish plumber’ metaphor, however, that helped feed the increasing fear of incoming legal migrants in France, putting both the Polish immigrants in France as well as the Polish nation as a whole on the spot. The response did not fail to arrive, with a surprising twist that shifted the debate clearly in favor of Poland: the Polish Tourism Board decided to turn the metaphor into an attractive image of the Polish plumber as the main theme for its ‘visit Poland’ campaign. With the help of a hunky, blond model, Piotr Adamski, the Board created thousands of posters featuring Piotr in overalls and no shirt sporting not just his own good looks, but also the beautiful scenery of Poland and a slogan that read ‘Come visit me in Poland! I'm not leaving.’ With a wink and a smile, Piotr drew hundreds of new French tourists into Poland, increasing the old numbers exponentially while mocking the ‘no’ camp and the right for its derogative use of his image (Sciolino, 2005).

The success of the Polish Tourism Board campaign propelled Piotr to celebrity status, drawing a number of invitations for official visits to France and to attend a number of shows such as On a tout essayé. Suddenly Piotr himself, and not just his image on a poster, became an important spokesperson for Poland, embodying the spirit of the ‘Polish plumber’ he was not. Piotr’s performances during his official visit to France and his presence on French Television shows became as important as an official government visit, with Piotr representing both the plight of the Polish plumber abroad and, more importantly, the pride of the Polish nation and its people in general. In an interview, Piotr speaks of the difficulty of having to play the role of someone he was not, in an official capacity as opposed to that of a model that poses and only speaks through the slogans on the bottom of the page. The expectation that Piotr truly represented the ‘Polish plumbers’ and that he was one of them seemed to have fooled everyone except for the Polish plumbers themselves, who rejected the glamorous depiction as simply unrealistic. Mr. Zieba, an actual Polish plumber living in France, says: ‘Mr. Adamski is carrying the wrong cutter for the plastic and metal pipe he is holding’ (Sciolino, 2005).

The positive twist in the ‘Polish plumber’ campaign managed to deflate an otherwise potentially threatening situation in France, but the extent to which it managed to address the larger problem of discrimination and xenophobia, present not only in France, but all throughout the European Union, Poland included, is unclear. In a manner not much different from EU propaganda in general – and I do not use the
The term ‘propaganda’ here derogatively – the campaign glossed over important issues by aesthetically changing the tired, dirty image of a real plumber into an appealing figure of a plumber whose hands looked freshly creamed and powdered. There is no question that the campaign was indeed successful in its goal of drawing more visitors to Poland and sending out a clear message that ‘we are not going to invade you’. Instead, we are going to welcome you to ‘invade us, be our guests’. What is, however, unclear is the extent to which such practices of diffusion serve to really address the problem at hand as opposed to simply delaying its resolution.

The more important question at hand, though, for the purpose of this article, is how an unlikely image such as that of the Polish plumber could become such an important point of visibility for the EU and the debates surrounding the transformation of the EU – such as the Constitutional debate. When looking to find signs of the EU, one hardly thinks to look at campaigns such as these, yet perhaps they speak more about what the EU stands for and the struggles that it faces than any potential brochure. The question that inevitably arises is ‘Can one treat Piotr as a sign, an image evocative of the EU and how people think about the EU, or not?’ Is the ‘Polish plumber’ an essential part of the EU’s visibility – at least for the year of 2005 – or not? The answer this article is trying to propose is ‘Yes’. The justification is based on the role that new practices of representation have taken in the political arena as well as on the increasingly important role that the visual plays in shaping political opinions and guiding specific policies.

The question is which visual is to be included in the political arena. Is the ‘Polish plumber’ poster with Piotr’s picture part of that visual or not? In her article about the Polish plumber and the image game, Irena Maryniak argues that ‘these days, representation is more about marketing and “the market” than about ideology or identity’ (Maryniak, 2006). From the publicity world to the film industry, marketing is certainly a big concern. Yet one cannot so easily dismiss the role of ideology or identity, particularly in light of the Polish plumber campaign. The choice made by the Polish Tourism Board to choose this particular imagery was not incidental and certainly not only an instance of utilising an image and an issue that had already gotten quite a bit of publicity. It was also a question of defending one’s identity and nation and defeating a potentially wrong turn in how the EU thinks about itself. Representation, at least in this particular case, remains very much about identity if not also about ideology. It creates and sustains new ways of thinking about Europe and the EU, perhaps helping to create what Armbruster called a potential ‘imagined Europe’ a la Benedict Anderson (Armbruster et al., 2003).

What does this potential ‘imagined Europe’ look like then, and what kinds of images help create it? A long and strenuous inventory of the most popular images, publicity posters, pictures and films from across the EU and a careful weighing of the implications of each of them might be one way to go. However, this would un-
doubtedly lead to recommendations and attempts to rectify particular ‘wrong’ or ‘negative’ images through the forced popularisation of ‘positive’ ones. The answer might perhaps be a little more evasive in arguing that there are any number of images and instances that stand out and that they gain their momentum in local contexts as well as during particular periods of time and then disappear with only a whiff and a small trail of articles, speeches, and arguments. In an interview with *L’Express*, Adam Michnik, the famous leader of the Polish Solidarity movement, nicely captured the spirit of this imagined Europe in Poland: ‘Each Pole has his/her own European dream: for the peasant, it is the agricultural subsidies from Bruxelles; for the worker, it is the promise of foreign investments; for the student, it is the guarantee of studying and living abroad. All of these are fantastic opportunities that our generation never had!’ (Demetz & Przewozny, 2005)

‘Imagined Europe’ is thus imagined in different ways, from the young Poles who seem to think of themselves as more European than Polish (Horabik, 2004) to the French right and Phillipe de Villier, whose Europe needs to be more protective of certain established boundaries and the wellbeing of its initial creators. Does this latter imagined Europe risk usurping the first or vice versa? Do increasing signals of discrimination across the EU, from the ‘Polish plumber’ French right campaign to the ‘Romanians go home’ campaign in Italy to the anti-Roma sentiments across the EU, threaten to mark the death of enlargement, as Rachman ponders (Rachman, 2006), or are they natural reminders of a process that demands struggle and debate, even when the latter turns into offensive visual campaigns, graffiti signs on walls or regrettable xenophobic calls?

This patchy Europe of both good and bad is more real than any attempt to beautify or idealise it, to depict it as a fighter for harmony, justice, human rights and nature protection for all. The EUTube campaign has certainly not understood the spirit of YouTube or the kind of practices that make it so popular: most clips are submitted by individuals, not institutions; they are aimed not at publicising a person or a product, but rather at sharing bits and pieces of people’s lives – from the interior of their home, to their funny cat or dog, to their comic skits or their first attempts at making a movie. YouTube clips of the now famous French show *On a Tout Essaye* which sport the famous Piotr in his plumber outfit alongside French comedian Florence Foresti trying in turn to advertise her own French hometown, Monfion sur L’Orge, while dressed in sexy plumber overalls capture the spirit of YouTube much better than any EUTube documentary.

Attempts to further publicise the EU through its audio-visual policy are not ways of imagining Europe, for the collective imagination does not seek to market itself the way a publicity campaign would. Instead, it simply emerges and bubbles up naturally all around us. The EU does not need to be made more visible – it already is visible. However, it needs to recognise these different forms of visibility, whether
negative or not, as an important part of its image. Denying them or attempting to paint over them with glossy brochures or televised or digitised campaigns is something that will inevitably fail.

SPORTING THE EU: THE BUCEGI AND URSUS BEER CAMPAIGNS IN POST-ACCESSION ROMANIA

The ‘canvas’ of Romania’s cities is perhaps painted mainly by the new publicity gurus: young, ambitious and creative entrepreneurs who are not afraid of exploiting their talents for profit-seeking. They do not hold back from using their talents and newfound power to creatively and critically engage with a number of important questions surrounding Romania’s economic and political transformation either. The creative style of Romanian publicity companies has been recognised in a number of prestigious award shows, including the New York Festivals, where three of the most powerful publicity companies in Romania won two gold and two silver medals between them (Badicioiu, 2007). This high level of creativity is also supported by incredible profits, with publicity companies topping the charts of the most profitable companies in Romania. In the year 2004, the top thirty eight publicity companies in Romania totaled profits of over 215.5 million euros, and the numbers have probably risen significantly since then (Barbu, 2005). Their new found power has allowed these companies to become avenues for critical engagement with politics, whereby commercials become nothing but an excuse to engage with particular government policies.

One of the themes that has dominated the publicity scene in 2007 was – not surprisingly, given Romania’s entrance into the European Union in January of that year – the question of EU enlargement. Given that Romania’s accession to the EU in January of 2007 has been a long awaited moment, particularly as most Romanians have maintained a much more positive view of the EU and the benefits that will follow this accession than all of their neighbours who had already joined the EU, the moment of entry was viewed both by producers and by the publicity companies as a dual possibility of boosting their sales while riding the wave of enthusiasm as well as of tactfully and subtly addressing a number of different concerns surrounding the accession. The Ursus and Bucegi beer companies thus hired two publicity giants to develop their New Year campaigns along the lines of the much awaited event.

Silviu Nedelschi, the head of Copy Publicis – the company which directed the Ursus campaign –, explains their choice for focusing on the accession moment by pointing to its historical symbolism as well as to the need to rejoice in something that the country had been working towards for the past seventeen years. The Ursus publicity spot does indeed reflect precisely this effort by depicting hundreds of people pulling on a thick cord which brings Western Europe closer to Romania’s borders,
enchanting people with images of the Eiffel Tower, the leaning Tower of Pisa or the Big Ben. The message is two-fold: ‘Ursus beer flexes its muscles and brings the Eiffel Tower closer’ and ‘Celebrate Romania’s success with Ursus.’ (Stanciu, 2007) Ana Militaru, a journalist and ad analyst, reflects on this campaign by arguing that the images reflected in it are often nonsensical and unclear. A publicity spot on TV shows several fishermen walking down a beach. They suddenly discover a rope, start pulling on the rope and then get unexpected help from hundreds of different people who are rushing through the main square of Brasov on their way to help the fishermen, some of them running past the Sphinx in the process. The rope seems to bring closer a whole different continent on which lie, one next to the other, the marvels, monuments and riches of Western Europe. Ana Militaru wonders why it is Romania that is pulling the EU over towards itself and not the other way around. She also wonders who had thrown the rope to the Romanians, and more importantly, why? (Militaru, 2007a, 2007b).

The skepticism that Militaru exhibits is very telling of yet another attitude that has been present in Romania since the country first began to court the EU in order to convince it to open its gates and accept its ‘poor brothers’ in the East. The enthusiasm and eagerness of Romanians to enter the promised land of the EU and their willingness to once again sacrifice themselves and pull on a symbolic rope has been met by many, like Militaru, with a sense of hurt pride and even bitterness. Playing on the mixture of enthusiasm and bitterness, the publicity companies manage to maintain perhaps a seemingly overly positive attitude in their commercials while at the same time hinting at the effort and, to a certain extent, the unequal treatment of Romania when it came to EU enlargement: the rope helps bring the EU closer, but the fact that the EU appears as a whole other continent in the commercial points clearly to the differences that are both real and mostly feared by the EU, which has managed to always keep its distance while still pushing for enlargement.

The majority of Romanians remain highly enthusiastic when it comes to having joined the EU, and what Militaru sees as nonsensical connections are perhaps nothing but fragmented yet powerful appeals to the Romanian consciousness. Thus, the image of the fishermen might easily symbolise simplicity and a certain level of naiveté that is, however, coupled with a hard life and an attitude that embraces challenges – such as the challenge of pulling the rope. The rush of hundreds of other people to help symbolises unity and a certain sense of solidarity when it comes to fighting for a common goal (this could also be perceived as highly ironic, however, since the level of social solidarity in Romania has most certainly been on a sharp decline since 1989), while the images of Brasov Square could symbolise the stages through which one had to go in order to even be thrown a rope (Brasov Square was the place where some of the first anti-communist demonstrations took place during the Ceausescu regime). The Sphinx perhaps represents strength and determination.
More pragmatically, both Brasov Square and the Sphinx might represent a random play on beautiful images of Romania that most people, locals as well as visitors, will be able to recognise, since the Sphinx and Brasov are perhaps some of the most popular tourist attractions. In its billboard and newspaper advertising versions, the publicity company has chosen to celebrate the success of the EU accession in the form of a mock coronation, with Ursus beer presented as the king of Romanian beers but also as wearing the European Union flag. This carries, of course, an interesting connotation, given that Romania still has a king in exile, one that some politicians argue should come back.

The Bucegi campaign, although also centered around the moment of the EU accession, struck a series of different cords. As Alexandra Tinjala, General Manager of Sister – the publicity company that developed the campaign – explains: ‘Our public has a very healthy way of looking at this accession, a very Romanian, positive way of accepting a series of realities that are not exactly “rosy”, and that is why I am not sure whether we necessarily chose this particular approach or whether it chose us.’ (Stanciu, 2007) What Tinjala seems to be arguing is that their publicity spots were nothing but an accurate reflection of scenes and images that one might regularly encounter in every day attitudes towards the EU. Staying close to the image of the simple Romanian, oftentimes the Romanian peasant, the spots supposedly exploit the true image of Romania, with both the good and the bad. In fact, the Bucegi slogan has long been – even during the times of communism – ‘together for better or for worse’. And yet the slogan has now been slightly changed: they have added ‘from now on, for the better’ as well as ‘Of all the moments in life, this time, Bucegi prefers the happy ones.’

Why, this time, the happy ones? Perhaps this is a direct reference to commercials and publicity spots that Bucegi ran during communism, the probably most notable one of which depicted an electricity blackout – something that occurred on a regular basis before 1989 – during an important televised soccer game. The viewer could only be consoled for the impossibility of watching his favorite team with a glass of Bucegi. The new accession oriented spots focus instead on how the Romanian peasant, for example, will deal with the new EU regulations with regard to farm animals. One of the spots focuses on a son’s visit to his parents, who live in the countryside. What follows is a meal conversation over a glass of Bucegi as to how the parents are going to deal with having to allocate enough square meters per chicken to meet the new EU regulations, given that their yard is not large enough to support them all. The spot makes fun of what are perceived to be ridiculous farm regulations, as these are thought to have been instituted by people who have obviously never lived on a traditional farm and have in mind only the large commercial farm model. While joking around however, the publicity spot does touch on an important issue that will affect the farmers and those still living on village and subsistence farms,
who make up almost 40% of Romania’s total population. If implemented, the new EU agricultural regulations will forever change the face of Romanian villages and Romanian traditions by challenging many commonsense rules and habits that have until now been passed on from generation to generation and that will from now on have to be controlled by agencies and people whom the peasants have little or no control over.

To use Milan Kundera’s metaphor, this is another instance of the ‘unbearable lightness of being’, whereby difficult issues are tackled with a shrug and a glass of beer, for in the end, there is really nothing to be done about them. Thus, the peasant and his family in the Bucegi publicity spots continue to enjoy the sunny afternoon, the fresh air, the background noise of farm animals and the chicken wandering about, and, of course, his glass of cold beer. Ana Militaru, though, suggests that this nonchalant attitude is due to the inability of the average Romanian to make up his/her mind about what he/she thinks about the EU. Thus, he or she adopts either a defeatist attitude of ‘que sera sera’ or one of ‘it was meant to be’. (Militaru, 2007b) Militaru goes on to argue that in fact, the attempts of publicity companies to go beyond their advertising role and seek to push Romanians to consider topics such as EU environmental policies or the EU Common Agricultural Policy threaten the strength of the publicity campaign and create a false image of the Romanian peasant as being concerned with recycling or with the environment in general. Whether this is indeed the case or not, what is interesting, however, is this willingness to risk an entire publicity spot in order to engage with important topics such as the EU enlargement.

This tendency to use advertising as an important outlet for thinking about politics has also been noted by Jeremy Morris in his examination of Russian commercials, where the focus tends to be more on elements of cultural nostalgia for the past and reiteration of a lost sense of national unity and solidarity. Unlike the Romanian commercials, however, the Russian spots clearly reflected nationalist tendencies influenced by the very position that publicity companies hold within the Russian economy – still very much connected to and regulated by the state while also managing to act as ‘a site of renegotiation between economic interests and cultural values in their broadest sense.’ (Morris, 2005, 2007) These engagements, along with earlier examinations of the symbolism of commercials such as the one conducted by Judith Williamson (Williamson, 1978), clearly point not only to a connection between politics, ideology and advertising, but to a definite move on the side of publicity companies to engage more or less directly with politics and state policies.

**CONCLUSION**

The EU’s visibility, depending on how one looks at it, is not necessarily on the decline, but rather on the increase, as new visual technologies – such as the publicity
world – find it more and more appealing to expand the scope of their statements from purely pleasing messages to clearly political ones. The three different publicity campaigns discussed above – the Polish Tourism Board campaign and the Bugeci and Ursus Beer campaigns – are meant to showcase not only the increasing interest that the publicity world – both publicly and privately owned – has taken towards subjects such as the EU, but also the ability of the campaigns to address serious concerns, such as discrimination and the economic pains of reform, with a wink and a smile. The much larger appeal of political ads to different communities both at home and abroad – as was the case with the Polish Tourism Board campaign – ensures not only that these concerns are openly recognised and addressed but also that they are addressed from the perspective of the everyday individual as opposed to that of the policymaker. Imbued with fun and empathy, these campaigns give a more approachable aura to the EU by making it a part of people’s everyday routine through their presence on street posters and evening TV.

In light of this, one may suggest that perhaps what the EU needs is not a more visible ‘brand’, but rather a more normalised image in which one could talk about the Common Agricultural Policy, the work visa regimes or the Constitutional Debate and their effect on different local communities without an immediate policy appeal that would work through a specific hierarchy. The question of the EU’s visibility does not hinge on how well the EU ‘markets’ itself, but rather on the extent to which the EU is able to acknowledge already existing forms of visibility – whether celebratory or critical – and incorporate them not only as alternative EU publicity campaigns, but also as important reflections of how people relate to the EU. EUTube could thus encourage EU citizens – and perhaps even citizens of countries outside of the EU – to create videos around the theme of the EU and post them online or to record local engagements with the EU – whether it be through inscriptions in the built environment or through different conversations. It could even feature different publicity campaigns, such as the ones discussed above, as examples of engagement with the EU. By acknowledging other ‘authors’ as legitimate, the EU could indeed create a space where conversation is encouraged and criticism allowed. Even if the ‘image’ of the EU is not always pretty, it is better that it be openly laid out and discussed than hidden behind videos about climate change (but this is not to imply that climate change is not a very important concern).

This acknowledgement has direct implications for how we are to go about studying the EU and what are the approved ‘methodologies’ for doing so. The acceptance of ‘aesthetic’ and visibility concerns as intrinsic to the EU’s concerns about its democratic deficit or audience forces us to consider otherwise questionable case studies, such as the Polish Plumber campaigns or the Bucegi and Ursus beer campaigns in Romania. While the study of ‘aesthetics’ has a long philosophical tradition, its application to specific empirical examples has been pioneered, at least in the so-
cultural sciences, by the ‘aesthetic turn in IR’. The ‘turn’ offers not only a methodological alternative, but also a theoretical anchor through which the ‘everyday’ empirical gains a renewed significance. In this sense, this article has hopefully also served to both show how the ‘aesthetic turn in IR’ – as a methodological and theoretical approach – can be used to address concerns over the EU’s visibility as well as concerns over how visual representations of the EU can serve, in turn, to elaborate on the implications of the ‘turn’ itself.

ENDNOTES

1 In fact, many would argue that the EU is much more visible in the new Central and East European accession countries than in their Western counterparts, partially because of the acquis demands and the reform process that goes along with them.

2 The language adopted in these two case studies showcases in itself a different type of methodological and theoretical engagement with the EU that engages the everyday not only in its subject but also in its form, making it accessible for the everyday individual as well.

3 Although some may regard the Polish Tourism Board’s twist as a one-off happening, as opposed to a possible model or case study, it serves to show the significant impact that an ‘image turn’ can have on one of the EU’s biggest challenges: immigration and xenophobia.

4 Original citation: ‘Chaque Polonais a son propre rêve européen: pour le paysan, ce sont les subventions de Bruxelles; pour l’ouvrier, c’est la promesse d’investissements étrangers; pour l’étudiant, la garantie d’étudier et de vivre au-delà de nos frontières. Fantastiques perspectives qui étaient interdites à notre génération!’ (translated by the author).

5 To watch parts of the show on YouTube, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bt5i8Aqkn-o.

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ANCA PUSCA

VISUALISING THE EU IN EU ENLARGEMENT

Bai Ganio and Other Men’s Journeys to Europe: the Boundaries of Balkanism in Bulgarian EU-Accession Discourses

ALINA CURTICAPEAN

Abstract: This article examines the role of Balkanism in Bulgarian EU accession discourses during the period that preceded the country’s membership of the EU. It focuses on political cartoons - regarded as indicative of broader societal discourses - which activate the ‘journey’ or ‘motion’ metaphor that dominated the imagery of EU integration. The article was prompted by a perceived incongruity in the study of the discursive encounter between the West and the Balkans. While most analysis concentrates on the Western or European self, by examining EU accession discourses in Bulgaria, this article turns to the Balkans’ responses to Western constructions. The study brings to light a decidedly mixed picture. Even though the crucial role of Balkanist representations and interpretations in Bulgarian EU accession discourses cannot be denied, alternative constructions are certainly present. They range from ambiguity and indifference to more overt challenges to the binary oppositions that characterize Balkanism.

Key words: Balkanism, Bulgaria, EU accession, ‘journey’ metaphor, narrative, national identity, political cartoons

INTRODUCTION

In the preface of her seminal 1997 book *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova – who was born and brought up in Bulgaria, where she earned a PhD from Sofia University and is currently professor at a prestigious American university – justifies her decision to trace the genealogy of the Western discourse on the Balkans, a discourse that she terms Balkanism, as follows:

Had I remained in Bulgaria, I would not have written this particular book [...]. I would have felt compelled to write a different one, one that would have explored and exposed the internal orientalisms within the region [...]. Maybe I will still write it.
But, as it happens, I live here and now, and for the moment it is to this audience that I wish to tell a story, to explain and to oppose something that is being produced here and has adverse effects there. (x, italics in original).

Ten years later, the so-called ‘critique of Balkanism’ comprises a considerable number of works. Adding to Todorova’s groundbreaking work (1994, 1997) and often directly inspired by it, a number of scholars have set to further investigate the workings of the Balkanist discourse. Vesna Goldsworthy’s Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination, Milica Bakić-Hayden’s ‘Nesting Orientalisms’, Dušan Bjelić and Obrad Savić’s co-edited collection Balkan as Metaphor, Patrick Hyder Patterson’s ‘On the Edge of Reason’ and Maple Razsa and Nicole Lindstrom’s ‘Balkan Is Beautiful’, to mention just a few, have all contributed to establishing the ‘critique of Balkanism’ within the English speaking scholarly world. However, until that ‘other book’ to which Todorova alludes in the introduction of her Imagining the Balkans will be published, the critique of Balkanism continues to be marked by a disparity. Interestingly, whereas the strong position of Balkanist stereotypes in Western representations of the Balkans has been carefully documented, less attention has been paid to Balkanism’s workings there, within the Balkans (Neuburger, 2006: 431).

Like Orientalism, Balkanism is a discourse organized around a set of hierarchically arranged binary oppositions – such as rational/irrational, centre/periphery, civilization/barbarism – arranged so that the first element of the dichotomy (‘Europe’) is always primary and definitional of the second (‘Balkans’). In spite of the similarities between the two discourses and of the obvious and acknowledged influence of the critique of the first on the critique of the latter, most of the scholars within this tradition do emphasize that Balkanism is not just another form of Orientalism. Two reasons seem to be of utmost importance for working and operating with such a distinction. First, whereas the Orient is discursively constituted as ‘the other’, the Balkans are relegated to a much more ambiguous, though still negative, position of ‘in-betweenness’. The Balkans, as Todorova says, are constructed as Europe’s ‘incomplete self’ (1997: 18). Second, unlike the Orient, the Balkans are not admitted as the ‘she-mate’ of the West. Scholars (especially feminist scholars) have long argued that the influential and pervasive categories of East and West have important gender connotations. The notions of West as male and East as female are appropriated from the European-colonial encounters (Neuburger, 2004: 14; Yuval-Davis, 1997). As subaltern territories are generally perceived in the gender/sexual role of femininity, the masculine assignment of the Balkans in Western representations seems to be a rather exceptional procedure. Balkan masculinity, however, differs from traditional Western masculinity. In the eyes of the West, Balkan masculinity is suspended between ‘machismo’ and imagined ‘feminine frailties’ such as impulsive spontaneity, hyperemotionality, moody unpredictability and unreliability. In addition, it ‘is deprived of
the leverage of such enlightening male merits as reason or rationality’ (Kambourov, 2003: 143). Thus, masculinity does not grant the Balkans a privileged position. To the contrary, it is likely to be perceived as more distant than a feminine culture (ibid.).

How do people in the Balkans then deal with the identities ascribed to them in Western representations? According to Todorova, the Balkanist discourse severely constrains the options of these people. Confronted with the hegemonic Western construction imposed on them, she writes, ‘it is hardly realistic to expect the Balkans to create a liberal, tolerant, all-embracing identity celebrating ambiguity and a negation of essentialism’ (1997: 59). Bulgarian theorist Alexander Kiossev (1999) shares the opinion that the Balkans’ self-narrations are imbued with self-stigmatization and ‘self-colonization’ according to ‘foreign models’.

This article is inspired by and points to the importance of historical, literary and cultural studies of the Balkans but shifts the discussion to IR. The curious incongruity between the amount of studies of Western representations of Eastern Europe and the Balkans and the amount of local responses to such constructions has been replicated within the field of IR and constituted the initial stimulus for writing the present article. Generally, most IR discourse analysis has been concerned with the construction of the Western or European self, and, by dint of it, with the discourses that the other has to address when engaging the West (e.g. Campbell, 1992, 1998; Doty, 1993; Hansen, 2006a; Milliken, 1999b; Neumann, 1999; Weber, 1995; Weldes, 1999). These studies have told us very little about discourses of the other – how the other constructs itself as well as the West. Yet, studying the discursive encounter between self and other is significant not only because the self and the other are mutually constitutive entities that merge into one another (Neumann, 1999: 36) but also because ‘it provides knowledge of the discursive and political room of maneuver of foreign policy issues’ (Hansen, 2006: 76).

Even though ideally studies should incorporate discursive encounters between self and other, that is hard to achieve within the limits of one article. By focusing on the Balkans’ response to the Western constructions imposed on them, this article addresses the under-researched side of the self/other nexus. Previous IR-related research has already shown that both EU and NATO enlargements were underpinned by a broadly Orientalist discourse which assumed ‘essential difference between Europe and Eastern Europe’ and framed ‘difference from Western Europe as a distance from and a lack of Europeanness’ (Kuus, 2004: 473). Addressing the EU enlargement discourse from the margins of the EU, namely from Bulgaria, I examine how the relationship ‘Europe’ – ‘the Balkans’ is articulated by the ‘Balkan people’ themselves and document the role played by Balkanist representations and interpretations in such narrations.

Before being suspected of an essentialism, which, in fact, I strongly oppose (see Curticepean, 2007a), I have to clarify that in the context of this paper, by ‘the Balkan
people’, I mean the Bulgarian cartoonists who, in their drawings of the EU accession, address the Bulgaria-Europe relationship. These cartoons, however, are much more than singular points of view. As researchers of the genre have pointed out, political cartoons ‘draw from an available stock of public knowledge’ (Greenberg, 2002: 194) and reflect ‘shared notions of social reality’ (Dines, 1995: 245) and ‘cultural beliefs and attitudes’ (White & Fuentez, 1997: 76). They have also been called ‘encyclopedias of popular culture’ (Michelmore 2000: 37). Even though largely neglected by IR literature, political cartoons deserve more attention – especially from studies which aim to bring to the fore not only dominant representations but also marginal narrations. Political cartoons are likely to unearth a wider array of narrations because they rely on the essential myths and dominant narratives of the cultures within which they are produced, but often through the use of irony, sarcasm and other subversive strategies, they can offer alternatives to those myths and escapes from hegemonic patterns (Schmitt, 1992; Hammond, 1991).

Out of a multitude of political cartoons addressing Bulgaria’s EU accession, this article focuses only on those that bring into play the imagery of EU integration as ‘motion’ or ‘journey’. The reason for this choice is twofold. First, the motion/journey metaphor represented the master metaphor in the EU accession discourses of the formerly socialist countries, Bulgaria included. The ‘return to Europe’ and ‘back to the West’ tropes had been used or perhaps abused so much that certainly one does not have to engage in any kind of detailed research to learn about their discursive prevalence. Second, as it rests on a tacit distinction between Bulgaria and Europe/the EU, the ‘journey’ metaphor will obviously address the relationship between the two entities, and as such, it represents the ideal site for examining the workings of Balkanism. This article investigates whether the stories that unfold in the context of those cartoons which activate the ‘motion’ or ‘journey’ metaphor challenge by any means, reinforce, are ambiguous about or are indifferent to the Balkanist discourse which has been claimed to hold a strong position not only in Western thinking about the Balkans but also in ‘Balkan people’s’ self-representations.

The cartoons gathered for this study have all been drawn between April 2004 and October 2005 by editorial cartoonists employed by central Bulgarian newspapers. The list includes Chavdar Nikolov (known mainly for his editorial cartoons for Novinar, but his cartoons are also printed in Vsekiden), Hristo Komarnitzki (Sega), Racho Rachev (Trud) and Ivan Kutuzov (Dnevnik). Political cartoons are not purely visual artifacts: they usually incorporate a verbal element, either within the frame of the cartoon as a caption or outside it as a title. All the cartoons gathered for this analysis are signed my men. That is by no means particular to Bulgarian political cartooning. According to Alex Robins, who in 2006 interviewed artists from twelve countries, political cartoonists are ‘generally a population of older men’.
Before proceeding with the interpretation of the empirical material, a short note on the concept of metaphor is due.7 Metaphor is understood here as a condensed open-ended narrative, an approach which builds on the discursive study of metaphors in IR (e.g. Hülsse, 2003, 2006; Milliken, 1999; Mottier, 2008). Metaphors, as key elements of discourses, construct political identities, and they do so in a particular way. First, metaphors produce identities by telling a story in a very concentrated format; in that sense, they function as condensed narratives (Ankersmit, 1993; Mottier, 2008; Schön, 1979). Second, these narratives are not completely spelled out. The spelling out of the full story is done by the audiences which draw on their tacit knowledge of the historical, social and political context to do so. From this perspective, metaphor is analogous to an unfinished film: it prompts viewers to search for and ‘fill in’ information that is suggested but not provided.8 Following from the narrative approach to metaphor, my interests in this paper are neither in the message(s) that the cartoonists intended to convey nor in the images themselves. Instead, I am concerned with the preferred readings or narratives that could be constructed for the cartoons within the political, social and cultural context of their publication.

I classified the cartoons which activate the ‘EU accession is motion’ or ‘EU accession is a journey’ metaphor into three groups according to the metaphorical picture they construct for the national community. In the first group, ‘Bulgaria’ is embodied by Bai Ganieo, and in the second, it is the ‘Everyman’ who stands for the national community. In the third group of cartoons, which focus on Bulgarian politicians and their actions, ‘Bulgaria’ usually takes a nonhuman shape, usually as a means of transport, be it a car or a train, a cart or a boat. This article, however, leaves aside the last group not only because of space constraints, but also for more substantial reasons related to a sharper distinction in the representation of the national community between the latter group and the former two. The article thus starts by investigating the deployment of Balkanism in political cartoons which rely on the Bai Ganieo metaphor and continues with narrations that bring forth the embodiment of Bulgaria as the ‘Everyman’.

By examining the entanglement between Balkanism and Bulgarian discourses of EU accession, the article makes a twofold contribution to IR. First, while the Balkanist discourse has received extended critical attention in historical, literary and cultural research, this article brings this discussion into the field of IR through an investigation of the interconnections between Balkanism and (Bulgarian) EU accession discourses. Second, while most studies within and beyond IR concentrate on the ‘Western’ or ‘European’ self, I focus on how the other responds to Western constructions imposed on it. The analysis shows that even though the Balkanist discourse cannot be denied an important role in Bulgarian EU accession discourses, alternatives are not in short supply. They range from indifference, irony and laugh-
ing at a presupposed inferiority in relation to ‘Europe’ to more overt challenges of the Balkanist power hierarchy.

**BAI GANIO SETS OUT FOR EUROPE**

![Image](https://example.com/image.png)

**Figure 1. Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 7 October 2004**

‘National politics and Eurointegration’

Kutuzov’s cartoon, reproduced in Figure 1, portrays a man who has just stripped off his peasant costume and is running towards an EU symbolized by stars. The destination is not very far away, and there are no apparent obstacles on the way to it. The man is chubby. We cannot see his face, and it is difficult to figure out his emotional state. Is he thrilled, worried, tired? That we do not know because the view is from behind and we do not see his face. He threw off his clothes as he was running; the last piece of clothing he discarded was his shirt, which still flies in the air. There is one interesting detail concerning his trousers: there are patches on both of the knees, and a third one is located on the top of the garment. Moreover, the lower end of his trousers seems slightly damaged. A poor peasant’s pair of worn out trousers!

The title of the article which the cartoon in Figure 1 accompanies, ‘National politics and Eurointegration’, suggests that we can interpret the cartoon as an enactment of the ‘EU accession is a journey’ metaphor, though this is surely not the only possible interpretation. Alternatively, Kutuzov’s cartoon could be understood as a metonymical expression of the then current emigration of Bulgarians to various Western European countries (which would possibly intensify after EU accession). Preceding Bulgaria and Romania’s accession, many EU governments were making decisions on how to deal with potential immigration from these countries, and the media in many places were forecasting ‘huge waves’ (note the metaphor) of Eastern European immigrants. In this context, especially somebody located in a Western
European country could have preferred the latter interpretation. Yet, Kutuzov’s cartoon was published in October 2004, following an important event in the accession process (the release of the European Commission’s Regular Report), and aims to tell a story to Bulgarian (and not Western) audiences. Of course, the point here is not to detect the ‘true’ meaning of the cartoon or the ‘correct’ interpretation (as it transpires, I do not believe there is such a thing), but rather to suggest what could be a preferred interpretation within a given context. The multiple readings of a cartoon, I argue, are virtually impossible to know for certain.

As mentioned before, the cartoon was published the day after the European Commission made public its 2004 regular report on Bulgaria’s progress towards accession. The negotiation chapters being closed in June, the report mentioned, for the first time, 1 January 2007 as the date of accession, conditional on ‘further progress in complying with the membership criteria’. The report also included a so-called ‘safeguard clause’ for postponing the accession until 2008 if reforms would not continue as envisaged. Considering the context of the publication of the cartoon in Figure 1, I propose reading it as an enactment of the ‘EU accession is a journey’ metaphor and ask what kind of political identity it articulates for Bulgaria and how it describes Bulgaria’s relationship with Europe. The EU is present here merely as the destination of the journey as this cartoon narrates Bulgaria. It represents the nation as a corpulent yet robust male peasant who abandoned his traditional costume in his quest for reaching the EU. It is a story of discontinuity, of change. It can be read as a story of the modernization that will happen through EU accession when (hopefully) new and better clothes will be put on. The Balkanist discourse is interestingly played out and complicated. The civilized-backward dichotomy, one of the main binaries on which the Balkanist discourse rests, is suggested by the weary peasant garments. In his pursuit of the EU, Bulgaria disposes himself of them. The centre-periphery dichotomy is also activated. Bulgaria is running in the direction of the EU. The alternative would be the EU approaching Bulgaria. The EU is the centre towards which motion is willingly oriented. Yet, unlike how the Balkanist discourse would have it, agency is ascribed here to Bulgaria.

Agency in Figure 1 is linked with nakedness or nudity. The representation of nude/naked bodies has been long documented by art historians and researchers of visual material. Some have differentiated between the naked and the nude and relegated one of the terms to the superior position and the other to the inferior. There is no consensus, however, as to which one is the positive term. In Clark’s formulation, for instance, the nude is ‘the body “clothed” in art, the body in representation’, and the naked represents ‘the body in advance of its aesthetic transformation’ and hence is the inferior term of the dichotomy. John Berger inverses the relationship and posits the naked in a superior position when he claims that the artist’s love metamorphoses the nude into a naked woman and prevents the voyeurism of the spec-
tator (Berger cited in Nead, 1992: 15). The distinction between the naked and the nude depends, of course, upon the theoretical possibility of ‘a physical body that is outside of representation and is then given representation, for better or for worse, through art’ (Nead, 1992: 16). As such, it ignores a whole body of (especially feminist) writing which has exposed the existence of ‘the body outside representation’ as fantasmic (see e.g. Butler, 1990, 1993, 1997). As the body is always a construction, a representation, I will not operate with the nude/naked distinction but will rather use the two terms interchangeably.

Kenneth Clark’s depiction of the ideal male body enshrines the Enlightenment values: ‘harmony, clarity and tranquil authority … calm, pitiless, and supremely confident’ (cited in Nead, 1992: 17). According to Clark, the muscle architecture of the male torso stands for power and control. In addition, the idealized male body (and in this particular respect it is no different than the idealized female body) requires for ‘the threat of the flesh to be remorselessly disciplined’ (ibid.: 18). Obviously, the excesses of flesh and curve disqualify the naked body in Figure 1 from the Western ideal of male beauty. Yet, deprived of clothes, the body in Figure 1 emerges as solidly built and healthy, and as such, it stands for vigorous, though primitive, masculine agency.

The cartoon in Figure 1, however, powerfully reminds of Bai Ganio’s journeys to Europe, and activating this frame brings an ironic twist in the interpretation of the metaphor. In what follows, the article will drift a bit from the discussion of the cartoons to introduce the literary character Bai Ganio and then some of the interpretations and uses of the ‘Bai Ganio’ metaphor in Bulgaria.

Bai Ganio is the main character of a series of short stories published at the end of the nineteenth century and authored by the Bulgarian writer Aleko Konstantinov (1863–1897), known in Bulgaria simply as Aleko. The stories were initially published in Zname and Misul, and in 1895 Konstantinov collected them in a book which bears the name of its main character and is subtitled ‘Incredible tales of a contemporary Bulgarian’. According to Todorova, Bai Ganio ‘is the one literary name and the book that every single Bulgarian knows and has read’ (1997: 39). But Bai Ganio is certainly much more than a character of fiction! Little known outside Bulgaria, Bai Ganio ‘stepped out of his literary world by acquiring a broad currency within society, and he evolved into a national symbol’, as Daskalov puts it (2001: 530). In the same vein but in slightly different terms, I suggest that Bai Ganio has became a popular metaphor within Bulgarian society and culture. As it is with metaphors in general, the Bai Ganio metaphor is complex and ambiguous and lends itself to various uses and interpretations across time or even, as we will shortly see in the context of cartoons, within the same period. The encounter with Bai Ganio in Figure 1 is not a singular one. We meet him time and again in Bulgarian cartoons.
We shall begin with a few words about the literary character Ganio Balkanski or Bai Ganio (bai is a form of address to an older person). Apparently, Aleko Konstantinov invented his character while visiting the Bulgarian pavilion at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. Here, in the back of the ‘Bulgarian Curiosities’ shop, he encountered an odd and unforgettable figure. His name was Ganio Somov, formally addressed as Bai Ganio. Konstantinov watched him as he sat in his oriental attire (shalvari-type trousers, sash and fez) on a box covered with a kilim rug. Aligned in front of him were small bottles filled with tereshe—a cheap imitation of the valued Bulgarian rose oil. He puffed away at his cigarette, unable to understand or answer visitors’ questions (Neuburger, 2006: 439–440). Ganio Somov captured Aleko’s imagination and served as the inspiration for his famous character Ganio Balkanski or Bai Ganio. The change of name cannot go unnoticed. ‘Somov’ is replaced with ‘Balkanski’, which is the adjectival form of the Bulgarian word for ‘Balkan’, as he would be a representative of the Balkans and not just an ordinary Bulgarian.

Bai Ganio, the literary character, is a Bulgarian trader of rose oil (a traditional Bulgarian merchandise) who travels through ‘Europe’ to sell his products. His physical appearance is carefully detailed. His very first action, at the beginning of the book or of the first feuilleton, is to ‘remove the Turkish coat from his shoulders’ and don a ‘Belgian mantle’ (Konstantinov, 1895a, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 117). Following his change of attire, ‘everybody said that Bai Ganio was already completely European’ (ibid.). Bai Ganio leaves behind his peasant costume and puts on a ‘European’ coat and suit. Yet, he keeps his Bulgarian kalpak (brimless sheepskin hat, fez-like in appearance) and woollen Bulgarian undergarments. In addition, he carries saddlebag-like woollen bags for his luggage. An odd combination of European and Bulgarian garments and accessories! It is worth quoting at length the author’s description of his hero:

A wide shouldered, dark-eyed, dark-haired and moreover dark-skinned gentleman with a twirled moustache, high cheekbones, shaven, bristling beard, dressed in (what would you think?) a frock coat, unbuttoned; under his vest a two or three inch wide red belt and with a white (in a Bulgarian sense white) shirt without collar, with a small cocked red fur cap, high boots and a walking stick under his arm. A young man: He is, perhaps, at the most thirty years old. (Konstantinov, 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 712)

Note the insistence on darkness (of the eyes, hair and, moreover, the skin)! It is also suggested that the shirt is not perfectly clean, yet this is not a problem for Bai Ganio because, as the author implies, Bulgarian standards for cleanliness are not too high anyway (the shirt is white only in a ‘Bulgarian sense’). Throughout the book, we are offered other piquant details concerning Bai Ganio’s physical presence. His strong
bodily odour, sweat and irregular personal hygiene are frequently mentioned: his hands are sweaty, his legs are dirty and ‘From afar he emits a sour odor’ (Konstantinov, 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 713). Bai Ganio carries vials of delightfully scented rose oil, yet, ironically, he reeks of ‘sweat and garlic’ (Petko Totev cited in Neuburger, 2006). In the olfactory encounter with Europe, Bai Ganio stands as the stinky Bulgarian who, however, sells the clean and perfumed Europeans part of the means to become that way. As Mary Neuburger (2006: 443) observes, in the nineteenth century, when the literary character was born, bathing began to become a standard among the middle classes in the US and many parts of Europe. Being modern required conforming to an olfactory norm, and hygiene and odour became part of Europe’s encounter with the world. Obviously, Bai Ganio had not adopted European practices of hygiene. In the European world of hygiene, his stench marked him as different. Among Bulgarians, though, he was at home since ‘with uncleanness one cannot surprise the Bulgarians’ (Konstantinov, 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 715).

Smell and dirt had long been a European trope of Balkan backwardness (Neuburger 2006: 443), and in Aleko Konstantinov’s stories, it informs Bulgarian students’ descriptions of Bai Ganio.

His actions, just like his physical appearance and odour, tell about Bai Ganio’s oddness in the European world. His behaviour seems to always bring him into ridiculous and absurd situations which trigger the astonishment or derision of the locals and his fellow compatriot travellers. These young men, who are mostly Bulgarian students abroad, tend to be amused but also deeply humiliated by the actions of Bai Ganio which they witness. The stories are actually narrated by these young educated Bulgarians, each of them telling one episode of his encounters with Bai Ganio. We observe him in a public bath, insisting on keeping his merchandise under supervision (for fear that otherwise it would be stolen) and breaking the conventions by jumping and swimming (‘the Sailor’ and ‘the Steamer’, as he proudly makes clear) in the small pool, splashing water on the heads of everybody else around him. In another episode we see him in a candy shop insulting the cashier lady by pinching her and twisting her arm. As if these incidents were not enough, in the same episode he continues by embarrassing his compatriot who invited him to the Vienna Opera and provokes the laughter of the entire theatre by completely ignoring the etiquette and making himself comfortable for the show (he strips to his shirt sleeves and unbuttons his vest). From one episode to another, we learn more and more about Bai Ganio’s character. He is opportunistic – he often pretends to be naïve or stupid to take advantage of others –, greedy and superficial, yet of an exceptional vitality.

Bai Ganio’s fellow countrymen, who measure his behaviour against the European norms of the time, are amused but also truly embarrassed by his actions. Yet Bai Ganio does not seem to care. To the contrary! He is totally and overtly proud of
himself. He trusts his masculinity and thinks of himself as a potential Don Juan. He has no doubts concerning his intelligence either: in Vienna, at the baths, unable to find a nail on which to hang his precious vials of oil to keep them under supervision (all properties should have been left in the dressing room), he infuriatedly declares: ‘What a stupid business, these Germans, it never enters their head to stick a nail in the wall – and they say that we are stupid!’ (Konstantinov, 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 714). Proud of himself, he does not hesitate to affirm his Bulgarian nationality, as in the baths scene when:

[Bai Ganio] began to heroically strike his hairy breast and shout triumphantly: ‘Bulgar! Bulgaaaaaaaar!’ and he struck his breast even harder.

The proud tone with which he expressed this recommendation expressed much: That tone said, ‘Here he is, do you see him, a Bulgarian! This is he, such is he! And you’ve only heard him, Slivnishki hero, Balkan genius! Here he is in front of you, in toto, from head to toe, in the raw! See what wonders he is empowered to do. And not only that. Aha, and what other deeds is he yet capable of doing! Bulgarians are stupid, ah? You gyps and farmers!’ (Konstantinov, 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 715)

Bai Ganio’s very positive image of himself as Bulgarian is accompanied by a negative opinion of the Europeans, whom he completely distrusts. He takes the advice of one of the Bulgarian students to deposit the expensive vials of rose oil in a hotel safekeeping deposit as a proof of the student’s deep naiveté. In his opinion, the only completely safe place is his vest, away from the hands and noses of foreigners. As for the European etiquette and high culture, Bai Ganio could not care less! When, following his misbehaviour, the usher of the theatre invites him to leave, Bai Ganio ‘gaze[s] at him in amazement and answer[s] with only a sign. … “I wonder who you’re trying to scare?”’ (Konstantinov, 1895b, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 554). And when his compatriot questions his lack of interest concerning the beautiful town of Vienna, Bai Ganio answers:

Why should I be looking at Vienna? A town is a town! Houses, people, pomp. And no matter where you go, it’s always ‘gut morgen’ and everyone wants money. Why should we give our money to these Germans? We also have someone to use it. (Konstantinov, 1895a, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 120)

Through Bai Ganio, Bulgarians could see themselves reflected in the European mirror – odd though partly European attire, unpolished manners – and smell themselves with a European nose: ‘European but not quite!’, as Aleko would have it (Todorova, 1997: 41).
However, the standard against which Bai Ganio is measured, though called ‘European’, is not set from outside, but rather from inside the Bulgarian society. It is the standard held by a group of his own countrymen, though certainly informed by Western distinctions between ‘Europe’ and ‘the East’ or ‘the Balkans’.

While in the first part of the book, Bai Ganio Sets Out for Europe, he is depicted as a comic, colourful character, yet always on the lookout for some personal advantage, in another part written at a later period, Bai Ganio Returns from Europe, he is set in his native Bulgaria and turns into a completely brutal and repulsive personage without any moral scruple. From one episode to another, he takes on a variety of detestable roles. For instance, he changes his party affiliation, always favouring the party in power, in search of personal benefits. In other episodes, he appears as a journalist ready to sell anything to anybody or as a head of a group who does not refrain from intimidation and assault of voters in order to secure the election of a parliamentary candidate (Daskalov, 2001: 531). In this part of the book, humour and irony are replaced by bitter satire and moral indignation.

Bai Ganio certainly amused Bulgarians but also invited them to self-reflection. Since the publication of the book, debates about the meaning of Bai Ganio arose. Was he a metaphor for the whole nation or perhaps for the entire region of the Balkans (as his surname, ‘Balkanski’, would suggest)? Or did he rather stand for a particular social type within the Bulgarian society, for instance, the nouveaux riches? Roumen Daskalov (2001) warns us that the mission of searching for a ‘true’ interpretation of Bai Ganio is impossible and even misleading. He synthesizes the various interpretations of Bai Ganio from the publication of the book to the present day and argues convincingly that these interpretations function as a mirror of the modern Bulgarian society reflecting its major problems and concerns. According to Daskalov, the interpretation of Bai Ganio in ‘national’ terms prevailed before the communist period (pre-1944) whereas its interpretation in ‘social’ terms dominated during the communist times.19

In the post communist period, the Bai Ganio metaphor has flourished. Bai Ganio was born in a modernizing Bulgaria which was gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire and was overtly hesitant in its positioning in relation to ‘Europe’. It is therefore not a surprise that the metaphor came into prominent use in the post-communist period marked by somehow similar uncertainties and a re-emergent discourse on Europe. We encounter it in films, cartoons and novels. Ivan Nichev directed two films based on Aleko Konstantinov’s stories – Bai Ganio (1990) and Bai Ganio on His Way to Europe (1991) – both starring the famous Bulgarian comedian Georgi Kaloyanchev as the main character.20 In addition, we come across Bai Ganio in the cartoons drawn by the famous Bulgarian caricaturist Todor Tsonev in the beginning of the 1990s21 and also as the main character in stories authored by Iordan Popov, Krüstiu Krüstev and Mikhail Veshim (Daskalov, 2001: 549, n. 49).
Concerning the material under analysis in this study, we meet Bai Ganio in several cartoons drawn by Ivan Kutuzov and published in Dnevnik.

Both the social and the national interpretations can be encountered in the post-communist period. The social interpretation is in place whenever the name Bai Ganio is applied to the ‘nouveaux riches who have attained their wealth through fraud and crude force and who often have a scanty education’ (Daskalov, 2001: 548), to ‘former sportsmen and secret police agents who have become “businessmen”’, to ‘populist politicians’, to ‘millionaires who made money by crooked means’, to ‘fraudulent Bulgarians abroad, and so on’ (ibid.: 549, n. 49). In this case, the metaphor functions as a way of condemning social groups and has a strong negative meaning. In any case, calling somebody ‘Bai Ganio’ is considered an insult. The national use and interpretation, in turn, implies that Bai Ganio is associated with the entire Bulgarian population. When the metaphor is employed to refer to a national ‘us’, its meaning is much more ambiguous. In this case, the metaphor has both positive and negative implications – but this time it is a nuanced negativity.

One mixture that is particularly pernicious rests on a set of overlapping dichotomies (‘European’–‘Bulgarian’, ‘civilized’–‘barbaric’, ‘developed’–‘backward’, ‘high culture’–‘low culture’) arranged in such a way that ‘European’ becomes fused with ‘civilized’, ‘developed’ and ‘high culture’ and ‘Bulgarian’ with ‘barbaric’, ‘backward’ and ‘low culture’. Such a use of the Bai Ganio metaphor looks like a ‘gesture of despair or resignation’ (ibid.: 545), bitter self-derision and ‘shameful national identification’ (Kiossev cited in Daskalov, 2001: 547, n. 44) – a total succumbing to Balkanism, you might think. Yet, sensing the self-irony that often subtly accompanies the metaphor flips this interpretation on its head. Indeed, the Bai Ganio metaphor can also function as a therapy through laughter, a strategy of coping with the stigma imposed from the outside. By collectively laughing at it, Bulgarians could complicate the workings of the Balkanist discourse, turn it into a milder form or perhaps escape it altogether. However, as Meshekov – himself a strong believer in the purifying and curative power of laughing at oneself – carefully noted, for the therapy to attain its cathartic effect, ‘more self-assurance and less of an inferiority complex’ is required (cited in Daskalov, 2001: 547). Without self-assurance, the therapy is doomed to fail.

In addition to rehabilitation through self-irony, there have been several other uses and interpretations of the Bai Ganio metaphor that propose a positive assessment of the character. One of these interpretations insists on the historical circumstances of Bai Ganio behaviour and argues that it was crucial for the survival of the Bulgarian nation during centuries of Ottoman rule. This interpretation admits that Bai Ganio is an opportunist, yet a vigorous and energetic one, and underscores the vital role that such a comportment played in the survival of the nation under conditions of foreign rule. This interpretation maintains that acting differently was simply impossible in those conditions (Gesemann cited in Daskalov, 2001: 534). Another positive ap-
praisal of the character derives from the notion of ‘wounded national pride’ and lays its foundations on romantic nationalism. Such a position does not question Bai Ganio’s distrust of Europeans. Why would he trust them, after all, when they committed great injustices against the Bulgarians? And why would Bai Ganio respect European civilization? Who are they to teach Bulgarians how to live? While conceding the character’s flaws, this interpretation nevertheless elevates Bai Ganio to the position of a dramatic, perhaps even tragic hero (see Ralchev in Daskalov, 2001: 534) and simultaneously downgrades the Europeanized Bulgarian students and the Europeans themselves.

Additionally, Bai Ganio figures positively in contemporary anecdotes and funny stories. I rely here on Daskalov’s appreciation of recent anecdotes scattered through Bulgarian humour publications (published in Bulgarian and obviously addressing a Bulgarian audience). According to him, in these anecdotes, Bai Ganio is:

synonymous with ‘the Bulgarian’ and meets representatives of other nationalities in various challenging situations, such as a contest or trial (also love contests) organized by some famous political figure or by God himself. In such encounters, Bai Ganio always triumphs over his adversaries – the ‘effeminate’ French, the technically better equipped Germans, or the earnest Americans – by some rough stratagem or by a simple but effective trick, a more positive reinterpretation of the character’s original combination of machismo and cunning. What seems gratifying to the audience is that a rough ‘Bulgarian’ may still triumph against all odds, and additional fun is derived from engaging popular images of other nations. (Daskalov, 2001: 535)

A positive appraisal of the character occurred also in the staging of a Bai Ganio play in which the manners of the civilized Europeans seemed formal and superficial whereas Bai Ganio, played by the Bulgarian actor Georgi Kaloianchev, offered a more natural, relaxed impression (cf. Daskalov, 2001: 536, n. 17).

In one of his positive renditions, Bai Ganio comes close to another popular Bulgarian character, Hitar Petar – Peter the Sly, in translation. Unlike Bai Ganio, who is only rarely used with positive connotations, Hitar Petar is typically regarded as a positive figure and a hero of the common people. As a character, Hitar Petar preceded Bai Ganio, being born in the popular imagination during the 16th–17th century, when Bulgaria was still under Ottoman rule. Hitar Petar figures in Bulgarian folktales and anecdotes as a poor villager who possesses remarkable slyness and wit. He is the antagonist of either Nasreddin, who personifies the ‘typical Ottoman’, or of the local rich nobles, clerics or money lenders, against whom he always triumphs thanks to his brightness and wit. In addition, Hitar Petar is brave and kind-hearted, which are qualities that make him dear to the hearts of the common people.
Hitar Petar had been a common appearance during the twentieth century in Bulgaria. A number of novelists and musicians (such as Vesselin Stoyanov) adapted some of the stories about Hitar Petar into their works. Remarkable is also the finding that the 1960 film bearing the name of this character (directed by Stefan Surchadzhiev) is reported to be the most watched Bulgarian film with more than 6 million movie-goers, which is a notable figure in a country of just over 8 million people (Petrova, 2006). Testifying to the popularity of Hitar Petar is also a 1981 sculpture by Georgi Chapkunov presently exhibited in the Park of Laughter at the Gabrovo House of Humour and Satire. Here, Hitar Petar’s statue is displayed in the company of famous characters such as Charlie Chaplin, Don Quijote and Sancho Panza.

Hitar Petar is usually represented as a slender (a mark of his poverty) man wearing a peasant costume and riding a donkey. In spite of the obvious physical differences between Hitar Petar and Bai Ganio, in present day Bulgaria, the two characters are occasionally conflated as in one episode of Slavi Trifonov’s popular show where Hitar Petar’s appearance – as a corpulent man in a traditional Bulgarian costume with a wide belt under his vest and a mantle donned on his shoulders – is the result of a hybridization between Bai Ganio and Hitar Petar’s physical traits. This blending of features makes it difficult or even impossible to distinguish between the two popular figures in the context of political cartoons, which are, after all, mainly visual artefacts. Therefore, this article does not operate with a strict differentiation between Bai Ganio and Hitar Petar. Rather, it regards the latter as a subcategory of the Bai Ganio metaphor. It should be noted, however, that a resemblance to Hitar Petar points towards a positive appraisal of the metaphor.

Interpretations and uses of the Bai Ganio metaphor exhibit significant caveats, shifts and even contradictions. In Ivan Kutuzov’s cartoons, Bai Ganio takes on a multiplicity of roles in conceptualizing or rather making visible the nation or particular social groups within the Bulgarian society. It is the encounter with the EU or ‘Europe’ in the accession discourses that invites the Bai Ganio metaphor. Familiarity with Bai Ganio induces us to associate the personage in Figure 1 with this memorable character. The very first action of Aleko Konstantinov’s hero, in the beginning of the book, is to change from his peasant costume to European clothes. Similarly, in Kutuzov’s drawing, the man strips off the peasant dress as he runs towards the EU. Moreover, he is ‘wide-shouldered’ and ‘dark-haired’, fitting Konstantinov’s description of Bai Ganio. Activating the ‘Bai Ganio’ metaphor brings an ironic twist in the interpretation of the ‘EU accession is a journey’ metaphor and provides closure to the story which the cartoon leaves open. We know that Bai Ganio exchanged his peasant dress for European clothes, yet this action brought about only a superficial transformation and not a complete metamorphosis. European costume on, Bai Ganio continued to act as Bai Ganio! His identity was left un-
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altered. The tale of Europeanization through the negation of Balkanness is twisted and laughed at! To sum up, I suggest that even though at first sight the cartoon in Figure 1 invites the story of Westernization, the association of the stripping peasant with Bai Ganio potentially subverts it.

Figure 2 illustrates another encounter with Bai Ganio. The context of the cartoon is the approval by the Bulgarian Parliament of a set of amendments to the Bulgarian constitution related to Bulgaria’s future membership of the EU and including provisions regarding ownership of land by foreigners. In terms of one of the amendments, EU citizens and EU companies are allowed to acquire ownership of land in Bulgaria. The title of the article, ‘European ships in Bulgarian territorial waters’, is itself metaphorical and suggestive of a potential threat. This time around, it is the EU (‘the European ships’) that is moving towards Bulgaria, and the move is received with suspicion.

Figure 2. Ivan Kutuzov in Dnevnik, 20 February 2005
‘European ships in Bulgarian territorial waters’

The cartoon accompanying the article also relies on the ‘motion’ metaphor. It depicts a man with dark hair and a dark moustache wearing a wide belt and a mantle on his shoulders. He certainly resembles Bai Ganio. Interestingly, in this cartoon, Bai Ganio is not moving towards the EU. To the contrary, he seems to be gathering all his forces to pull the Bulgarian flag away from the EU magnet that clings to it. The expression on his face shows determination. We can almost hear Bai Ganio shouting proudly, as in the bath scene, ‘Bulgar! Bulgaaaaaar!’ The EU magnet is bigger than Bai Ganio, yet it seems to lean slightly in the direction in which Bai Ganio pulls the flag. Will he succeed? The story remains, once more, unfinished. I suggest an interpretation of the cartoon in Figure 2 in national terms. It narrates Bulgaria as an energetic and vigorous Bai Ganio, determined to resist the attraction of the EU. No trace of the Europeanization tale here! Through Bai Ganio,
Bulgaria is represented as being firm in its position, resisting the appeal of the centre. Yet, in this case too, the argument could not have been made in the absence of the oppositional binaries which characterize the Balkanist discourse. The imagery of Kutuzov’s cartoon draws from Balkanism but ultimately subverts it by challenging the superior position of the EU/Europe. Embodied by Bai Ganio, Bulgarian masculinity emerges as different from but not inferior to the ideal Western masculinity.

The cartoon in Figure 3 was published together with an article titled ‘Iberian lessons’ before the 25 October 2005 release of the European Commission report on Bulgaria’s readiness to join the EU. The two men caricatured here seem to be Don Quijote and his companion Sancho Panza. Don Quijote’s horse Rocinante jumps effortlessly through the EU ring, thereby giving an example or a lesson, if you will, to Sancho Panza on how to execute the move. Sancho Panza, on his donkey Rucio, appreciates the task as much more difficult. The donkey is hesitant, and Sancho seems hesitant as well. One small detail in the representation of Sancho Panza puts his identity into doubt. Instead of a cap, he wears a traditional Bulgarian hat (made of sheepskin and without a brim). Once his identity is questioned, the similarities between this Sancho Panza and Bai Ganio become apparent. With his moustache, white shirt, vest, and saddle bags, this Sancho Panza can easily be Bai Ganio! Hence, interpreting Don Quijote as a textual embodiment of Spain and Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio as Bulgaria would not appear too far-fetched.

Bai Ganio is reduced here to a squat Sancho Panza. ‘Dwarfing’ or diminishment, as Janis Edwards has argued, is a common strategy in cartoons and acts on two levels: on the first level, it operates a reduction in physical stature, and on the second level, it trivializes the character and capabilities of the one so diminished (Ed-
wards, 1997: 81–91). In the cartoon in Figure 1, Bai Ganio-Sancho Panza is clearly diminished in relation to Don Quijote. The contrast between the tall, thin, fancy Quijote on his Rocinante and the fat, short, simple Bai Ganio-Sancho Panza riding the donkey works obviously in favour of the former. Jumping through the ring, which translates metaphorically into EU accession, was easy for Don Quijote – Spain, who had the means, i.e. Rocinante, but seems rather complicated for Sancho Panza – Bai Ganio – Bulgaria, who does not have similar capacities. The cartoon could thus be interpreted negatively as questioning Bulgaria’s capabilities in the EU accession process. Bulgaria is inferior to other former EU candidates, here represented by Spain, and should learn from them. Yet, provided that it learns the (jumping) lesson, Bulgaria can become an EU member! The cartoon in Figure 3 constitutes a reiteration of Balkanist dichotomies – that could be the summary of my initial interpretation of the drawing. Embodied by Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio, Bulgaria’s gender is masculine, yet by recourse to dwarfing and allusions of incapacity, masculinity is ridiculed.

Two elements, however, provide grounds for challenging this line of interpretation. One of them concerns the resemblance between Kutuzov’s Sancho Panza and the popular Bulgarian figure Hitar Petar, who is generally represented as riding on his donkey. As mentioned earlier, this article regards Hitar Petar as a subcategory of the Bai Ganio metaphor but nevertheless as a subcategory that points towards a positive assessment of the metaphor. After all, Hitar Petar always managed to win over his adversaries thanks to his brightness and wit. A deeper familiarity with Cervantes’s story then provides another ground for subverting the negative interpretation of the cartoon in Figure 3. In Cervantes’s novel, Sancho Panza does not share Don Quijote’s delusional ‘enchantment’ (at least not until late in the novel). He is ever-faithful to his master, following Don Quijote despite being sometimes puzzled by his actions, and manages to get him out of several problematic situations. In Kutuzov’s cartoon in Figure 3, Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio is hesitant to follow Don Quijote in jumping through the EU ring, but his action, or rather lack of action, can alternatively be interpreted as appropriate caution. Who knows what aventura lies on the other side of the ring? What kind of troubles will Don Quijote’s fantasies bring them into this time around? Translating this reading into EU accession terms suggests that the EU project belongs to the world of fantasy and portrays Bulgaria as appropriately sceptical towards EU accession. Iberian lessons should not be hastily followed – that is the message that transpires from the cartoon when we follow this line of interpretation. Lack of action from Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio/Hitar Petar-Bulgaria translates therefore not into incapacity but into appreciable prudence and reflection. In this construction, masculinity equals rationality and translates into a subversion of Balkanism. This interpretation, however, requires deeper familiarity with Cervantes’ novel, especially concerning the
relationship between Don Quijote and Sancho Panza, and a recognition of the positive Bulgarian figure Hitar Petar. It is impossible to tell which one of the two mutually contradicting readings proposed here a particular reader would ultimately prefer. What can be affirmed with more confidence, however, is that neither one of them is indifferent to Balkanism.

Figure 4. Ivan Kutuzov in Dnevnik, 14 April 2005
‘About Pax Europeana’

In the drawing in Figure 4, the means of transport used by the Balkan people to get to ‘Europe’ is a boat. The traditional dress (a fez and shalvari-type trousers) of the last man to jump into the boat indicates that he is Turkish, but the nationalities of most of the other men in the boat are almost impossible to decode. Visual elements linked to traditional clothing, especially hats, and idiosyncratic elements concerning the cartoonist’s style of drawing Bulgarian and Romanian men would suggest that a Romanian and a Bulgarian have also joined the EU-Balkans boat to Europe. The Romanian man sits on the left-hand side of the boat and wears a lightly coloured, pointed, brimless sheepskin hat. His face is distorted, and his right hand is raised in the air with the fist clenched. The Bulgarian sits beside him. He wears a black sheepskin hat resembling a fez. This interpretation is, however, highly debatable, as in each country, there are large variations of traditional costumes, including the shapes and colours of hats, from one region to another. Moreover, the other travellers’ nationalities are not made clearly recognizable. Taking into consideration the stereotypical facial features of the participants in the journey – i.e. dark hair, moustaches, big noses – and the absence of obvious national markers, I propose reading the cartoon as an enactment of the Bai Ganio metaphor. I hence suggest that the EU-Balkans boat is populated by a number of Bai Gani. Unlike the previous cartoons, where Bai Ganio symbolized Bulgaria, in the cartoon in Figure 4, Bai Ganio-in-plural stands as a metaphor for the whole region of the Balkans.
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The atmosphere in the boat is excited – mouths are open and hands are raised, fists are shaken. No doubt is placed on the destination of the vessel, which is clearly indicated by the sign ‘Europa’. But this only means that the Balkans are not part of ‘Europe’. They are merely going towards ‘Europe’, not by ships or trains or any other modern means of transport, but by boat. And yet there is something more to this cartoon, for ironically, nobody is rowing and the boat is actually sitting on rocks, so how could it move at all?! And even if the boat were on water, the outcome might not be that different: the overcrowded boat could easily sink. Closer attention to details reveals also the aridity of the land; grass is scarce around the boat. Yet, in the horizon, the ‘Europa’ sign is surrounded by grass. We have here a whole chain of visual elements constructing a complex metaphorical argument.

Through the metaphor of an impeded journey, the cartoon in Figure 4 ridicules the Balkans’ potential integration in Europe. The Balkan people are represented as a crowd of Bai Ganiós in a boat which sits on rocks. In these conditions, the possibility of getting closer to Europe is, to say the least, bleak! Europe is the object of desire, the destination of the journey. However, unlike the other cartoons discussed so far, the cartoon in Figure 4 tells us something more about Europe: it is the place where the grass grows. The flock of Bai Ganiós intend to leave the arid land of the Balkans in search of Europe’s prosperity. The cartoon relies on and reiterates Balkanist oppositional binaries. The Balkans’ embodiment is male, but fantasies and expectations related to Western masculinity remain unfulfilled, for these male bodies are particularly marked as traditional (as opposed to modern) through their clothing and as hyper-emotional (as opposed to rational) by their excitement. In addition, the impeded journey metaphor questions the capabilities of these bodies to attain their goals and arrive at their destination.

Closer attention to the context of the publication of the cartoon, however, could provide a point of departure for an alternative interpretation. It was published in Dnevnik on the day following the approval by the European Parliament of the Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania, which was to be signed later in the month in Luxembourg. Headlines such as ‘Agonizing 15-hour-long negotiations on the brink of a heart attack’ or ‘Europe admitted us after a dramatic turn’ splashed the front pages of Bulgarian newspapers on the day following the tensions over the vote in Strasbourg.24 If the cartoon is interpreted as a collective laughing at the image of Balkans constructed from the outside (here in relation to the European Parliament’s debate on Bulgaria and Romania’s EU accession), then the workings of the Balkanist discourse are potentially undermined. However, as Meshekov thoughtfully pointed out, for laughter to be curative, self-assurance is a prerequisite. A lack of self-confidence forecloses access to a more positive interpretation of the cartoon and leaves the way open to self-deprecation.
THE ‘EVERYMAN’ ON THE ROAD TO EUROPE

A second large group of cartoons portrays the Bulgarian community as a kind of ‘Everyman’. According to Duus, the representation of the nation as the ‘Everyman’ or ‘Everywoman’ facilitates ‘the audience’s sense of identity with the nation in a way that a standard icon like Uncle Sam does not’ (Duus, 2001: 986).

Like the cartoon in Figure 4, the cartoon in Figure 5 was published on the 14th of April, the day after the European Parliament approved, after a heated debate, the accession treaty of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. Both cartoons activate the motion metaphor, yet they articulate very different metaphorical stories. Racho Rachev’s cartoon in Trud pictures a person jumping. The facial features are roughly drawn, but other physical traits (i.e. big hands, solid legs) and elements of clothing (i.e. trousers, a hat) signify the masculine gender of the personage. The verbal component of the cartoon relies on a play of words: ‘Europa!’ (‘Europe!’) is divided into ‘Eur’ and ‘opa!’ (‘opa!’ is an exclamation that accompanies jumping). From this composition of verbal, pictorial and contextual elements emerges the idea of the approval of the accession treaty by the European Parliament as a big step (or rather a jump) forward for Bulgaria. Unlike the previous cartoons, which rely on the Bai Ganio metaphor, the drawing in Figure 5 tells its story by leaving out the familiar dichotomies of the Balkanist discourse (i.e. ‘civilized’ – ‘primitive’, ‘affluent’ – ‘poor’). In addition, in Figure 5, masculinity is not accompanied by the compensatory inferiorities derived from the Balkanist rhetoric. Summing up, I suggest that Rachev’s narration of Bulgaria in Figure 5 is indifferent to Balkanism. The cartoons in Figure 6 and 7 work in similar ways. They represent the national community through a hybrid: the ‘Everyman’-plus-car.

**Figure 5.** Racho Rachev in Trud, 14 April 2005
In Figure 6, the ‘Everyman’ is in a car checking a traffic sign. The sign shows that the main road straight ahead leads to Europe and a secondary road to the right leads to elections. He has to choose between ‘Europe’ and ‘vote’ and cannot have both at once. The ‘Everyman’ appreciates that the next move will be a turn to the right, which, according to the traffic sign, means going to the polls. The cartoon was published on the 4th of August 2005, about a month after the parliamentary elections held on the 25th of June. The elections were followed by a period of intense political bargaining and coalition talks among the coalitions and parties that received most of the votes, namely the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) dominated Coalition for Bulgaria, the National Movement Simeon II (NMSII) and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). On the 28th of July, when the Parliament elected BSP leader
Sergei Stanishev as Prime Minister, the negotiations seemed to have come to an end. Yet, somewhat unexpectedly, several hours later, the Parliament did not approve Stanishev’s proposed cabinet. In the beginning of August, when the cartoon in Figure 6 was published, the new cabinet of Bulgaria was still uncertain, and early elections seemed very likely. At the same time, deadlines on adopting laws and completing reforms related to the future membership of the EU were pressing. The drawing in Figure 6 suggests that early elections will be organized and that this action will divert the ‘Everyman’-Bulgaria from his path to Europe. Even though it distinguishes between Bulgaria and Europe, the narration in Figure 6 does not enact the Balkanist vocabulary in articulating its story. Furthermore, agency is ascribed to the hybrid ‘Everyman’-plus-car; it is up to the ‘Everyman’ to decide whether to take the right turn or not, whether to increase the speed or not, or even whether to abandon the journey altogether. As with the cartoon in Figure 5, in the absence of the attributes of backwardness, hyper-masculinity or traditional femininity that derive from Balkanism, in this caricature, masculinity does not mark Bulgaria as inferior to Europe.

Hristo Komarnitzki’s cartoon (Figure 7) in Sega picturing the ‘Everyman’ at a petrol station also dates from the same period of heated political negotiations for forming a new cabinet. The cartoon portrays a man who holds the nozzle to fill the tank of his car. He is moustached, dark-haired and wears a light blue shirt, dark brown trousers and brown shoes. His clothing is ordinary, but it is in good condition and so is the car: its colour is bright red, and its tyres are properly inflated. The matriculation number on the car reads ‘Bulgaria’. The petrol pump features the inscription ‘Europe’ in English spelling against a blue background. The yellow price (or amount) indicator on the pump shows that the filling has already exceeded 2007 but has not yet reached 2008. The man looks at the indicator. His emotional state is difficult to appreciate, but obviously, he is not cheerful. Let us now attempt a metaphorical translation by placing the cartoon in the context of difficult and prolonged political negotiations. In the absence of a governing Collation, the adoption of laws required for EU accession was brought to a halt. The red colour of the car can be easily linked to the BSP’s symbol, the red rose, just as the colours on the petrol pump remind of the yellow stars on a blue background of the EU flag. Bulgaria (man-plus-car) is in good shape, yet the cartoon implies that it is unlikely that it will join the EU/Europe in 2007. The negative prognosis for accession, however, is articulated in the absence of the pejorative connotations typical of Balkanism.

Elements of the Balkanist discourse return in the cartoon in Figure 8, which pictures the ‘Everyman’ setting out for Europe. His only piece of luggage is a bundle on a stick. Behind him, four oversized bullets lie on the ground. The ‘Everyman’ looks at them and reflects that ‘Few of us will get there’. The cartoon was published shortly after Bulgarian businessman Emil Kyulev was shot dead in the centre of Sofia while...
travelling in his luxurious car. Kyulev was one of the richest Bulgarians, a banker and an owner of an insurance company. It was suspected that the murder was generated by his attempt to differentiate himself from Bulgaria’s shady circles. According to the Bulgarian English-language weekly Sofia Echo, his murder was the eighth since the formation of Bulgaria’s new government.

Figure 8. Rachko Rachev in Trud, 27 October 2005
Caption translation: Few of us will get there.

The date of the murder coincided with the official presentation of the European Commission report on Bulgaria’s (and Romania’s) progress towards accession. Even though the 2005 report was expected to settle the accession date, it did not make a final assessment. Instead, the Commission decided to continue its ‘intensive monitoring’ of ‘Bulgaria’s and Romania’s preparation’, ‘to review the situation’ in spring 2006 and ‘if needed, to postpone accession by one year’ and make use of ‘other available safeguards’. It also expressed the ‘hope’ that ‘steps undertaken by both countries will lead’ the Commission to ‘conclude that such a recommendation’ was not ‘necessary’. Concerning Bulgaria, it was also mentioned that it has ‘lost the momentum somewhat after the conclusion of the negotiations in summer 2004’ and ‘has worked energetically to make up for lost time after the parliamentary elections of June 2005’

In this context, the murder of the Bulgarian businessman was interpreted as an illustration of Bulgaria’s failure to deal with organized crime. The cartoon in Figure 8 reiterates this interpretation in an overtone of bitter sarcasm. To reach ‘Europe’, one has to first survive locally. Bulgaria is marked in this narrative as an unattractive and moreover dangerous place that people would be glad to escape, a description which resonates with the Balkanist discourse.

The cartoon in Figure 9, published in the beginning of March 2005, continues in the same tone.
The title of the article which the cartoon in Figure 9 accompanies tells us something about a dispute between Montenegro and Serbia, yet the cartoon neglects the topic and articulates on its own a story about Bulgaria and the EU. Bulgaria is again represented by the ‘Everyman’, who now stands nude in front of a rainbow. The only piece of luggage he carries is a bundle with the inscription ‘BG’ on a stick. Ironically, he is wearing slippers while otherwise stark naked. His position, slightly crouched with his hand covering his genital area, invites a sexual narrative.

As feminist art historians have noticed, the difference between the male and female nude is that whereas the female usually covers her breasts or genital area, the male covers nothing. The idealized female nude was represented since antiquity in the form of *Venus Pudica*, the female figure covering her genital area with her hand (Salomon, 1996: 73; Valenius, 2004: 153–154). Shielding the genitals and/or breasts from the viewer’s eyes was and continues to be a favourite fashioning of the female nude in the art of the Western world. As Nanette Salomon puts it:

> The endemic presence of this pose has become so normalized, so ‘natural’, that it is made invisible or transparent. If the female pudica is said to signify anything at all, it is the embodiment of western ‘high’ aesthetics or artfulness. (1996: 70)

It is important to note the gender differentiation vis-à-vis the artistic nude. Whereas for the female nude the hands-to-genitals gesture is an enduring attribute, for men the *pudica* gesture is a momentary reaction to a specific situation. Depicting the male nude as *pudica* challenges his masculinity, feminizes him and accentuates his vulnerability. Referring in particular to medieval painting, Salomon notes that the
hand-to-genitals pose is a form of deep humiliation for a man. She remarks the presence of the *pudica* gesture for both a man and a woman in a painting depicting Adam and Eve as they flee paradise in humiliation and shame (1996: 77). In Figure 9, Bulgaria’s embodiment is male, yet the *pudica* pose places the male body in a position of shame and vulnerability. In addition, the chubby unclothed body falls short of Western expectations regarding the ideal: requirements of athletic musculature, proportions or youthfulness are not met.

Having acknowledged the gender differentiation of the artistic naked body, the next step is to examine the situation which brought about the ‘Everyman’-Bulgaria’s reaction. With it, the attention shifts from the body to the action that is being represented in Figure 9. The ‘Everyman’ is facing an overarching rainbow which makes a connection to another world. Yet, the situation on the other side of the EU rainbow is not revealed. Instead, the lights are on the ‘Everyman’- on Bulgaria’s reaction to the encounter with the EU rainbow. The *Pudica* pose and the connotations of helplessness and embarrassment which are attached to it are, I suggest, a reaction to the encounter with the superior world beyond the rainbow and ultimately consistent with the implications of Balkanism.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This article was prompted by a perceived incongruity within IR and beyond it in the study of discursive encounters between the Western or European self and its others. In an effort to counterbalance the extended scholarly attention that the West and its discourses on the others have received, I turned to the other’s response to the Western construction imposed on it and focused on discourses of European integration in pre-accession Bulgaria. Specifically, the paper has examined the deployment of Balkanism in Bulgarian EU accession discourses as expressed in political cartoons – understood here as expressions of wider societal discourses. It has concentrated on the ‘EU accession is motion’ or ‘EU accession is a journey’ metaphor, which dominated the European integration imagery of the candidate countries.

Needless to say, the ‘motion’ metaphor already sets ‘Bulgaria’ and ‘Europe’ apart, but, as such, it is not necessarily entangled with Balkanism, which rests on a hierarchy that privileges all that is ‘European’ over all that is ‘Balkan’. IR-related research has argued that a pattern that favours the fully European ‘Europe’ over the not-yet-fully European ‘Eastern Europe’ underpins the EU enlargement discourse, which is thus ultimately framed in broadly Orientalist terms. In addition, many of the critics of Balkanist language seem to suggest that Balkanism functions as a ‘power discourse’ – and a particularly powerful and persistent one at that – that structures and constrains not only ‘outsiders’ but also ‘insiders’ responses to the Balkans. Are we then to expect a Bulgarian construction organized around the
‘European but not quite’ designation that Aleko Konstantinov introduced more than a century ago?

The article found evidence which contradicts such an expectation and challenges the presupposed hegemony of Balkanism within pre-accession Bulgarian society. Some of the cartoons analysed here – as illustrated by Figures 5, 6 and 7 – articulate their stories of EU accession while being largely indifferent towards Balkanist distinctions. Overt challenges of Balkanist rhetoric are rare but certainly not absent; Figure 2 is an example in this sense. Most of the cartoons, however, are highly ambiguous vis-à-vis Balkanism and open to different, even mutually contradicting, interpretations. It is the genre of political cartooning which not only allows but in fact invites a plurality of interpretations. Irony and satire, which are often employed by cartoonists, constitute very powerful subversive strategies in that they represent ways of stating and simultaneously undermining Balkanist distinctions.

Although the analysis in this article is based solely on political cartoons, the findings can be extended beyond the sphere of cartooning because cartoonists must tap into familiar narrations easily accessible to their readers. As DeSousa and Medhurst put it, ‘the cartoonist taps the collective consciousness of readers and [thereby] affirms cultural values’ (1982: 85). Treating political cartoons as indicative of wider societal discourses, I suggest that even though the strong position of Balkanism in Bulgarian EU accession discourses cannot be denied, Bulgarians do find alternative strategies to deal with the inferior position attributed to them in Western constructions. Such strategies range from indifference and collective laughing at a presupposed inferiority to overt challenges of a hierarchy that privileges all that is European over all that is Balkan.

The declared purpose of this article was to document the deployment of Balkanism in pre-accession Bulgaria. But can any policy conclusions be derived from its findings? Knowing how ‘Bulgaria’, ‘Europe’ and, implicitly, the ‘Bulgaria’-‘Europe’ relationship had been constructed in Bulgarian discourses before the country became a fully-fledged EU member provides at least a preliminary understanding of the discursive and political room of maneuvre after accession. The entanglement of national identity constructions with Balkanism suggests a favouring of all that is ‘European’ over all that is ‘Balkan’/‘Bulgarian’ and ultimately implies a passive position in relation to the EU. Conversely, ambiguity, indifference and subversion of the Balkanist stereotypical language open discursive pathways for more active positions vis-à-vis the EU. The alternatives to Balkanism present within Bulgarian society already before the country’s EU accession could thus be regarded as an indicator of a potential discursive switch from a passive towards a more active stance in relation to the EU once accession is completed. However, this should be seen only as a tentative conclusion in need of further research to be confirmed.
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ENDNOTES

1 For a comprehensive comparison between the categories of Orientalism and Balkanism, see Fleming, 2000.
2 A brief clarification for my reference to Bulgaria as ‘Balkan’ and Bulgarians as ‘Balkan people’ is due here. Whereas Slovenes, Croats and Romanians, amongst others, have long tried to escape their Balkan categorization (see e.g. Cioroianu, 2002; Razsa and Lindstrom, 2004; Patterson, 2003), being part of the Balkans is accepted by Bulgarians as a predicament. There are several reasons for this, central among them being the fact that one of the crucial symbols of Balkanness, the Balkan mountains, lies almost entirely on Bulgarian territory (see also Todorova, 2000: 228–229).
3 Over the last decades, the field of IR has paid increased attention to various artefacts of popular culture, art, film and literature (e.g. Campbell, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004; Der Derian, 2001, 2005; Lacy, 2003; Shapiro, 1988, 1990; Weldes, 2001, 2003a, 2003b). However, critical attention to popular culture has not been equally distributed, with genres such as film and photography being amongst the favourites. With few notable exceptions, such as Beth Dougherty’s (2002) pedagogical article on the use of political cartoons in the teaching of international politics, Klaus Dodds’s (2007) work on geopolitical representations in Steve Bell’s political cartoons and Lene Hansen’s (2006b) article on the Muhammad cartoon crisis, political cartooning remains a neglected genre in IR literature.
4 The names of the newspapers for which the cartoonists were working during the period under analysis in this study, that is, April 2004–October 2005, are mentioned in brackets. None of these newspapers has a clear party-line allegiance. For a more detailed discussion on print media in contemporary Bulgaria, see Balabanova, 2004: 278–281.
5 The verbal components of the cartoons were translated by Radost Dimova, to whom I am very thankful.
6 See Stephen Anzaldi’s interview with Alex Robins.
7 I have dwelled more on various theories of metaphor elsewhere, arguing that those interested in social and political aspects would profit most by situating the analysis of metaphors within a discourse analytic framework which is sensitive to the inherent ambiguity of metaphors and takes into consideration issues of context, power and subjectivity (see Curticapean, 2007b).
8 In linking metaphorical narrations with unfinished films, I was inspired by Detenber and Byron’s (1996) suggestion that the still picture offers incomplete information.
9 In the daily Dnevnik, the cartoon is published together with an article, and both cover a common topic. ‘National politics and Eurointegration’ is the title of the article accompanying the cartoon in Figure 1.
I thank Professor Christine Sylvester for directing my attention to an alternative interpretation of the cartoon in Figure 1 as an expression of Bulgarians’ emigration to Western countries.


See Nead’s discussion of Clark’s The Nude in Nead, 1992: 12–16.

Clark’s work has been strongly criticized by feminist art historians, such as Lynda Nead and Helen McDonald amongst others.

Note the various spellings of the character’s name in English-language sources: Bai Ganio (e.g. Daskalov, 2001), Ba Gano (e.g. Neuburger, 2004, 2006), Bay Ganyo (e.g. Todorova, 1997), Bai Ganiu (e.g. Salter, 1969). The variations are, of course, due to transliterating the Bulgarian phrase from the Cyrillic to the Roman alphabet. For reasons of consistency, I use the ‘Bai Ganio’ transliteration throughout the text.

Aleko Konstantinov is the only Bulgarian writer to be commonly referred to by his first name by a loving public (cf. Daskalov, 2001: 532, n. 3).

Unlike Konstantinov’s other famous book, To Chicago and Back, which has been recently (2004) translated into English, Bai Ganio. Incredible Stories about a Contemporary Bulgarian has not been made available for reading in English. The book has, however, been partly or completely translated into several other languages, including Serbian (Baja Ganju, Rijanac Baceta, trans., published in 1900 by Glas nesloboždenog srpsstva and republished in 1907 by Srpska knjižna zadruga), German (Baj Ganyu, G. Weigand, trans., Leipzig, 1908; only the first part was translated), French (Baj Gagno. Le tatarin Bulgare, Matei Gueorguiev and Jean Jagersmidt, trans., Paris, 1911, and Bai Ganiu na frenski i bulgarski, Sofija, 1942), partial translation used for foreign language teaching), Russian (Bai Ganiu. Bolgarskii tatarin, Moscow, 1912), and also Bai Ganiu, O. Govorukhina, trans., Moscow, 1931, Armenian (Bai Ganiu, Sofija, 1926) and Esperanto (Baj Ganju, Loveć, 1941). I rely in my discussion of the literary character on three stories (‘Bai Ganiu Travels’, ‘Bai Ganiu at the Opera’ and ‘Bai Ganiu at the Baths’) which were translated into English by Francis Salter (1969) and on some secondary English-language sources: Daskalov (2001), Neuburger (1997, 2004, 2006) and Todorova (1997).

See also Konstantinov’s description of his encounter with Ganio Somov in To Chicago and Back.

The similarity was so obvious that it incited Gano Somov to write to Aleko Konstantinov several times to claim a share of the royalties from his book.

Daskalov (2001) discusses two other interpretive threads: historical and cultural. Todorova (1997) privileges a socio-historical interpretation which associates Bai Ganio with the nouveaux riches group and not with the nation as a whole.

Positioning the stories in relation to Europe is not rare in Bulgarian film. Like the Bai Ganio films (Bai Ganio and Bai Ganio on His Way to Europe), a number of other productions – such as The Attached Balloon (Bulgaria, Binka Zheliazkova, 1967), The Patent Leather Shoes of the Unknown Soldier (Bulgaria, Rangel Vulčanov, 1979), Last Wishes (Bulgaria, Rangel Vulčanov, 1984) or the more recent Traka-Trak (Bulgaria, Iliya Kostov, 1996) – tell their stories by reflecting on ‘Europe’ and by placing their narratives in a ‘European’ context (Iordanova, 2000).

Two cartoons by Todor Tsonev which deploy the Bai Ganio metaphor are reproduced in Neuburger, 1997: 18 and 19.
22 Hitar Petar is often considered the Bulgarian variant of Nastradin Hodza, a figure that is popular both north and south of the Danube and also in the Near and the Middle East. His equally wily and resourceful Romanian counterpart is Pacala (Cornis-Pope, 2007: 16–17).


24 Interview with Gergana Gruncharova on BTV on the programme ‘Tazi Sutrin’ (transl. ‘This Morning’), 14 April 2005, downloaded from the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website on 23 June 2005.

25 The BSP dominated Coalition for Bulgaria won the largest percentage of the votes at the parliamentary elections held on the 25th of June, 2005 and was likely to nominate the Prime Minister.


29 The enduring belief within some European societies that a treasure, generally a crock of gold, is buried at the end of the rainbow is not generally shared by Bulgarians, and therefore, I do not pursue this path in interpreting Figure 9.

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We apologize for the low quality of the reproduced drawings (which was caused by technical problems associated with their reproduction here).
Toward a Conception of Welcoming and Cooperating Patriotisms

ALBERTO NONES

Abstract: This paper discusses the relationship between patriotism, a concept traditionally equated to a notion of overwhelming cohesion, and multiculturalism, often taken as completely centered around a notion of irreducible cultural diversity. The paper reconsiders this dichotomy, providing a framework for understanding multiculturalism as referring to a multifaceted empirical phenomenon and normative theory and for understanding patriotism as something which is capable of overcoming forms of ethno-cultural nationalism. Such an understanding of patriotism, implemented both at the national and at the international level, could promote a sentiment of unity and, at the same time, address the discrimination from which multicultural claims originate.

Key words: multiculturalism, nationalism, patriotism

INTRODUCTION
Multiculturalism is becoming a central trait in both national and international affairs, as cultural diversity is increasing in most western countries due primarily to immigration (but most of these countries also present historical cultural diversities), mobility (which, in Europe, is guaranteed by the institution of European citizenship) and, in an extended sense, the confrontation of different cultures that international (and supranational) relations entail. Focusing on the internal dimension of states, or at least having an idea of its importance, is essential for understanding any external dimension.

Indeed, cultural diversity arouses the dormant conscience of the first problem of any socio-political unit: who is entitled to belong to it, on what grounds, and what exactly does it mean to share it? That is to say, multiculturalism concerns the inner tensions of patriotism, which is meant here to indicate the sentiment of loyalty and attachment to a country (but which also exists in relation to other countries) on the part of its citizens. Since human beings are deeply characterised by making sense of the world by what we call cultures, patriotism unavoidably has cultural components in it. However, given the fact of cultural diversity, such attachments can hardly take the form of mono-cultural prescriptions, which are more typical of nationalism.
the same time, though, it is not only mono-cultural prescriptions that are problematic: cultural diversity too can become a problem when multiculturalist movements start upgrading claims for cultural non-discrimination to claims for political independence, which pose the greatest risk that any socio-political unit can ever encounter – fragmentation, separation, disintegration. How can a sense of common political belonging or international co-habitation co-exist with the protection and advancement of existing (and shifting) plural identities?

This paper tackles the question by introducing, in the first section, the problems of multiculturalism and raising the issue of what agents underpin the political community in a context of cultural diversity with the aim of showing the inherent flaws in uncritical understandings of the concepts of ‘we’ and ‘others’. To this purpose, four distinctions are introduced that may help us to more fully understand what ‘we’ and ‘others’ mean: first, ‘we’ and ‘others’ can be (seen as) incommensurable (‘absolute’); second, they can be (seen as) highly intertwined (‘deviant’); third, they can be (seen as) different but capable of engaging in some form of responsive dialogue (‘defensive’); and, fourth, they can be (seen as) capable of creating a completely new understanding of ‘we’ in relation to ‘others’ (‘revolutionary’, in the sense of being ‘progressive and emancipatory’, not ‘regressive and violent’). The second section of the paper applies these same four distinctions to the more general issue of political agency, which provides the practical framework for articulating the collective life of the nation, as opposed to multicultural agency, which concerns the question of how to deal with cultural heterogeneity, showing how the two agencies have significant aspects in common in the process. The last section elaborates on the various conceptions of patriotism that can emerge from such an interplay between multicultural and political agency, advancing an arrangement – ‘welcoming and cooperating patriotisms’ – by which one can promote a sentiment of unity and, at the same time, address the cultural discrimination from which multicultural claims originate.

Several studies already exist about the idea of patriotism through the centuries, most importantly about the diachronic formation of a language of patriotism in relation to the separate but (in certain periods) interlocked formation of a language of nationalism. What is still lacking is a reflection on the nearly synchronic picture of the various theoretical possibilities that are open for our understanding and actualisation of patriotism today. Of course, this variety results precisely from the complexity of the history of patriotism and especially from the complexity of its more or less occasional conjunction with the history of nationalism. This complexity is even greater given the contemporary context of international affairs, characterised as it is by – at once – enhanced intercultural relations and the increased tensions that these relations can produce, both within and among countries. Such tensions first and foremost concern the degree of assimilation or else accommodation that the
various possible policies of integration between ‘we’ and ‘others’ envisage, which is the first issue to be tackled.

1. WE V. OTHERS?
Most of the literature on multiculturalism has originated in response to the liberal state’s alleged failure to guarantee equality and its tendency to impose a liberal way of life as a founding element of all forms of human association. From Iris Marion Young’s critique (1990) of the uneven distribution of power among groups to Charles Taylor’s argument (1992) about the lack of self-respect that discrimination implied for cultural minorities as such to Will Kymlicka’s defense (1995) of multiculturalism on the liberal ground of the notion of individual autonomy (see also Margalit and Halbertal, 1994), influential arguments were directed against a process of integration that was not living up to its promises. These arguments helped improve aspects of societal arrangements that for long had been considered adequate without actually being adequate, especially with regard to the very principles of equality generally proclaimed by liberal constitutions themselves.

What one should not be too quick to do, however, is to generalise about the ideas of uneven distribution of power, lack of respect and individual discrimination that integration in liberal polities and communities would entail. Properly understood and implemented, integration implies a two-fold process, comprised of both a component of accommodation of diversity and a component of assimilation into some form of unity. Critics have rightly thrown light on the element of assimilation that in certain contexts and cases might have indeed been prevailing in the policies of integration. However, some of them suggested that the only meaningful arrangement would occur through granting full accommodation, as if to completely separate units. Hence, instead of focusing on the need to reinforce the accommodation component of integration, they opted for ‘splitting’ the common sphere.

At the national level, such multiculturalist policies are likely to create a serious problem in the long run, reiterating at the group level the problems experienced at the state level. Just as the exclusive dominion of the majority culture in the state may cause problems for minorities, allocating some form of independence to minorities may, in fact, cause similar problems for sub-sections within the minority groups. In response to this, theorists like Michael McDonald (1991) and Chandran Kukathas (1992) maintained, from a communitarian and a libertarian standpoint respectively, that individual discrimination is a somewhat necessary side effect of toleration (the principle at the root of the argument for accommodation) and, in any case, individuals are not forced to remain in their groups. Others, most notably Susan Moller Okin (1997), reacted by stressing how the state should normatively protect any individuals, the fundamental cells of any society, from actual or potential oppression and discrimination by groups. Thereby, however, such critiques of unconstrained
cultural accommodation risked seeming to suggest a preference for a similarly unconstrained liberal-state dominance, which was precisely the sort of arrangement against which multiculturalists had come up in the first place. At the international level too, a dilemma may be identified between accommodating national differences and informing integration with the values and interests of the most powerful countries. In neither of the two options is integration seriously conceptualised as a process that involves both assimilation and accommodation.

Focusing on the national level, Ayelet Shachar has proposed a model of accommodation which conceives of granting separate jurisdictions to groups but which at the same time conditions such autonomy upon a mechanism that would prove ‘a catalyst for internal change’ (Shachar, 2001: 118). According to her model, individuals could opt out of a jurisdiction when such a jurisdiction is perceived by individuals themselves as inadequate to meet their needs and concerns. Such a device is an improvement over Kukathas’s (1992) sheer emphasis on a formal right of exit, for ‘reversal points’ would be established ‘through negotiation between the state and the group as a precondition for establishing a joint governance regime in the first place’ (Shachar, 2001: 124). This sort of preliminary contract between the state and the groups would induce both states and groups to take into consideration the other actors at play – the individuals. Shachar’s argument, however, is correct insofar as it stresses that an acceptable model of identity formation should assure the recognition of the triad that comprises the individuals, the groups, and the state, but it has not adequately examined what sort of collective sense of belonging may cement the triad.

As a first step in this direction, it is necessary to reconsider the extent to which the two-fold process of assimilation and accommodation at work in any process of identity formation produces permanent, clear-cut distinctions between two neatly separate and easy-to-locate entities – ‘we’ and ‘others’. My hypothesis is that ‘we’ and ‘others’ actually often overlap and that drawing a distinction between them is usually contested. Iris Marion Young famously unmasked the exclusionary quality that apparently universal ‘we’-identities may have, remarking on how ‘[m]odern political theory asserted the equal worth of all persons, and social movements of the oppressed took this seriously as implying the inclusion of all persons in full citizenship status under the equal protection of the law’ (Young, 1998: 401) Her argument paved the way to a critique of the notion of a formal ‘we’ that in actuality comprised excluded people who felt themselves to be ‘others’. According to Young, the equal worth of all persons was just an abstract assertion about the blindness of the law with respect to social, economic, and cultural differences. In the ‘dichotomy between public and private that defined the public as a realm of generality in which all particularities are left behind, and defined the private as the particular, the realm of affectivity, affiliation, need, and the body’ (406), a powerful ‘we’ distanced itself from a plurality of underdog ‘others’ who only formally belonged to the same socio-political unit.
The thrust of Young’s critique of the modern ideal of universal citizenship is still compelling. The sound remark that all ‘[p]eople necessarily and properly consider public issues in terms influenced by their situated experience and perception of social relations’ (408), though, does not in the least conflict with the well-understood idea of dialogical citizenship in a context of cultural diversity. Undoubtedly, a notion of universal citizenship premised on masculine notions of reason, honour and so forth did apply in the context of modernity that Young reconstructs, for the segregation of women in the private sphere and the exclusion from the political sphere of the poor and the culturally different (besides women) were then indeed overwhelming. But Young’s argument goes too far when it is extended from a history-oriented critique to a general evaluation of democracies today, without considering the considerable and continuous – though necessarily gradual and still largely insufficient – improvements of the conditions of individuals and groups that used to be completely excluded from actual political membership.

Inner we-other distinctions that held true at the beginning of the modern era greatly differ from the distinctions at play today in western countries. Notwithstanding the persistence of (old and new) asymmetries of power, it seems reasonable to suggest that several different balances of the dynamics between assimilation and accommodation exist in the shaping of we-identities. The most advanced is what I call a ‘revolutionary we’, where the new conceptualisations go as far as expressing the need to completely redefine the ‘we’ in the context of the acknowledgment that the collective has changed and a realignment is needed between past conceptualisations and present realities. Of course, however, more typical conceptualisations of ‘we’ are still based on the perceived need to defend a specific group’s cultural features, usually those of the majority (or else those of an elite). Here, the balance can take the form of a ‘defensive we’, which recognises but opposes the emergence of cultural diversity. Otherwise, one may still be faced with conceptualisations of ‘we’ that are informed by elements of stark cultural homogeneity – that is, forms of an ‘absolute we’ that should hold for everyone. However, this eventually leads to yet another possible assimilation-accommodation balance, instances of a ‘deviant we’ in which the very same absolute cultural homogeneity is challenged by subjects that, from within the ‘we’, call for the accommodation of cultural diversity but do so with the hidden aim to isolate and eventually even stigmatise such diversity.

Still at a theoretical level, four symmetrical categories of ‘others’ correspond to the four categories of ‘we’ just outlined. The first category of ‘others’ shares a common border with the fourth (deviant) category of ‘we’: ‘deviant others’ are those who, though from an apparent standpoint of cultural heterogeneity, nevertheless choose, for self-interested reasons, to highlight aspects of commonness with a traditionally understood ‘we’. Different are those subjects who conceive of their otherness as an irreducible and incommensurable cultural diversity, ‘absolute others’ who see them-
selves in static, essentialist ways. When subjects transform this static absolute other-ness into dynamic political claims to an equal treatment of their rights and their particularities, they become ‘defensive others’. Finally, they are ‘revolutionary others’ when they do not just defend their otherness, nor simply state it, nor just aim at compromises, but rather strive to completely reconstruct the very idea of otherness.

Young’s negative description of citizenship as masculine, discriminatory, and exclusive does not account for the spectrum of ideas and implementations of ‘we’ and ‘others’ that underpin such an abstract notion and largely focuses on an ‘absolute’ interpretation. My claim is not that negative tensions between assimilation and accommodation do not occur and that no objective residual distinctions hold between ‘we’ and ‘others’. However, possible ‘revolutionary’ encounters, as well as ‘deviant’ ones, should be taken into consideration. Consider clitoridectomy, a national-level case of cultural practices that severely infringe upon liberal rights (Mayall, 2005). Although many women themselves freely endorse this cultural practice in some immigrant communities, it undoubtedly infringes upon the rights of a person at least in their liberal formalisation, hence arguably threatening to pose a case of ‘absolute others’ against an ‘absolute we’. And yet, there are reasons of public health (basically, avoiding operations at home) for providing the operation in public hospitals and therefore accommodating in a liberal society even this cultural practice. Such an accommodation would be granted, actually, in the hope of putting down the basis for a larger assimilation into the practice of the legal supply of health services, whereby individual attitudes and behavior are monitored and confronted. Notwithstanding the difficulty in identifying the legitimate spokespersons of the communities that engage in the contested cultural practices, it seems that launching such an experimentation and debate in the public sphere would ensure what follows. First, contested practices would be accommodated (or not) only after careful evaluation because both points of view can be seen as representing world views that may result in ‘absolute’ we-others distinctions. Second, encouraging a public debate about the acceptability of the contested cultural practices would ensure that they would be scrutinised within the communities themselves, exerting a constant pressure for long-term assessment along ‘defensive’ terms on both sides. Third, careful evaluation and public debate would in their turn ensure that an open dynamics between accommodation and assimilation and a renewed reflection on the various senses of ‘we’ versus ‘others’ would take place, thereby provoking new thinking both about the communities’ sense of being a ‘we’ and their relationships with the ‘others’, possibly with ‘revolutionary’ outcomes.

At the root of we-others distinctions lies the low stability that characterises human beings and their personal and collective selves. This lack of stability is only aggravated by migration, which is among the foremost originators of we-others distinctions based loosely on cultural diversity but foremost on perceptions of it and social
constructions based on it. Further, it is aggravated by the reconfiguration of the nation-state, which calls for a cultural and political reflection on what, in the context of a multicultural western world, the distinction between one’s country and other countries actually stands for. The argument about the loosening of clear-cut distinctions between ‘we’ and ‘others’ is reflected in fact at the macro level of international relations, which makes for a rather dense and complex picture of the contemporary international system. However, although this picture may induce some to feel nostalgic for the alleged straightforwardness of the past, absolute identities juxtaposed in a vision where ‘we’-identities (read nations) struggle for their earthly existence have already proven their entire destructive capacity.

The possibility of a drift in that direction is always present. It is indeed reasonable to suggest that extreme nationalisms testified precisely to the ever-present possibility of the re-emergence of a Schmittian logic of enmity and distinction. But politics, for instance as instantiated in the process of European integration, may also entail a striving for a form of superior association. Interestingly, such a vision of politics was synchronically present in the same years that saw the rise of extreme nationalistic ideologies all premised on we-others distinctions. In the context of a fascist Italy and a Nazi Germany, Benedetto Croce could write that

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\text{in all parts of Europe we are watching the growth of a new consciousness, of a new nationality (because, as we have already remarked, nations are not natural data, but historical states of consciousness and historical formations). And just as, seventy years ago, a Neapolitan of the old kingdom or a Piedmontese of the subalpine kingdom became an Italian without becoming false to his earlier quality but raising it and resolving it into this new quality, so the French and the Germans and the Italians and all the others will raise themselves into Europeans and their thoughts will be directed towards Europe and their hearts will beat for her as they once did for their smaller countries, not forgotten now but loved all the better (Croce, 1933: 360).}
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Indeed, extreme nationalisms are best understood as forms of reaction to a process of dialogue among ‘we’ and ‘others’ already, and inexorably, at play. Hitler’s ideas and plans, for instance, largely originated from the observation of a social and political pluralism that existed in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the Republic of Weimar (see Hitler, 1939: 48 ff).

When one maintains, as nationalism does, that the unit of government of the political order should be the nation, and thus the sentiment of loyalty towards the state is coterminous with the sentiment of loyalty towards the nation, countries (and thus, arguably, patriotisms) and nations (and thus, arguably, nationalisms) end up basically referring to the same thing. However, it is well known that the question of what
exact features are actually in common and to what degree has always been a matter of deep controversy, whence the conundrum of the corollary of nationalism: that the nation has to ‘remain itself’. This is the political problem inasmuch as any idea of identity in politics is always some sort of approximation (if not contradiction). Historically, nationalists have been so sensitive to this problem that, at a certain point, they sought to provide the ultimate solution to it: transforming a multitude of individuals where subjectivity is infinitely fractioned into a monster homogenising entity where subjectivity would be identified in a single movement organised under a leader, who would subsume the political voice and the moral consciousness of the entire nation. Sought by many, in the first decades of the 20th century in Europe, it was indeed an alternative to the liberal understanding of politics, namely to its indecisiveness about and confusion of ‘nationals’ and ‘non-nationals’ at the level of domestic politics, a premise – they maintained – for worse indecisiveness and confusion at the level of international relations.

The alternative presented an internal dimension of cohesiveness and an external dimension of self-assertiveness. Not quite states were at issue, though. In fact, after claiming that the unit of government of the state should be the nation, nationalists then tended to not identify with those existing states. The state as it was was simply seen as the contingent form of a cultural/social/political group-entity - the nation - which had full priority and could practically organise itself as it pleased (eventually, even in the form of an empire). In this sense, countries (patriotisms) and nations (nationalisms) were set apart (comp. Hitler, 1939: 18). Nationalists tended to identify not so much with a motherland as with a stock of nationals, a we-identity, always distinct from and opposed to non-nationals, even in racial terms. Nationals were entitled to rule over a space that could be elastically reconfigured over time, provided they conquered / held it in the face of non-nationals’ claims. In order to attain any such results, national mobilisation was crucial.

Hitler, for one, attempted to strengthen a community based on an organic will over a society fragmented into pluralistic and arbitrary wills. Among the policies for attaining this, he espoused (and announced to the German and international public who could and did read Mein Kampf en masse) genocide and eugenics. Genocide was directed against all those non-nationals within the country who did not comply with a National Socialist vision of Volk, both in the cultural sense (e.g. the Jews, the Roma, etc.) and in the political sense (e.g. the Jews again, liberals, communists, pacifists, etc.). Eugenics was directed against those nationals who did not possess the ‘strength’ and ‘character’ required for representing the nation (e.g. the physically or mentally disabled, homosexuals, etc.). The idea of purification was thus embodied in the typical nationalistic ambivalence between ‘should’ and ‘is’: on the one hand, the collective ‘we’ was presented as something static, insofar as the movement’s declared objective was to preserve the nation; on the other hand, it was prac-
Abandoning this disturbing (to say the least) nationalistic conception and reality for supranational or cosmopolitan ideals, however, is not really a viable alternative. In fact, it might be a big mistake inasmuch as many might think that the agents of such idealistic attempts are betraying the nation, the nationality, the country, the civilisation or whatever else they deem central to their lives, with the possible results of a relapse – dictated by fear – into the most exclusive and hindering sentiments of attachment and solidarity. Let us see how, instead, a new understanding of the dialogue between ‘we’ and ‘others’, both at a micro and a macro level, might be introduced in the political discourse.

2. MULTICULTURAL V. POLITICAL AGENCY?
Transformative pressures are exerted on culture and on politics at once, for cultural identities cannot be easily severed from political identities. ‘Political agency’ is to be understood as related to the mechanics of association and distinction between agents who are the conundrums of selves that were pinpointed in the previous section. All political acts have some cultural dimension, for they all stem from a viewpoint on what is the meaningful thing to do in a given situation for situated subjects. For instance, what is probably the quintessential political act at the national level, a state’s financial law, allocates resources not in a cultural vacuum, but in a contested playing field where what is funded and why depends precisely on the desires of different parties endowed with different cultural standpoints, i.e. different opinions about the significance and importance of education, religion, science, art, etc. An equally important role is played by cultural considerations as regards international politics, if only on the grounds of political alliances and economic partnerships. It is the task of political agency to provide a practical framework for articulating the collective life of the nation and the country and relate it to such a cultural background at all levels.

Multiculturalism, which has foremost to do just with the national dimension but – I maintain – can be significantly extended, is used to mean either a normative approach to integration theory or just the empirical fact of cultural diversity (Barry, 2001), a terminological openness that applies to my discussion. My thesis originates from a comprehensive interpretation according to which, in factual conditions of multicultural diversity, a normative model of multicultural identity is the only acceptable one.

The assumption of this thesis is that there is not a dichotomy between a multicultural and a political agency and that the two can be complementary. They are importantly distinct in that multiculturalism has diversity at its core and calls into question any excessively artificial sense of cohesion, especially when this endangers the existence of different cultures and hence the dignity of the individuals who value
those cultures, whereas national politics usually concerns an activity focused on the problems of living together in a (more or less) cohesive unity in the face of other (more or less) cohesive units. However, multiculturalism concerns not only heterogeneity as such but also a discourse about how to deal with heterogeneity in a common society (and, in an extended sense, among different societies and polities). Likewise, politics is always embedded in the culture and sub-cultures that constitute the way(s) of life of the polity.7

From this perspective, the four categories that have been previously advanced for a more comprehensive understanding of ‘we’ and ‘others’ can be applied to the very notion of multicultural agency.8 The first category is a ‘revolutionary’ multicultural agency, in which a strikingly explicit political dimension stems from a serious commitment to the importance of the force of accommodation in any process of identity formation. As it were, different collective identities are taken to be already present and just in need of recognition, usually in a fashion of separation from the rest. This category is revolutionary because it aims to terminate a state of intolerable oppression and grave discrimination. Its most radical goal is to establish an arrangement whereby oppressed communities are recognised as bearing rights to an equal and independent status in respect to traditional majorities or communities endowed with state status. Among the various examples of such multicultural agency, one can mention here the problematic case of the ETA in Spain. It is just such forms of multicultural agency that critics of multiculturalism fear most because they subvert traditional cultural equilibria by recognising the political claims of cultural groups that can be determined to use all means necessary to carry on their struggle.

The second category is a ‘defensive’ multicultural agency, which also concerns promoting the rights of a community that feels it is ostracised or discriminated against, but the arrangement sought is not necessarily one of separation or special autonomy. Rather, it is the defense of a community’s cultural practices, which usually amounts to less demanding claims, which are not so much political as financial and strictly cultural. When immigrants, for instance, start to organise themselves as a group, their goal is multicultural not in the sense that they aim to break with the larger society (there would be no reason to immigrate to that society if one were not attracted to it in some important respects), but rather in the sense that they desire the recognition of their dignity, which is best attained by policies of (in a negative sense) toleration9 and (in a positive sense, usually later on) affirmative action. Examples of such multicultural agency are plentiful, as most immigration societies present communities that undergo a process of rights-seeking, a typical case being Muslim immigrants’ initiatives for establishing Mosques in their host countries, having aspects of the history of Islam in some way included in the school curriculum, and so forth. Critics of multiculturalism tend to consider such defensive multicultural claims more mildly than revolutionary ones, as the negotiations that result typ-
ically preserve the existing cultural majority and only confer traditional rights to new subjects. These cases are not only internal to a common society. ‘Defensive’ initiatives such as advancing claims to various forms of recognition can be undertaken by countries that are nonetheless profoundly committed to integrating in, say, a supranational organisation to whose way of life they are highly attracted. Examples that come to mind concern attitudes on the part of recent or smaller EU members, like Poland, or the controversies over the candidacy of countries like Turkey.

The third category is an ‘absolute’ multicultural agency, in which the aim is neither to give birth to a new political arrangement founded on the autonomy of cultural entities (‘revolutionary’) nor to advocate their defense through cultural policies (‘defensive’), but rather to simply gather on the part of subjects who feel discriminated against, in danger, or simply different from the mainstream and find in the attachment to their cultures an existential assertion with respect to the rest. As concerns the forces of assimilation and accommodation, these multicultural arrangements typically envision a strong accommodation of the cultures at stake in relation to the surrounding ones and, at the same time, a totalising force of assimilation within them. This often results in forms of closure (to the extent that this is possible in national and international settings where both the economy and culture are usually highly integrated) and even antagonistic non-communication, the creation of a separate economy (separate to a larger or lesser degree), arguments about cultural distinctiveness, etc. Examples of this kind of multicultural agency may include, at the national level, ghettoes of various sorts and urban phenomena such as Chinese enclaves, the banlieues in France, etc. and, at the international level, solitary endeavours like those of Communist Albania or, for completely different reasons, Switzerland. Depending on the nature and level of the insulation at issue, critics of ‘absolute’ multicultural agency range from complaisance or indifference to serious concern or condemnation (sometimes of a racist and belligerent sort).

Finally, multiculturalism can engage with politics to produce the fourth category: ‘deviant’. It can take two main forms. The first is linked to the category of the ‘absolute’ multicultural agency. Consider the following example. When immigrants organise themselves by reconstituting the culture they practiced in their home countries and do not seek any integration with the host society or simply a defense of their culture, they can either simply isolate themselves in ‘absolute’ communities – be they fully political or fully apolitical – or link themselves to the politics of some other country, which is where national actions assume international overtones and consequences. Evidence of such a ‘deviant’ multicultural agency can arguably be found in the exceedingly high remittances to home countries (e.g. those of Mexican immigrants in California), which is quite understandable if directed from immigrants to their families but starts to become problematic if huge amounts of resources (even in the form of investments) are directed to a different national economy. Such
an economic diversion of resources signals a deviation that may result in the troublesome centrifugal tendency to shift allegiance from a traditional nation-state towards another nation-state. However, this ‘deviant’ multicultural agency can take another form, the centripetal one, as it is not linked to an actual form of spontaneous political, cultural, or essentialist claims but originates from ambiguous spokespersons internal to a national community. Often, the voices of this ‘deviant’ multicultural agency are just aimed at presenting cultural groups as different from the mainstream societal culture, namely as a threat. This variant is deviant because it is more integral to the way in which the mainstream culture views the ‘others’ than it is representative of the cultural minorities at stake. It is centripetal because it ends up discouraging the support for multicultural claims. A possible example is the case of an Italian citizen – Adel Smith – who converted to Islam, claimed to represent the Muslim Union of Italy (an association which, however, did not quite represent all Italian Muslims) and through this multicultural agency launched a campaign against the display of the crucifix in public places. Such a campaign, exceedingly amplified by the media, was not in the least unanimously agreed upon by Italian Muslims but nevertheless ended up establishing a view about Italian Islam that did not correspond to the variety of the authentic positions.

This four-fold categorisation suggests that when discussing the question of whether multiculturalism is a danger or a good idea for a society and a polity at large, it is crucial to pay attention to what kind of multicultural agency one is confronting. In fact, multiculturalism may come to mean quite different things. There are instances of ‘revolutionary’ and ‘defensive’ multicultural agency that, notwithstanding the socio-political tensions they may produce, are justifiable because their aim can be not to cause socio-political tensions per se, but to improve the larger society or the international system at large. Such hypotheses are often dismissed, though, for a dominant narrative about the liberal (international) political system asserts that such a system already provides for all the protection of cultural diversity that people(s) need.

Bold assertions of this sort call for a re-examination of what political agency is. I suggest that it nearly always involves a (multicultural) dimension. This dimension is especially evident both when political agency organises the affairs of a society at an associational, national level and when it organises them internationally, i.e. with respect to a distinctive association. In both cases, the political is informed by emotional, intellectual and spiritual – that is, cultural – motives. When one considers such a complex and usually very broad unit as a society, culture is typically made up of different internal understandings of what the culture is for the various individuals at stake; in an immigration society, or, at any rate, in a society that allows immigration, these differences can be raised to the level of actual different cultures – let alone the international society, which is constitutionally made up of different states.
and consequently more or less different cultures. It is the diversity of national and international society as they are, that is, provided with different cultures, that gives actual content to the political confrontation. There are two aspects to this combination: on the one hand, to be induced to rethink one’s own idea of sameness; on the other hand, to be induced to rethink the reasons for the others’ eventual uneasiness concerning this notion of sameness. It is realistically untenable and theoretically unsound to argue that political agency concerns only homogeneity. But what does it pinpoint instead?

With symmetrical reference to the four-fold categorisation of multicultural agency, political agency can first of all lean towards the multicultural agency in such an ambiguous way as to be considered ‘deviant’. That is, it can instrumentally use political channels to proclaim the desire to achieve multicultural goals (in the form of recognition, autonomy, or even separation). The deviant qualification derives from the fact that the political role of conciliator of different interests and viewpoints is dismissed in favor of the self-interested role of espousing multiculturalist claims with the hidden intention of actually getting rid of the multicultural initiatives, or else with the intention of discriminating against entire minorities or gravely disparaging other countries. Such ‘deviant’ political agency is slippery, although it captures important deceptive aspects of many if not most of those partisan governments and societal orientations whose objective is to ghettosise undesired segments of the (world) population. A possible example is a recent sentence by a German law court (‘political’ in the sense that, as any law court, it is engrained in the institutional system), in which judge Burries von Hammerstein decided that a man who had raped his girlfriend was entitled to a lighter sentence (6 years instead of 15) because some degree of violence against women could be considered as a part of his cultural way of life, the man being of Sardinian origin. At the international level, ‘deviant’ can be the attitudes of certain western countries towards the so-called rogue states, whereby entire peoples end up being identified with their current rulers or segments of the population.

In a straighter understanding, the political is all centered around fairness, cooperation, and security to the point that what does not conform to the characteristic norms of the system is dismissed as belonging to the other half of the coin—unfairness, anarchy, and insecurity. Such an ‘absolute’ political agency implies a sort of ceremonial worship of politics as legislative power and international politics as premised on international law. Laws which have cultural roots and cultural implications are the primary tools of an all-encompassing national and international assimilation; they can be changed only through a complex democratic procedure, which in its turn is regulated by a law of the system that reflects a majority or elite choice; other than that, laws simply require obedience, regardless of the inequality they (re)produce, and citizens must abide by them or be punished and deprived of their liberty, just like entire states
must endure their fate if they dare challenge them. If not actual sameness, this produces a systematic discrimination of those who do not comply with norms that are necessarily partial. Examples of ‘absolute’ political agency include those systems that are based on an ethno-cultural substantiation of citizenship, such as Germany until the 1999 citizenship law reform. However, in more general terms, most political arrangements tend to ignore the fact that most laws have a cultural content that is only purported as neutral. When the underlying substantive cultural root becomes explicit, political agency usually tries to convince the public that diversity poses a threat to the core culture, and hence, policies of closure are needed, lest the alleged purity of the nation be endangered. As for the international dimension, a paradigmatic example is still the ‘bias’ for liberalism – positive as it is – of a ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ that holds internationally.

Of course, at another level, the political can be presented as based on a mechanism according to which a majority is entitled to rule but not in an absolutistic fashion, for it is indeed bound by a set of (constitutional and democratic) principles which provide for a dialogue between all the actors at stake. In this sense, politics translates into the defence and advancement of what one considers to be, or aims to render, the norm – ‘defensive’ political agency – but in the face of alternative claims that at least must be taken into due consideration. Although the democratic claim to the people’s right of legislation is, generally speaking, different from the multicultural claim to a right of defending one’s community rights, the two have points in common. The important difference is that political agency rules over all, whereas multicultural defensive discourses typically relate only to minorities and ‘eccentric’ countries; but the distinction becomes less clear when the multicultural agency is one of the representative political forces and works for the attainment of forms of accommodation. In this case, the majority or dominant group is confronted by legitimate claims to difference that can make their way through the public opinion. Possible examples of this kind of arrangement are supranational organisations like the EU, where many decisions have to be taken by unanimity, or those national systems that conceive of quotas or at least provide for other measures of integration like the introduction in Italy of the ‘Consulta per l’Islam italiano’ (a consultative body – rather well representative of the different positions of Italian Muslims – appointed on 10 September 2005 to undertake research, give opinions, and make proposals with regard to the Italian Islamic community).

It would be inaccurate to state that political agency ought necessarily to be reduced to its own existing laws and namely to the laws that promote the values of only one part – that it rests on a closed system which is static and, by definition, monocultural. Political agency does have aspects of openness, dynamism and internal diversity precisely because it inevitably relies on the invariably diverse cultural understanding of its constituents in liberal contemporary societies.
WELCOMING AND COOPERATING PATRIOTISMS

and international settings. Electoral campaigns and policy processes are just epiphenomena of structural movements, deep forces that lurk below the surface and often stem from multi-cultural positions. Critical cultural issues often enter the political arena through this avenue, which makes politics transcend a merely defensive monocultural dimension. What I want to suggest by this category of political agency, ‘revolutionary’, is that the boundaries between what is known and what is unknown, what is established and what is in fieri, what is ‘normal’ and what is ‘different’ are often blurred, which can open up the system to the new. But here we are already abandoning the complementary nature of political and multicultural agency toward the comprehensive embrace of the whole spectrum that should more accurately be termed patriotism.

3. WHICH CONCEPTION OF PATRIOTISM?
Patriotism does not just pinpoint a political mechanics regulated according to the principle of distinction or association between friends and enemies (Nones, 2006). Nor does it just pinpoint the socio-cultural dynamics regulated according to the principle of assimilation or accommodation between individuals and groups (Nones, forthcoming). It is a higher-level discourse that intends to make sense of such mechanics and dynamics, elaborating on what belonging to the political and the socio-cultural units entails, how to make sense of it, how to conceptualise ‘we’ and ‘others’, and how to love the community as a whole. Having presented four categories of multicultural agency and four categories of political agency, patriotism, which is best understood as an impingement between the two (socio-cultural and socio-political elements), shall take sixteen different forms (see the Table below, which reflects a general divide between a positive patriotic (+) that allows for a broad integration of diversity into a unitary entity and a negative patriotic (−) that gives way to troublesome discrimination). A discussion of patriotism inevitably takes issue more with the national than with the international dimension, but, as I will show, some important consequences follow regarding the latter as well. The cluster of combinations −8, −7, −6, and −5 is the result of the confrontation between multicultural agency and a ‘deviant’ political agency. Given my focus on preserving and advancing a constructive unity rather than on the various political aspirations of the sub-units, all four forms are negative forms of a ‘deviant’ patriotism. Indeed, the political agency with which the various multicultural voices here interact is always mystifying. An example of this kind of ‘deviant’ patriotism can be identified in ethnic cleansing, when nationalistic upsurges lead to the separation and genocide of ethnic groups in the name of the creation of independent socio-cultural and political units and whereby, as it were, national conflict becomes international hostility.

At a more detailed theoretical level, in patriotism −8 both the political and the multicultural agencies instrumentally endorse ideological discourses of xenophobia
(and hence hatred and suspicion), and no authentic dialogue is possible between the
two. The political agency cheats – so to speak – with regard to what its cultural di-
mension is, for instance by camouflaging its substantive cultural roots, whereas the
multicultural agency cheats in the sense that those who speak in its name actually
do not represent multicultural claims at all. No synthesis can emerge from this clash
other than a patriotism which is not really patriotic because it is always relative to only
a part of the citizenry and never to the whole. The talk may pretend to be patriotic,
but the content is deviant because deviant are the political and the multicultural
agencies that constitute it.

In patriotism –7, a ‘deviant’ political agency echoes a multicultural agency that re-
sorts to the absolute centrality of diversity, which is doomed to fragment society.
To be patriotic in such a sense does not mean to negatively defend the socio-politi-
cal unit or to positively advance it, but to jeopardise the right of individuals and
groups to be equally represented and protected, often by segregating them and in-
discriminately attacking the ‘others’ in order to make the mainstream attachment
to the country culturally informed.

The situation slightly improves when a ‘deviant’ political agency confronts a ‘de-
defensive’ or a ‘revolutionary’ multicultural agency (when these are constructive en-
deavours). However, paradoxically, the political intention is to be found here more in
the multicultural than in the political agency, which remains deviant with respect to
the true possibilities of a unitary politics, i.e. it does not take them seriously and typi-
cally misrepresents them to favour the claims of radical multiculturalists. Patriotism –6
eventually produces acceptable outcomes not because of political initiatives, but
rather to the extent that the various multicultural voices are able to politically engage
in a defensive game of negotiations. Likewise, patriotism –5 instantiates a turning
over according to which the only possible positive dimension depends on the event-
tuality that a tolerant ‘revolutionary’ multicultural agency fully overcomes a ‘deviant’
political agency and thus becomes, in its turn, the new political agency.

The cluster of combinations –4, –3, –2, and –1 results from the confrontation be-
tween multicultural agency and an ‘absolute’ political agency and represents, in var-
ious degrees, forms of ‘absolute’ patriotism. The four combinations are somewhat
less negative when compared to the ‘deviant’ ones, for – although they all amount
to assertions about what one should better conform to, in both cultural and politi-
cal terms – at least the discourse is not meant to be deceptive as in ‘deviant’ patri-
otism. However, it can be highly discriminatory. A pertinent if controversial example
can be identified in the alleged bias against Muslim, Arab, and South Asian cultures
in the US after 11 September 2001, which has been evident in foreign policy but
has slowly penetrated vast strata of American society. According to this view, peo-
ple at home and whole peoples abroad have been and still are suspected of being
dangerous even in the absence of strong, demonstrated evidence and are conse-
consequently discriminated against on the basis of a cultural opposition which makes for a new personification of America’s enemy: terrorism, a ‘designated enemy, which is now solely ethnic-racial-religious’ (Kateb, 2006: 65). Even academics have supported aspects of this kind of ‘absolute’ patriotism. In his discussion of alternative models of American identity, for instance, Samuel Huntington praises what he calls a ‘revitalized America reaffirming its historic Anglo-Protestant culture, religious commitments, and values and bolstered by confrontations with an unfriendly world’ (Huntington, 2005: xvi). It is exceedingly difficult, however, to see in what sense Huntington’s ‘revitalized America’ would differ from an alternative he dismisses – an ‘exclusivist America’. Indeed, his appraisal of the former pretty much resounds in his condemnation of the latter (‘a highly probable reaction from a once dominant ethnic-racial group that feels threatened by the rise of other groups’) (20). Huntington goes on to say that an exclusivist identity ‘could produce a racially intolerant country with high levels of intergroup conflict,’ (20) a worry that I personally share but which would most likely apply just as much to his preferred ‘revitalized America’.

To take a closer look at the theoretical details of this cluster of combinations, combination –4 results from an interaction between ‘absolute’ political agency and a ‘deviant’ multicultural agency, which usually amounts to a confirmation of the former in instrumental opposition to, and indeed exploitation of, the latter, which portrays claims for autonomy as perverted cultural games.

Patriotism –3 represents instead the confrontation of two authentic opposites. Patriotism here is likely to view multicultural agency as the absolute ‘others’ to the absolute ‘we’ that political agency represents; of course, the reverse holds true as well, most likely producing opposing patriotisms, i.e. two opposed senses of attachment to cohesive cultural units perceived as under threat or under attack. There are two main negative aspects to such perceptions. The first is the obvious one that in this way political agency tends to favour the culture of the majority or the elite (because their culture, symbols, language, calendar, etc. are enshrined in the public system) and discriminate against the members of the cultural minority groups (because their cultures, in contrast, are barely tolerated in the private sphere). The paradox is that by trying to contrast the claims to independence on the part of cultural groups, the state becomes, in turn, highly cultural, although it pretends to be neutral. The second negative aspect, strongly linked to the former, is that by trying to oppose an ‘absolute’ multicultural agency, ‘absolute’ political agency increases social tensions, for the reaction to discrimination and intolerance is usually an even more intense attachment to one’s own culture (Walzer, 1997: 33). The likely result is the mistaken idea of an inevitable clash, both on the part of the political and on the part of the multicultural agency, which gives birth to two irreconcilable, ‘absolute’ patriotisms. Such a clash is even more evident in the international confrontation between ‘absolute’
patriotisms that relate to already independent countries which do not intend to engage in any form of dialogue or co-operation.

Slightly better is the encounter between an ‘absolute’ political agency and a ‘defensive’ or ‘revolutionary’ multicultural agency (patriotisms –2 and –1), not because the former would in any case be more receptive to the latter (for it is ‘absolute’ and remains that way), but rather because – as hypothesised above – a ‘defensive’ and a ‘revolutionary’ multicultural agency might be better in themselves, and in this case they would not be confronted by a deceptive political agency either. The improvement, however, would derive from a change of perspectives whereby the patriotic dimension of change is wholly subsumed by a multicultural agency that substitutes for a political agency.

A third cluster of combinations derives from the opposition of a ‘defensive’ political agency against the various forms of multicultural agency. These four combinations – patriotisms +1, +2, +3, and +4 – represent degrees of positive instances of ‘defensive’ patriotisms, which probably are empirically the most widespread, as political systems tend to defend themselves against antagonistic multicultural agency. Consequently, any official institutional talk (national or international) might do as an example, with all the typical rhetoric of political correctness about the worth of all cultures mixed with edifying assertions of national uniqueness and pride, the righteousness of a ‘coalition of the willing’, etc.

As for the details, if a ‘deviant’ multicultural agency and a ‘defensive’ political agency confront each other, the patriotism +1 that results is little more than a confirmation of the reasons for the political agency to be defensive of its own prerogatives, with little authentic representation of other points of view.

The confrontation is more authentic when the multicultural agency is ‘absolute’ (patriotism +2), i.e. when it stems from an original motive for existing, and the political agency applies its ‘defensive’ understanding of politics (roughly, to give to every component a share in the whole)\(^2\) in the confrontation with such multicultural claims. Of course, little dialogue is possible so long as these remain ‘absolute’, but at least the political significance of other cultures and their individual members is acknowledged (though opposed at the same time as a threat that may lead to fragmentation).

The first form of a definite positive patriotism is to be found in the combination of a ‘defensive’ political agency with a ‘defensive’ multicultural agency (patriotism +3). Multiculturalists here reason on the same grounds as traditional political members, that is, in the language of the defense of one’s interests and values. The positive outcome might be the launching of a phase of negotiations concerning what the public culture of the whole community, or the relationship among cultural communities and individual subjects within those communities, is or should be. Patriotism is conceptualised here as making sense of unity in the face of external and internal diversity. The
agencies at work are, respectively, a political one which is aware of the multiplicity of its cultural voices and a multicultural one which engages in pragmatic dialogues.

However, when multicultural claims are more neatly political, they are in combinations such as patriotism + multiculturalism, in which a ‘defensive’ political agency confronts a ‘revolutionary’ multicultural one. The only problem here is that multiculturalists actually propose more than the political agency is usually prepared to concede, and the outcome is a difficult relationship which, although it results in the advanced granting of special rights and even independent jurisdiction to particular cultural groups, is likely to be criticised by those parts of society that see such an arrangement as conducive to little actual unity. It seems to me that multicultural scholarship has revolved chiefly around this possible combination of the multicultural-political relationship. At the national level, indeed, the focus has been on cultural minorities’ rights to assert themselves and not as much on a reciprocal change of both majorities and minorities in the form of a comprehensive reconfiguration of the whole.

In contrast, the cluster of the last four combinations takes issue precisely with the whole. A pertinent example may again be the United States, but this time perceived positively, as a country ‘founded and ruled by immigrants’ (Walzer, 1992: 13). Compiled at the beginning of the 1990s, Walzer’s account of American identity is very different from Huntington’s 2000s snapshot, which suggests one of two things: either the intervening factor of a religiously- and culturally-informed terrorism has gravely changed the picture or Walzer’s account may have actually benefited from the non-exposure to the terrorist dramas, collective phobias and impressionist scenarios that have characterised much of the American intellectual debate after 11 September 2001. Walzer actualises and perfects in his work ideas that were already formulated by the founding fathers and constantly kept alive since then. These revolve around the widespread principle that the American nation is a ‘political nation of cultural nationalities’ (9). To this central point, he adds two important remarks. First, the cultural component does not lie only at the individual and the group level, but the US per se has a quantum of cultural substance, though not quite in the Anglo-Protestant terms of Huntington. Second, ‘[t]he stronger the particularist identities of individual men and women are, the stronger their citizenship must be’ (10). Walzer’s thesis is that one should ‘reassert the twinned American values of a singular citizenship and a radically pluralist civil society’ (17). This theoretical account has also been matched, at least to some extent, by a pragmatic political agenda, which unfortunately is no longer in place. Proposals such as Clinton’s for a ‘multicultural revolution’ – if freed from any residual electoral purpose and especially when seriously implemented, of course – were especially pointers in the direction of the kind of transformative patriotism I have outlined. Interestingly, not only a politician but even a head of government could talk of ‘revolution’ without sounding threatening (i.e. apocalyptic in the messianic sense of the term ‘revolution’). Needless to say, how-
ever, people like Huntington would not be (and indeed were not) convinced by such a proposal because it dissolves their favoured ‘revitalized’ American identity, in which the only conception of patriotism is of an ‘absolute’ or at best a ‘defensive’ kind. However, although revolutions usually seem far from having any welcoming dimension, as they often signify an unprecedented change for some at the expense of others through violent means, several revolutions in history prove that it is often by contesting meanings and structures that better arrangements come about.

A balance is possible between the multicultural and the political dimension that meets the difficulties confronting America and other western countries today: America is a nation of settlers which has become a nation of immigrants; Europe is an association of nation-states which are integrating among themselves (to an extent) and are being internally transformed by immigration, on the one hand, and are also being transformed by rates of procreation of some immigrant groups which are very high when compared to those of the original populations, on the other; most other liberal-democratic countries are constituted by societies which are caught in a two-fold process of globalisation and diversification. The balance amounts to a carefully crafted combination of assimilation and accommodation. I am far from proposing that every culture, irrespective of its actual content, should be equally accommodated and that any cultural core should wither away. However, it is reasonable that all those cultures that do contribute to the nation’s or the international community’s advancement and enrichment should be accommodated, in the sense that they should rightfully become part of an overarching identity: not assimilated, i.e. not merely absorbed, but not just tolerated either, i.e. not merely let alone. By not merely letting these cultures alone, I mean that they should be empowered and thus enabled to identify with higher-level political and cultural units. This is possible only through a conceptualisation of patriotism – the collective reflection on politics, society, and culture – which is internally ‘welcoming’ in regard to diversity and externally ‘cooperating’, at least with all those other countries that subscribe to the same principles of constructive cultural and political openness.

With the possible exception of patriotism +5, in which the ‘revolutionary’ political agency is undermined by the ideological nature of a ‘deviant’ multicultural agency, the response of the political to the multicultural agency in a ‘revolutionary’ patriotism is to make sense of the socio-political unit as a dynamic, developing multicultural entity, where we-others distinctions are but final crystallisations of the debate within a national and international plurality of voices. The multicultural agency that a ‘revolutionary’ political agency confronts here can be either ‘absolute’, i.e. still uncompromising as to its radical goals of cultural and political autonomy (patriotism +6), ‘defensive’, i.e. assertive of its own cultural practices but ready to acknowledge the needs of political cohesion (patriotism +7), or, in its turn, ‘revolutionary’. In this last case, one witnesses a responsive transformation of the collective ‘we’ in order
to combat discrimination in its individual, group-, and state-forms, which triggers a rethinking of what diversity really comes down to. Further, discrimination is tackled by a ‘revolutionary’ patriotism that rethinks the alleged neutrality of the state. A patriotic sentiment that comes to grips with such an understanding of the political unit and its critics (patriotism +8) would be revolutionary in the sense that there would no longer be compelling reasons for asserting antagonistic claims to independence, for a joint effort on the side of the political and the multicultural agencies would address the concerns for the equal treatment of all the cultural components that constitute the whole.

Patriotism +8 is also where the best possible balance is attained between the force of assimilation and the force of accommodation that condition the formation of any collective identity. When both the multicultural and the political agencies engage with a responsive transformation in order to accomplish higher-level goals — terminating cultural, social and international political inequality and at the same time preserving some significant level of cultural, social, and international political cohesiveness —, the two forces at play in the process of identity formation — accommodation and assimilation — interact in the form of a dynamics by which diversity is protected and a sense of unity is fostered. At the national level, the principle of accommodation functions as the tenet around which to assimilate individuals and groups toward the creation of a diverse but cohesive collective identity. At the international level, the European motto ‘United in diversity’ best represents a contemporary example of national units that can co-operate and intermingle while preserving their identities and original characteristics.

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The least welcoming and cooperating combination = black; the most welcoming and cooperating combination = white.

‘Welcoming and cooperating patriotisms’ represent an arrangement in which the focus is not so much on cultural majorities and cultural minorities, nor on cultures and countries endowed with more or less power, but rather one in which power is shared and thus the law produced does justice to all. As Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)
puts it, ‘[a]n unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.’ ‘Welcoming and cooperating patriotisms’ are possible when a comprehensive association transcends distinctions in the form of progressive revolutionary associations that rule for the good of all. Patriotism here is conceptualised in such a way so as to fill the gap between past and present, privilege and justice, and is implemented so as to effectively welcome in the sentiment of patriotism all those who are willing to cooperate in the creation of a new, inclusive ‘we’.

In this sense, patriotism becomes patriotism in the truest sense of the word when it transcends a sentiment of mere nostalgia (longing for a past in which one’s own position used to be privileged), piety (worship of the laws as they are, no matter what their discriminatory effects are), or passion (pride in embodying what one considers to be the salient features of the country or the international community) to achieve the form of a more welcoming and cooperating sentiment, that of compassion. Compassion is a force that drives human beings to better a situation considered unjust, regardless of whether the injustice is suffered by subjects who belong to a traditional ‘we’ or to some sort of ‘otherness’. Piety would be a justifiable component of patriotism if the existing regulations treated every member according to principles of formal and substantial equality; nostalgia would be a justifiable component of patriotism if the regulations of the past were more tolerant and less discriminatory than those of the present; passion would be a justifiable component of patriotism if the enthusiasm were directed towards a country or an international arrangement that engages in transformative processes of common emancipation; but otherwise, that is, in the absence of these conditions, compassion is the only sentiment that can act as a seed from which a better (in terms of the realisation of a common emancipation) political order and socio-cultural arrangement could arise.14

CONCLUSION

Western polities and societies – European and American alike, including the international compounds in which they associate – face the greatest risk that any polity or society can encounter: fragmentation, separation, or even disintegration. In the last decades, multiculturalists have propagated claims – most evident so far at the national levels (but many examples testify to the proximity of the national and international dimensions) – for the protection or even jurisdicitional and political independence of minority cultures. Polities and societies should try to understand the reasons behind such claims and, whenever possible, try to address the concerns that cause them. By doing so, they may well end up neutralising the multiculturalist threat of fragmentation, separation, or disintegration. If radical multiculturalist claims
continued in polities and societies that seriously undertake policies aimed at recognising the complex agency behind we-others distinctions and at contrasting cultural discrimination and inequality, then they would reveal a ‘deviant’ or ‘absolute’ nature; if, on the contrary, multicultural claims became less radical, then they would reveal a ‘defensive’ or ‘revolutionary’ nature, and distinctions between ‘we’ and ‘others’ would be reconstructed as new forms of association, in which a common tension for non-discrimination and co-operation would inform new patriotisms underpinned by a new sense of a collective ‘we’.

I have remarked that any discussion of multiculturalism is complicated in two ways, for the concept stands for both a normative theory of what contemporary societies should be like and a mere empirical acknowledgment of cultural diversity. These difficulties remain. My own analysis has originated from ‘the political’, i.e. from the perspective of someone who wants to preserve and advance the prospects of political unity and common citizenship, but, at the same time, it has undertaken a multicultural approach in that its objective was to suggest that a theory of political unity can come to terms with the fact of cultural diversity. From such a standpoint, I have elaborated on three main proposals.

The first is to critically reconsider what agents animate any polity and society. One should be better aware of his or her own position in the system, which can be accomplished by testing one’s own interpretation of the polity and the society, where distinctions between ‘we’ and ‘others’, although they do exist, hardly correspond to objective and permanent (‘absolute’) distinctions. Rather, any collective emerges as a whole where every single member conveys layers of sameness and layers of uniqueness, and where ‘we’-‘others’ distinctions are constantly reconfigured according to the ‘revolutionary’, ‘defensive’, ‘absolute’ or ‘deviant’ nature of the identities at stake. Such collectives are fluid themselves, for they result from dynamic combinations of the opposing forces of assimilation and accommodation that underpin all processes of identity formation.

The second proposal is to test any allegedly multiculturalist claim according to the ‘revolutionary’/‘defensive’/‘absolute’/‘deviant’ categorisation of multicultural agency. Indeed, multiculturalism has many faces and is not problematic per se, but only some of its understandings and implementations are. Accurate research and reflection are needed before one can ascribe an empirical phenomenon with sufficient certainty to one category of multicultural agency or another. Paying more attention and putting more precision into analysing multiculturalism would already amount to an improvement, given the hasty conclusions that some journalists and even academics, politicians and policy-makers tend to draw about it (the hasty conclusions of the latter two having the most devastating effects). Equally important is to not equate political agency to an all-encompassing Schmittian distinction between friends (those like us) and enemies (those who are existentially different from
Like multicultural agency, political agency takes at least four very different forms — ‘deviant’, ‘absolute’, ‘defensive’, and ‘revolutionary’ — all of which possess some cultural dimension but in different ways.

The third proposal concerns a new understanding of patriotism that, in a context of multiculturalism, is welcoming of both the traditional cultural mainstream and the old and new cultural flows that are willing to cooperate in dialogical processes of identity formation. Once again, my purpose has been first of all to show how patriotisms have no univocal dimension. They can uphold ‘deviant’ discourses, i.e. mystifications of what the political (and socio-cultural) unit is really all about, or ‘absolute’ discourses, i.e. convictions that privilege which constitute the one and only acceptable meaning of patriotism are to be maintained. However, other understandings of patriotism do exist and should be spread. A ‘defensive’ arrangement is already an advancement, for it conceives of patriotism as proper to a common arena where all subjects can reach a synthesis through the defense of their particular interests. However, the most advanced understanding is one that positively and actively aims at the improvement of society through a love of one’s country as a whole, which is in turn enmeshed in a system of cooperating international relations and thus necessarily amounts to a love of all the constitutive members of the whole — in one word, compassion.

Be they revolutionary, defensive, absolute or deviant, multicultural claims are not necessarily good in themselves. However, they may serve as incentives to render political agency, and ultimately patriotisms, into something better. This article has argued that this ‘something better’, which is better because it is liberty- and equality-enhancing, shall certainly not be deceptively ‘deviant’, arrogantly ‘absolute’, or merely ‘defensive’, but a web of revolutionarily ‘welcoming and cooperating patriotisms’.

ENDNOTES

1 I take ‘culture’ to mean ‘the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group’ (UNESCO, 1982). That is, I follow the anthropological scholarship that does not confine the notion of ‘culture’ to ethnic aspects, as some of the literature on multiculturalism does; but I do not confine it to aspects of leisure either — be it low or high culture. Even if it is probably true that culture has more to do with the intellectual sphere than anything else and that, in contrast, the spiritual concerns an internal sensitivity which makes sense of the external world and orients one’s moral choices, when one speaks of the ‘culture’ of a people or a group, one normally does not refer to intellectual features only. Cultures even have political sides to them and indeed tend to be politicised, particularly by forms of nationalism. In this regard, my approach is aware of the possible connections between culture and nation but does not follow a deterministic linkage between the two, assuming that nations are typically multi-cultural.

2 In my usage, the adjective ‘multiculturalist’ differs from ‘multicultural’ in that the former pinpoints radi-
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cal attempts to produce policies that allow for the complete independence and separation of a cultural
group from the rest of society, whereas the latter refers to more moderate claims.

3 See, for a primary reference, Maurizio Viroli (1995).

4 Indeed, Patrizia Nanz employs precisely Young’s adjective – ‘situated’ – to qualify her critique of the
abstractedness of Habermas’ idea of postnational constitutional patriotisms in favour of a multicultural
/dialogical and translational) theory of a ‘contextualized or situated constitutional patriotism’ (Nanz,
2007: 115).

5 I thank the author for making the text available to me.

6 Traditional ‘we’ also develop and change through contestations of this sort. The argument used against
clitoridectomy, for instance, somewhat echoes the argument advanced by supporters of the right to
abortion in Italy some thirty years ago.

7 As Maurizio Viroli (1995: 174–175) notes, ‘the ethnocultural identity has political significance, while the
political identity is also cultural. The historical memory of the people, which is a fundamental component
of its common culture, is multiple, controversial, and open to continuous interpretations and re-inter-
pretations which are always politically oriented. ... Ethnocultural identity and political values are neither
connected by implication nor distinguished under the heading of particular culture versus universalistic
principles. Cultural identity and political values do in fact overlap and many combinations are possible.’

8 Note that the categories I identify, however, do not necessarily represent clear-cut cases of multicul-
turalism, as most of the time, single cases will be comprised of a mix (depending on the circumstances)
of aspects taken from more than one category. The nature of the categorisation is explicative rather
than descriptive.

9 Michael Walzer conceptualises this sort of toleration as his fifth regime of toleration, that of the immi-
grant societies. The use of the term ‘toleration’ is apt because what Walzer concentrates on in this case
is not so much public efforts on the part of the state to publicly sustain cultures, but rather the tolera-
ton on the part of the state of those individuals who want to organise themselves – privately – in cul-
tural associations, be they churches, schools, etc. In my reading, the ‘multicultural’ is already present de
facto as a result of the state’s toleration of individual cultural difference, but, in its more normative di-
mension, it emerges at a slightly later stage, which Walzer (1997: 34) also acknowledges: ‘The fear that
soon the only objects of toleration will be eccentric individuals leads some groups (or their most com-
mitted members) to seek positive support from the state – in the form, say, of subsidies and matching
grants for their schools and mutual aid organisations. Given the logic of multiculturalism, state support
must be provided, if it is provided at all, on equal terms to every social group.’ The claims of the groups
for state support derive not so much from fear, but from a sentiment of inequality and injustice. In fact,
the state, which purports itself as neutral and indifferent to cultural difference, may be and usually is, as
correctly noted by Young and others, culturally informed. In this sense, multiculturalism emerges as a
reaction to state policies that favor certain cultural groups within the whole society (see, for instance,
the establishment of public holidays or public school curricula and in general what is perceived as ‘nor-
mal’ according to customs and common norms).

10 Multicultural agency may indeed, anthropologically, represent a threat more than an asset. For inter-
esting insights, see Wilshire, 2005.
11 And bearing in mind the explicative and non-descriptive nature of the categorisation. See note 8.
12 Before Crick (1962), this account of the political was espoused by innumerable theorists from antiquity through modernity. For a particularly elegant republican version of the argument, see Madison (1987).
13 Huntington does not agree that the American society is an immigration-society, and he has a point when he remarks that America, at least in its initial phases, is better described as a society of settlers. I am inclined to think that the US today, however, can be seen as a sort of peculiar nation-state: it is indeed a country comprised of an American nation; but immigration is a defining feature of this nation throughout its history (though its historical significance varies over time); and perhaps all the differences between immigration and settlement can be substantially reduced if one thinks of both as forms of migration (the former being actually nobler if one recalls what settlement and colonisation meant for indigenous peoples).
14 For an extended presentation of this argument, see Nones, 2006–2007.

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WELCOMING AND COOPERATING PATRIOTISMS

Global Governance vs. State Failure

PÉTER MARTON

Abstract: The article presents some conceptual innovations to aid research on state failure by freeing it from some of its burden of a specifically West-centric kind of normativity. It looks to do so firstly by offering a more universally relevant definition for the central concept of the discourse. Following a dual conceptualisation of the notion, it deals with state failure primarily from an external/security perspective, using the concept of Negative Spill-over Effects (NSEs). This has the added benefit of leading to a potentially refined definition of global governance by pointing to a program of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) as the latter's essential contemporary mission. With regards to what that may imply, an overview of the discourse on state failure and a description of different schools of thought within it follow. A theoretical construct of the discourse is laid out, which may allow for distinguishing between various conceivable and debatable normative frameworks for CTR and global governance, each read out from one of the respective schools of thought presented in the overview of the discourse.

Key words: state failure, spillover effects, security interdependence, herd immunity, post-modern imperialism, cooperative threat reduction

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War was followed by a brief period of upward trends in the number of armed intrastate conflicts (UCD). These make up a significant cluster of what the State Failure Task Force in the mid-1990s defined as ‘state failure events’ (Goldstone et al.; SFTF, 2000: 5). Initially, humanitarian interest defined much of the research on the topic of failed states and state failure. The direct discursive origins of inquiry can be traced back to a 1993 article by Helman and Ratner, who itself in turn was influenced by developments such as the civil wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, in the post-Soviet space and in Somalia. Even Helman and Ratner, who did consider negative external effects of armed intrastate conflict, did so merely with the purpose of justifying the need for the United Nations Security Council to preoccupy itself with an issue of otherwise mostly humanitarian significance. They noted a potentially destructive external impact in the case of states directly neighbouring on conflict-struck areas and made the argument that because of this, these conflicts could endanger international peace and security.
Today, there is a large and constantly growing body of literature on ‘failed states’ and ‘state failure’ (see Lambach, 2007). This, however, is attributable to no small degree to a more recent development. The effect of the terror attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 brought widespread recognition of the fact that even distant armed intrastate conflicts, such as the one in Afghanistan, and a lack of effective control over state territory by an internationally recognised government can have lethal indirect consequences – even for non-neighbouring, quite distant, and very powerful states.

What has been missing from the discourse, with the exception of the State Failure Task Force’s (SFTF from hereon) quite exact definition of state failure events, carefully operationalised using event identification thresholds and event magnitude scales, is a thorough conceptualisation of state failure with the aim to produce a universally operationalisable definition.

This lack of a definition partly stems from the nature of International Relations Theory, i.e. the nature of a theory of interstate relations. State failure is simply outside of the ‘box’. It poses the greatest challenge to that IR school of thought which by its very nature is most confined to the proverbial box: Realism. The latter’s uncomfortable answer to the phenomenon of state failure seems to be to note that in ‘failed states’ one sees ‘a curious inversion of Hobbes’ (Jackson, 1998: 5). That is the state of nature which Realism is trained to consider on the interstate level rather than as an intrastate phenomenon, even while the latter clearly wouldn’t be much of a surprise even for Hobbes himself. This has paralysing analytical implications. It results in taking a very simplified view of the usually highly complex reality of social relations in the space described as a ‘failed state’.

Presenting a possible way to conceptualise state failure, the following section of this article looks to overcome the above mentioned deficiency of the IR discourse by using the following basic innovations. I.) Firstly, it seeks to do this by avoiding the inherently normative term ‘failed states’ because it results in derogatory labelling. Such labelling is influenced by considerations that are political/non-scientific in nature: considerations regarding which states one may appropriately call ‘failed’. Two other negative implications for analysis are that the adjective ‘failed’ suggests a possibly false finality and that it lacks sophistication to a critical degree. II.) The second innovation is to differentiate between different research motivations, which dictate different research agendas. As a result of one or another particular way of answering the question of ‘for whom’ research is conducted, one may view ‘state failure’ as a phenomenon from an external/security or an internal/humanitarian perspective. This results in differing definitions. III.) Thirdly, state failure doesn’t have to mean an absence of statehood or imply a decrease in statehood, i.e. a diminishing of ‘state-likeness’. Keep the analogy of market failures in mind here. A market failure doesn’t have to be interpreted as something that implies the overall absence or failure of the
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market as an institution. The expression can even be used in the plural, referring to the various, potentially contemporaneous forms of market failure.

It’s especially the definition from the external/security perspective that may offer additional value: in the post-September 11 world it may have advantages over the SFTF’s definition by arguably being more relevant (although the humanitarian considerations-based definition that the task force designed cannot be overlooked, even with a staunch security focus in research, for reasons made clear in this article later on).

Dealing with state failure primarily from the external/security perspective and using the concept of Negative Spillover Effects (NSEs), which will be introduced in the following section, one may define an important stake of the discourse on state failure, that is, a potentially refined definition of global governance. It stems from identifying a program of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) as an essential contemporary task of global governance. CTR is conceptualised so as though it would offer converging gains to all the states on the planet.

To elaborate on what that may imply, an overview of the discourse on state failure and a description of different schools of thought within it follow. That allows for distinguishing between various conceivable and debatable normative frameworks for CTR and global governance. These normative frameworks are generated from the schools of thought outlined in the overview of the discourse. A discussion of them may help define the enormous challenges of the sort of interstate cooperation conceived of here. It is cooperation on a highly ambitious scale, on epistemologically and empirically questionable grounds, and of a debatable content as to the concrete measures to be taken.

The last section is what may be regarded as the more policy-relevant part of the article, even while it itself only looks to present some cautiously formulated (albeit critical) normative conclusions.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Something that can be viewed as a welcome change in the new ‘post-9/11’ interpretation of state failure is the honesty in it about the security considerations and security interests motivating research. An outpouring of refugees, for example, has usually been a key external security concern in the case of humanitarian crises. Generally, however, such concerns remained more latent, only implicitly informing research and policy-making. The threat of terrorism, especially since it was highlighted by what happened on September 11, 2001, tends to figure much more prominently in reasoning justifying any kind of research or policy agenda related to state failure. This is shown the most clearly in the title of Robert I. Rotberg’s oft-cited volume (‘State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror’; Rotberg, 2003) or in former UK foreign secretary Jack Straw’s statement that we shall fear the coming of the
'next Afghanistan' (Straw, 2002: 4). It’s a welcome honesty, even if there certainly exist chances for the manipulation of the notion through it.

The use of the concept of state failure may be more clarified now. An approach that reflects the dual – mixed security-oriented and humanitarian – nature of the research can be established. One can come up with both a ‘security-oriented’ and a ‘humanitarian’ concept. In other words, these may be viewed as a duo of one concept from the global, external perspective and another from the local, internal point of view (drawing on Marton, 2005: 2).

(The security-oriented definition.) According to the security-oriented definition, state failure occurs when the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG from hereon) of a state doesn’t exercise sufficient control over its internationally recognised state territory and therefore fails in its chief function from the external point of view. That primary function is defined, for the purposes of abstract conceptualisation here, on the basis of a norm of cooperative sovereignty. According to the latter, a state is primarily responsible for maintaining sufficient control over its sovereign portion of world territory. State failure thus occurs when an IRG is unable to prevent the emergence of Negative Spillover Effects (NSEs) – negative external security consequences – from its territory. In the case of such IRG incapacity, the use of incentives or deterrents by the actors of the outside world can’t get the IRG in question to prevent or cease NSEs on its territory (hence the threat is ‘indeterrable’). By the ‘outside world’, one may mean potentially all the states on the planet, a group of states or even a single state affected by NSEs.

NSEs can be interpreted as any external impact that may become securitised. Keeping securitisation theory (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde, 1998: 23–42) in mind is important for a critical view of this issue. The most often considered NSEs are those of terrorism-related or organised criminal activities (including, for example, the drugs trade). The danger of an epidemic getting out of control in the territory of a poor or a conflict-struck state, facilitated by critically weak health services, also belongs in the category of more frequently considered threats.

However, one may think of many others as well. For example, a guerrilla organisation active in one country may take advantage of the weakness of a neighbouring country’s IRG and the political vacuum in the latter’s territory and establish rear-bases in the protection of internationally recognised state boundaries. To name but one such instance, this happened in the case of the Rwandan Interahamwe militia (which retreated from Rwanda to rear-bases in the Congo after 1994). Pirates – guerrillas of the sea in analogous terms – may similarly establish operating bases for themselves along an insufficiently controlled coastline. The International Maritime Bureau of the International Chamber of Commerce regularly updates its live piracy map. On the latter you can see in one glimpse where insufficiently controlled coasts pose a problem, Somalia’s coast being one of these problematic areas (IMB/ICC, 2006).
GLOBAL GOVERNANCE VS. STATE FAILURE

It might also be perspective-widening to break away, in connection with the threat of epidemics, from our preconceptions about lethal, rapidly killing viruses like the one causing SARS. Consider therefore the threat of multi-resistant TB-strains or the spread of HIV, for instance.

A critical interpretation of the concept of NSEs implies first and foremost that one doesn’t simply accept any security agenda. For example, one should not accept as an objective fact that the outpouring of refugees from a state is a security issue. Such a view can only be the result of an inter-subjective process with a more or less stable, i.e. a potentially dynamically shifting, outcome.

To express what is meant by the term ‘indeterrability’ then, one has to point to the issue of government recognition. The present global state system should ideally function so that the list of IRGs and – referring to Henry Kissinger’s famous question about the EU’s telephone number – that of the telephone numbers belonging to each would suffice to keep the problem of NSEs under control. Such a list would provide contact points to able leaderships in every corner of the world. For instance, should there appear a terrorist training camp in Country X, it could be enough to dial the right number and ask the leadership there to make that camp disappear – that is, assuming the benevolence of Country X’s leadership, stemming from the premise of the universal acceptance of a cooperative norm of sovereignty. Country X’s leadership is also supposed to be capable of credible commitment to do what it takes to meet its external obligations (regarding credible commitment and its significance in European state formation, see Spruyt, 1998).

When Country X isn’t capable of that, it might be for various reasons. Some IRGs are weak to act even in the absence of an armed challenge. In other cases it is an armed force other than that of the IRG that controls the given territory from where NSEs may emerge.

The term ‘IRG-failure’ may be more preferable than ‘state failure’ because of the greater accuracy of the former. The implications of the oft-seen erroneous tendency of conflating state and government as an actor in IR discourse can be avoided by using the term ‘IRG-failure’ as a substitute. The term ‘state failure’ will only be used in this article from hereon in order to conform to the tradition of the discourse. It is purely for the sake of the mutual comprehensibility of this contribution and the rest of the discourse. Otherwise, state failure is re-conceptualised as IRG-failure here.

Opening a global perspective on the issue, an instance of state failure may also be interpreted as the failure of the global system of IRG-operated states. Unfortunately, here again, the use of the word ‘state’ draws attention away from the distinctness of state and government. It may thus lead to IRG-centricity in thinking. For instance, in areas that have been firmly controlled for decades by an armed organisation other than an IRG, which may provide acceptable governance there and may
aim at establishing constructive relations with the outside world, one should not speak of indeterrability. There is still somebody to deter. Jeffrey Herbst speaks, in connection with this, of ‘legal blinders’ and states that ‘the standard international legal practice almost always equates sovereign power with control of the capital city’ (Herbst, 2004: 302).

(The humanitarian definition.) Having clarified the security-oriented concept, the humanitarian concepts of state failure still have to be discussed.

Rotberg, for instance, draws up a continuum along which a country may move: from the rank of being ‘strong’ through that of being ‘weak’, ‘failing’, ‘failed’, and finally ‘collapsed’. He doesn’t differentiate between problems of insufficient or incomplete territorial control, on the one hand, and those of weak government performance or the insufficient provision of ‘political goods’, on the other. For his approach, he draws latent criticism from Jenne, who points out that it would allow for including the seemingly strong North Korea and the fragmented Sri Lanka in the same category (Rotberg, 2003: 2–10, Jenne, 2003: 222–223). A bigger problem, however, is that the ‘internal perspective’ makes it necessary to make normative statements regarding the desirable quality of a state in much more detail than does the security-oriented concept. That, implicitly or explicitly, means taking as the basis of such considerations an ideal model-state, which rather inevitably results in West-centricity.

With the aim of being therefore strategically vague, and on an arguably Hobbesian basis, one may define the state as the chief means for the population of a given territory of ensuring stable, reliable life prospects for the long run. State failure thus occurs when a state fails in this chief function (Marton, 2004: 134). However, in thinking exactly based on Hobbes’ concept of the Leviathan and what might go wrong with it, one gets to theoretical possibilities that show that even when using of deliberate under-conceptualisation, one cannot really exclude ideological influences.

If we imagine what might be non-optimal about the operation of a Leviathan, we get four options: I.) It may be too strong, in which case the state itself makes life prospects non-reliable by violent arbitrariness. II.) Two or more Leviathans may fight for the control of state territory in a ‘civil war’ or an internal armed conflict (although a persistent division of state territory is also imaginable in a frozen conflict without continuous fighting). III.) If the Leviathan is simply too weak, unmitigated miseries of life, corruption, and organised and unorganised forms of crime might be a source of uncertainty. IV.) Finally, it is a theoretical, rather than a practical, possibility that any kind of Leviathan may be absent altogether.

The first option shows strongly authoritarian rule as being the equivalent of state failure, from which the universal need for democracy promotion may stem. The first person to protest that would probably be Hobbes himself, who, in accordance with his vision of ‘the state of nature’, was ready to welcome even authoritarian rule as
preferable to the possibility of civil war (Hobbes, 1970: 145–149). Still, scholars such as Nicholson seem to be following a logic similar to the one outlined above. Nicholson stops short of referring to states which provide their populations with ‘coercive’ stability, as opposed to the ‘consensual’ stability provided by democracies, as ‘failed’. Since coercion means state violence, however, he acknowledges that it might constitute a failure in guaranteeing individuals’ physical security. His benchmark for judging the latter is a critical threshold of ‘the probability that a new-born infant will reach a suitably advanced age and then die of natural causes’ (Nicholson, 1998). This leaves room for soft authoritarian states in the category of ‘non-failed’ and thus mitigates ideological influences.

The third option, that of the weak but non-challenged Leviathan, is also interesting. The SFTF’s definitions of state failure events cover only two of the three relevant possibilities listed above. It is easy to understand why the third one remained outside the framework of the SFTF’s empirical inquiries. State weakness, seemingly in the absence of anything dramatic happening, can hardly be noted as an ‘event’ – even if for many individuals life may be brutish and short as a result of poverty-related diseases or organised crime.

The main challenge regarding the humanitarian definition is that it’s less objectively operationalisable. Using the critical threshold suggested by Nicholson may be quite problematic in instances when we don’t have sufficient and/or reliable statistical data. Also, the humanitarian notion may be too wide to benefit analysis. Low-income and conflict-struck states and countries ruled by strongly authoritarian regimes all fall within its category.

Yet we can’t just ignore it. For example, there is the issue of refugee flows as an NSE shows that the ‘humanitarian vs. security-oriented’ differentiation of research approaches cannot be clear-cut. The risk of such NSEs is clearly higher when a state’s population doesn’t have stable, reliable life prospects. This is more than a plausible hypothesis. Per definitionem it is so, based on any interpretation of the term ‘refugee’.

Humanitarian considerations matter also from an ethical perspective. A state where the IRG doesn’t produce sufficient public good is hardly well-functioning, even if there are no NSEs originating from its territory.

Further critical remarks are, however, necessary. Most importantly, albeit one may empirically identify states’ individual failures in a trans-spatial and trans-temporal set of state failures, this shouldn’t imply that one cannot look beyond any given individual state in analysing the reasons for a particular instance of state failure. Currently, that commonly happens as the discourse on state failure is very closely connected to the discourse over ‘good governance’ – they share basically the same analytical framework, existing in a complementary relationship (Kasnyik, 2007: 55–56). Structural factors thus have to be taken into account beyond a narrow-sighted, ‘agency-focused’ approach to reviewing individual states’ features. One
cannot miss the importance of history either and has to counter the ahistorical nature of the discourse (Bilgin and Morton, 2002). The latter, in turn, is closely tied to a similarly deceiving, depoliticising mode of speech over what state capacity building may entail (Hameiri, 2007).

**NSES, INTERDEPENDENT SECURITY, AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

A security-oriented conceptualisation, focusing on NSEs, treats a co-operative interpretation of sovereignty as the norm. The objection that it isn’t actually the norm of the day is welcome. This is merely to say that it could be the norm in the ideal world of credibly committing IRGs described in the previous section.

The notion of cooperative sovereignty is essential in understanding why the issue of state failure is problematised at all. A traditional Realist normative framework of thinking would leave far smaller room for such problematisation: weak, failing and failed states shall perish unless they are allies. Therefore, one first has to look at the concept of security interdependence in this section to more comprehensively explain the problematisation of state weakness that has taken place.

As a result of globalisation, the world has become highly interdependent, not only in an economic but in a security sense as well. In such a world, the benefit of having stable states with credible leaderships covering all the territory in the world is obvious. Given a high level of interconnectedness, if Country X might spend a great amount of money on its security, regardless of how high the amount is, it may still not be able to preserve it if, meanwhile, Country Y is a totally dysfunctional state which operates as a fertile ground for NSEs (see Figure 1.).

**Figure 1: States as building blocks**

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In the absence of a world state – the starting point of any discussion of the issue of global governance – the existing states serve as building blocks of global stability. Assuming the highest attainable level of security interdependence, physical proximity will be an irrelevant factor in affecting the probability of NSEs from a dysfunctional state, such as Country Y, reaching Country X. Wherever Country X is, NSEs are going to reach it. If this will not happen directly, then it will happen indirectly through a shock effect across the entire system. Country X and Country Y don’t have to be adjacent to each other.
That’s how security interdependence works. Several analogies may highlight the essence of this sort of interdependence. The study by Kunreuther, Heal and Orszag (2002) on security challenges faced by companies in the airline industry is one such useful analogy. The authors point to the example of Pan Am flight 103, which was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland on December 21, 1988. The luggage containing the explosive device that destroyed the aircraft didn’t go through Pan Am’s own reliable screening system – it was transferred from another flight. Thus, Pan Am effectively lost an airliner due to another airline’s lax approach to security (p. 2).

Other analogies include interconnected computer networks like the Internet itself, where one insufficiently defended computer might be a threat to the entire network. The chances are that it might more easily be bot-infected and controlled by malevolent third parties. Similar interdependence may be observed among human populations trying to defend themselves against communicable diseases. Those people who are not vaccinated against certain infectious diseases pose a risk to their entire society. Diseases may spread in the non-vaccinated part of the population and may eventually evolve, through a process of mutation, into a threat even to the vaccinated part of the population (to which the old vaccination no longer provides protection).

Security interdependence in general works according to the principle that the higher the ratio of sufficiently protected units, the lower the level of threat to the entire set of units. This holds for the case of states as well. Epidemiologists use the term ‘herd immunity’ when referring to this inverse relationship. The following example may be useful in grasping the practical implications of the concept. Communicable diseases return to cause epidemics when there is a drop below the herd immunity threshold of a population, e.g. as a result of a decrease in the vaccination rate. This is the case with meningitis in Africa’s Sahel region, in the so-called ‘meningitis belt’, where people get vaccinated against meningitis only during times of major epidemics (see e.g. WHO, 2003).

One may say that state-building and measures to strengthen states in general aim at the achievement of a kind of herd immunity for states. The best case would be if the ratio of sufficiently protected units could reach a hundred percent. Conversely, if a large number of states are non-functioning units, in the sense that NSEs emerge from their territory, that doesn’t bode well for overall global stability. This is where state-building comes in as a pivotal task for global governance to ensure that the society of states stays above the critical threshold for maintaining stability in an interdependent environment.

The latter worried view explains the emergence of a so-called post-modern imperialist stream of thought. ‘The premodern world is a world of failed states’, Robert Cooper writes, of much of the post-colonial world (Cooper, 2002: 16). ‘All of the world’s major drug-producing areas are part of the pre-modern world. (...) If non-
state actors, notably drug, crime, or terrorist syndicates take to using pre-modern bases for attacks on the more orderly parts of the world, then the organised states may eventually have to respond. If they become too dangerous for established states to tolerate, it is possible to imagine a defensive imperialism’ (Cooper, 2002: 16–17). Fukuyama effectively echoes the same when he talks of the need to ready ourselves for more frequent interventions in the ‘failed state part of the world’ (Fukuyama, 2005). So do others, such as Mallaby, who speaks of the emergence of a kind of ‘reluctant imperialism’ (Mallaby, 2002), or Fearon and Laitin, who describe neo-trusteeship as something offering potentially equal gains for every major power interested in global stability (Fearon and Laitin, 2004: 6–7).

In fact, the call for neo-trusteeship had been made a lot earlier, e.g. by Helman and Ratner (1993), albeit on different (i.e. humanitarian) grounds. That is the essence of the change right there: a shift from primarily humanitarian interests to security interests in calling for rather similar measures (intervention). Arguably, that has been brought about in large part by the events of September 11, 2001, as argued earlier.

Nevertheless, post-modern imperialists do acknowledge that – in Cooper’s words – both the ‘demand’ for and the ‘supply’ of imperialism are short of what would be sufficient for a non-problematic implementation of the concept as policy.

**THE THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT OF A POLEMIC**

Having already discussed the post-modern imperialist stream of thought associated with the likes of Cooper et al., it is still necessary to give a more complete picture of the discourse on state failure. What follows here, as indicated, is a theoretical construct of the polemic. It is developed on the basis of visibly distinct patterns of thought or paradigms of thought. However, it is not meant to suggest that everyone contributing to the actual polemic necessarily takes up one of the possible positions defined in the following scheme. This concerns even those authors who are mentioned specifically in connection with a particular viewpoint. Hybrid positions as well as inconsistencies are fully imaginable, even out of pragmatic considerations.

One possible way to structure one’s inquiry is to start with looking at the polarising issue of the acceptability of intervention. On the basis of that, one immediately gets a surprising result. One may find alongside each other, in the non-interventionist camp, a typically Eurocentric and a completely non-Eurocentric stream of thought, even though they are otherwise clearly distinct from and, in a sense, antagonistic to one another.

(Historicists.) Historicists attempt to set their analysis in an historical context. Or, more exactly, they regard the occurrence of state failure as one point along a unilinear, universal development path. In this view, state failure is a necessary misery.
'There is nothing novel about the phenomenon of state failure,' writes Herbst, adding that even the European states of today have failed once or twice during their history (Herbst, 2004: 303). Prunier and Gisselquist start their study of Sudan by declaring that state failure can be observed in the history of the Roman Empire, France and China as well and thus, ‘any discussion of how an African state has failed has to be carried out with these parameters in mind’ (Prunier and Gisselquist, 2003: 101).

Behind these views, there are two main premises: I.) that in Europe, the possibility of fragmentation led to the coming into being of stable nation-states; II.) that Africa’s future may be seen in Europe’s past, given that in Africa, the chief source of problems is the instability of the artificial states that were created upon decolonisation. Colonial administrative boundaries were preserved in Africa as state frontiers, in accordance with the international legal principle of uti possidetis iuris. There are quite expressive adjectives in use that refer to the stated artificiality of African states: ‘quasi-states’ and ‘juridical’ states as opposed to ‘empirical’ states (Jackson and Rosberg, 1989; Woodward, 2002: 5–6) or ‘might-have-been-states’. According to a particularly sceptical statement cited by numerous sources, ‘African states are neither African nor states’.

Of course, these premises can be critically examined, and one may ask several questions, such as the following: 1) Do we really have only ‘nation-states’ in Europe today (especially with the ambiguity of the term ‘nation’ in mind)? 2) How stable are these states (for instance, those in the Balkans”)? 3) Has there always been and is there today the possibility of fragmentation? In other words, has it always been around and is it currently allowed to happen (again, for instance, in the Balkans)? 4) In times and places in which it did happen, just how spontaneous was this process of fragmentation? 5) Have all of the currently existing European states come into being through a process of fragmentation?

In light of the above mentioned premises, Herbst for his part makes the call ‘Let them fail’ when advocating a solution to the inherent long term instability of some states. More exactly, he adds that what we need is ‘to increase the congruence between the way that power is actually exercised and the design of units’ (Herbst, 2004: 311). That’s why he advocates decertifying sovereignty in the case of non-functioning states together with conditionally recognising sovereignty in the case of fragment-entities providing stability and acceptable governance to their population for a reasonable amount of time now – for instance, in the case of the former British colonial territory of Somaliland within Somalia (Herbst, 2004: 314).

(Anti-Eurocentrics.) What one may call the anti-Eurocentric stream may effectively be regarded as agreeing with the slogan ‘Let them fail’. It is an extremely diverse stream of post-colonialist, post-Marxist, cultural relativist and other thinkers who see the need for a kind of emancipation of different cultures. They mostly emphasise that the state is an institution that was exported to the non-Western world, even
forced on it - at least on most of those states that were created at the time of de-colonisation. Critical concerns of this stream have already been voiced in reaction to the increasing prominence of the idea of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s. In their view, it is *hubris* on the part of the West when it wishes to take into its care the populations of the exported states, trying to save them or their populations out of stated humanitarian concerns - as is the case from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sudan’s Darfur region.

In the background, these thinkers tend to suspect a kind of re-colonisation attempt (e.g. in the form of ‘cultural imperialism’ through the promotion of human rights and democracy) which is connected to classical imperialist aims. Even behind the occasional ‘emergency’ revision of ex-colonial (= artificial) boundaries that divide ethnic, religious and tribal communities and make it difficult for nomadic peoples to continue with their traditional way of life, they find inflexible the endeavour to preserve the rest of the ex-colonial boundaries and the majority of the original post-colonial states. They see that as a structural form of violence.

Thoughts with similar roots are not alien to Western thinkers either. Huntington, for instance, argues in his book *The Clash of Civilisations* for the respect of a kind of ‘civilisational’ autonomy, equating universalism with imperialist tendencies (Huntington, 1998: 548; in the Hungarian edition). Christopher Clapham provides a picture of the lack of pre-colonial proto-statehood in Africa (noting some exceptions but even then with major differences from the European experience), and he subsequently reaches the conclusion that ‘zones of statehood have to coexist with zones of less settled governance’ and that ‘attempting to restore universal statehood is chimerical’ (Clapham, 2004: 78). With regards to Somalia, he wonders if the Somali proverb ‘every man his own sultan’ indicates that statehood may be too alien to Somalis for it to be realisable in any stable way there (Clapham, 2004: 87).

With the latter thought, which basically stresses a kind of individual sovereignty, even a number of libertarian thinkers might sympathise. A most notable real-life example from their ranks is the late Michael van Notten. Having felt disappointed by liberal democracy, van Notten moved to Somalia, where he spent most of the latter part of his life, having even adopted a family there. Based on his experiences, he wrote an essay in which he described the system there in the 1990s as one which contains both libertarian and anarcho-capitalist elements and is thus rather close to his heart (van Notten, 2002).

(Human rights universalists.) Moving on to the interventionist camp, a dominant stream within it is that of human rights universalists - those who are ready to intervene for the sake of the universal application of human rights, even against IRGs if need be. To account for the rise to prominence of their views, one has to emphasise the significance of two historical normative shifts as Bain does (Bain, 2000).
Colonisation has been legitimised in the past by ideas such as the ‘dual mandate’ put forward by Lord Lugard. Along the lines of such thinking, it was suggested that colonisation was a mission and that the West was morally obliged to deliver civilisation to the savages and use the resources of their lands for the benefit of all mankind. By the time of decolonisation, these ideas have been largely discredited. Colonial rule, it seemed, was irreversibly de-legitimised. The new society of states was ready to accept even strongly authoritarian forms of rule within its new members. The new members were protected by the principles of territorial integrity and non-intervention (the latter often called the principle of ‘negative sovereignty’).

In the 1990s, however, views that one shall not tolerate everything started gaining prominence. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his Millenium Report that no legal principle may shield crimes against humanity (Annan, 2000: 48). One of Annan’s former advisors, Mohamed Sahnoun, has voiced that instead of the possibility of intervention, we should rather talk of the ‘responsibility to protect’ (see e.g. Sahnoun and Evans, 2002), a call for which had earlier been made by Bernard Kouchner, the founder of Médecins Sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde. Kouchner’s life story is illustrative enough to mention here. He founded Médecins Sans Frontières after having witnessed the plight of civilians in the Biafra War of 1967–1970, which he felt was largely ignored by the world. Nigeria could settle that conflict the way it did since it was accepted to be its domestic issue and since separatists worldwide were to be delivered a message in the form of the Biafra outcome.

The ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P) in 2005 has been included on the UN reform agenda as well. The plenary meeting of heads of state and governments that year even collectively endorsed it (albeit arguably without much practical relevance). The sort of activism stemming from R2P obviously doesn’t prefer passivity in the face of mass violations of human rights that are often seen in states deemed ‘failed’ once they fail to provide ‘protection’ to their populations, be it intentional or not.

Intervention, however, often takes place in defence of minorities. Then-UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in his 1992 An Agenda for Peace: ‘One requirement for solutions (...) lies in commitment to human rights with a special sensitivity to those of minorities, whether ethnic, religious, social or linguistic’ (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). That is a major recognised contradiction of the activism stemming from an individualist interpretation of human rights. It can lead to situations in which holding a state together can become close to impossible and fragmentation hardly avoidable. This dilemma was a constant feature of the polemic that surrounded the case of Kosovo.

(Statists.) There exists a fifth stream of thought within the state failure discourse – the ‘statist’ stream. It might seem to be in complete contradiction with the perspective of human rights universalists. It is a complex stream and problematic to conceptualise. There are at least two distinct camps within it.
A more traditional statist school of thought argues for the preservation of all the internationally recognised states of today as well as for the preservation of their borders, accepting only the idea of interventions serving this very aim, interventions in the sense of passively or actively assisting a government in the face of separatists. They argue that one of the stabilising pillars of the post-1945 international order is the non-changeability of borders on the basis of ‘ethnic’ claims of self-determination or as a result of violence. With several exceptions, this principle has been largely consistently applied, and stability arises from it. Hence, if we let today’s states fragment, recognising new entities as states, we may, in their view, contribute to a process of global fragmentation or fragmentation ‘on a planetary scale’ (quote from Gottlieb, 1994: 2 and 26; see also Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 11).

Regarding Kosovo’s independence, which they interpret as a ‘precedent’, they have a kind of domino theory to envision what will follow. Their predictions go against the long run optimism of historicists. Therefore, traditional statists may regard as acceptable a variety of means for the preservation of a state and may show suspicion towards minorities’ political agendas. For example, the following was stated by the Kenyan delegation at the 1963 opening meeting of the Organisation of African Unity about Greater Somali nationalism: ‘if they [Somalis] don’t want to live with us in Kenya, [...] they are perfectly free to leave us and our territory. This is the only way they can legally exercise their right to self-determination’ (quoted by Jackson and Rosberg, 1989: 109).

Population transfers inevitably come with a lot of human suffering and subsequently may amount to a mass violation of (individual) human rights – something that coercive forms of cultural assimilation may also amount to. Statists may accept such measures in return for the stability they hope was so created for the long run, which they see as a collective good that is worth the sacrifice. At this point, there is an obvious clash between them and human rights universalists.

However, statism is not necessarily incompatible with the endeavour to, in the long run, turn states into neutral providers of human rights. Moreover, a statist stance may be actually better defensible than separatism if it doesn’t come in one package with the aim of achieving ethnic homogeneity. In that case, it might use the argument that it is impossible to create ‘non-artificial’ states through the recognition of new entities or the modification of borders in the sense of creating ethnically homogeneous units. That is especially true in areas characterised by a mosaic-like ethno-geography. Their situation could be well described by paraphrasing a wise quote from former Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov: ‘Today you are the minority in our state, tomorrow we would be the minority in your state,’ and that would be the only change (the original phrase quoted in ICG, 2004: 4).

Such pro-human rights statism may be sensed in Bookman’s works. He argues for an ‘administrative disassociation between ethnicity and territory’ and against
providing exclusive territorial autonomy to ethnic groups, which might be a risk to stability (Bookman, 2002: 44). Following a somewhat different logic with a minority-friendly statist agenda, Gottlieb advocates a functional – as opposed to an essentialist – interpretation of borders and territoriality and the creation in some instances of trans-state national homes for stateless nations (Gottlieb, 1994: 44–47).

The rise of another kind of statism was observable during the 1990s. This other form of statist thought is termed here ‘IGO statism’ (Inter-Governmental Organisation statism). In its preference of preserving currently existing states, it doesn’t fall too far from the form of statism outlined in the previous paragraph, but its motives are different.

It received ample input, for instance, from the findings of the World Bank Group’s research on civil war, which was led, among others, by Paul Collier. A dominant feature of the latter inspired a series of scholars in outlining the concept of a ‘new’ form of civil war. According to new war theorists, contemporary rebellion around the world is primarily found to be motivated by opportunity (facilitating conditions) and greed (that of leaders as well as of those being led) rather than objective collective grievances. Collier himself published a study with the title *Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity* (Collier, 2000). The title itself might raise the suspicion of one-sidedness if we think of Charles Tilly’s famous essay and its title, *War Making and State Making as Organised Crime* (Tilly, 1985). The interesting thing is that Collier takes an overall much more balanced view of armed conflict.

Still, Collier’s works provided inspiration to the sort of thinking emblematic which has the ‘new war concept’ as its emblem. For example, Mary Kaldor, among others, talks of the emergence of ‘new war’, by which term she means those armed conflicts that ‘are sometimes called internal or civil wars to distinguish them from intra-state or Clausewitzian war.’ Kaldor repeats the rebellion–organised crime analogy and stresses the importance of opportunity vs. grievance (Kaldor, 2001). One may, of course, find changes in the nature of internal armed conflicts, just as the world itself has changed significantly in the meantime. Nevertheless, Kaldor’s conclusions still seem ideological. Numerous studies have since criticised these views for their methodologically erroneous basis or their Euro-centrism (see, e.g., Kalyvas, 2001).

It may be worth pondering why the endeavour to question and potentially criminalise anti-IRG rebellion in general surfaced more or less directly from prestigious institutional sources. One may point to the interests of development-focused, multilateral IGOs that by definition maintain relations mainly with IRGs. They run into frustrating problems when attempting to give assistance to countries destabilised by internal armed conflict. Hence, there is the suggestion that their reaction could be looked at as ‘IGO statism’. To support the distinction, one may quote Jackson and Rosberg, who state that since the time of decolonisation, international organisations have served as ‘post-imperial ordering devices’ for Africa, where ‘there was little choice but to estab-
lish independence in terms of the colonial entities’ (Jackson and Rosberg, 1989: 114 and 108). A regime like the Kimberley Process exemplifies such a device as it criminalises rebel organisations’ profiting from a natural resource (diamonds).

**IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

Encoded within the theoretically constructed streams of thought overviewed here is their own version of a global solution to the problems at hand. Post-modern imperialists may wish to take over much of the post-colonial world and run it themselves again (at least temporarily). They might do so out of the fear that leaving it to self-destruct would put our security in great danger as well. Human rights universalists would intervene in the protection of all minorities at risk on the planet. Statist thinkers, for their part, would either prefer to put down every single revolt or resolve all conflicts within existing state structures, which are preserved in their post-colonial geographical boxes. Anti-Eurocentrics and historicists would vote for a laissez-passer approach for their part.

Further insight may then be gained about the relation of the different streams vis-à-vis each other if one ponders their attitude towards the necessity of democracy and the market economy. That lets us drift towards the question of state-building and debates over its desired outcome. Historicists and anti-Eurocentrics might say ‘no’ to both democracy and the market economy, but historicists will do so only temporarily, expecting the ‘developing’ world to get to where the developed world is today by tomorrow. That is the expectation that conforms to their unilinear development hypothesis. Post-modern imperialists and human rights universalists both stand for the idea of democracy and the market economy. However, post-modern imperialists show more readiness, in the name of pragmatism, to forge a compromise over democracy. Cooper’s remark that in the jungle we should operate according to the laws of the jungle may be quoted as relevant here (Cooper, 2002: 16). Finally, mention has already been made of the ambiguities in statist thinking about the issue of human rights and, subsequently, democracy. As far as the market economy is concerned, the most positively approving view is unquestionably held by World Bank-type IGO statism.

Regarding territories that have become ‘stateless’ not as a result of internal armed conflict, but purely as a result of the weakness of an IRG, only anti-Eurocentrics and post-modern imperialists have a clear policy recommendation – each their own. Respectively, it is either that we have to accept and live with or panic because of and act against the existence of such territories. This might illustrate the state-centricity of Western political thought: only anti-Eurocentric thinking contemplates in principle the toleration of statelessness or a lack of positive sovereignty.

Of course research on ‘state failure’ also inevitably shows statist tendencies by automatically coding state weakness as negative and also by seeing the solution in
GLOBAL GOVERNANCE VS. STATE FAILURE

strengthening states. Paradoxically, this statism isn’t incompatible with the anti-statism of neo-liberalism or, more specifically, with its existing practice. Neo-liberal thinkers, save for some with libertarian or anarcho-capitalist inclinations, do approve of strengthening states in their security-provider role with the aim of facilitating the trouble-free operation of the global economy. However, they will only do so without revising their ideas about the sphere of the economy, the consequences of those ideas put into practice, and the selective way in which they are put into practice. This sort of approach might be endorsed by post-modern imperialists, whose aim might be interpreted as correcting decolonisation to save globalisation. However, we can hardly afford the luxury of selectivity in critical thinking and may not be content equating state-building with the assignment of revitalised ‘night watchmen’ to their posts.

In a complex world one has to beware of accepting the idea that universal solutions might exist and show sensitivity to local circumstances. This underlines a need for hybrid positions and inconsistencies in this wide and complex debate (the possibility of which was emphasised at the beginning of this section). With that in mind, here follows an overview of the streams of thought discussed, organised into a chart showing their positions concerning three key questions.

Chart 1: Streams of thought and their policy recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fragmentation, border changes?</th>
<th>Need for intervention?</th>
<th>Democracy, market economy? / Is it the desirable outcome?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-modern imperialists</td>
<td>May have to be allowed</td>
<td>Yes, in our interest</td>
<td>If possible / Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights universalists</td>
<td>May have to be allowed</td>
<td>Yes, in their interest</td>
<td>Yes / Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historicists</td>
<td>Should be allowed</td>
<td>No – better for everyone in the long run</td>
<td>Temporarily no / Temporarily no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Eurocentrics</td>
<td>Illegitimate not to allow</td>
<td>No – it’s illegitimate</td>
<td>No / No (at least not by Western instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional statistists</td>
<td>Shall not be allowed</td>
<td>Yes, rebellions have to be put down</td>
<td>Maybe / Maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGO-statists</td>
<td>Don’t have to be allowed</td>
<td>Yes, rebellions have to be ended</td>
<td>Yes / Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

In a highly interdependent world, states are building blocks of global stability. Their IRGs have to ensure that NSEs don’t emerge from within their territory. States which are dysfunctional in the sense that their IRG is incapable of ensuring that pose a se-
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Curiosity threat to others by their weakness. They undermine other states’ endeavours to ensure their own security. That’s why state-building is now regarded as an important institution of today’s society of states.

The threat of NSEs works as an impetus for re-taking direct control over parts of the post-colonial world, but such attempts will almost inevitably run into resistance in some places. In looking to find the right global policy framework, one faces such basic questions as whether and when intervention can be legitimate. Should the fragmentation of currently existing states be allowed? Managing a global process of fragmentation is something that many see as an inevitable task for global governance (e.g. Alger, 1998). There are also those, however, who think that the process, once started, could not be controlled. Their fear is that it would eventually result in the creation of a large number of non-viable states. Then there is also the question of what, in the case of state-building, the desired outcome should be. Democracy? What kind of democracy? And should democracy be promoted together with a transition to a market economy?

Rich democracies are ready to lead (at times reluctantly and at other times less so). However, there are debates even within them as to what exactly should or could be done and when. And of course their leading role is being debated – at times even contested – by others.

Regarding what kind of coordinated global action to reduce NSEs could be entailed beyond these larger questions, it is also important to recognise that the different kinds of NSEs are not evenly securitised in the rich democracies that are setting the agenda of global governance. Terrorism, the drugs trade, and migration into rich democracies are the issues receiving the most attention. A clear realisation that NSEs tend to hurt low income countries the most is lacking. For example, locust infestation, the spread of wheat stem rust, a more frequent presence of destabilising armed conflicts in the direct neighbourhood (see Sesay, 2004), and meningitis epidemics are all relatively rarely considered threats, but they are aggravated by weak state institutional capacity to respond to them in the hardest struck areas and affect poor countries the most. To provide one illustrative fact here, according to USCR’s 2007 World Refugee Survey, among the top 24 refugee host territories, there wasn’t a single OECD member state (WRS 2007: Table 8). However, regardless of which country happens to be affected the most in terms of sheer numbers, poor countries are less well-equipped to deal with the challenges that are associated with the impact of NSEs in the first place.

State-building ventures are spectacular, arguably inevitable, but also very risky challenges to handle for global governance, as they are questionable in legitimacy. Such efforts should be complemented by less direct forms of assistance to weak states. A global program of ‘cooperative threat reduction’, or CTR, should, therefore, focus more on building support for the development of a whole series of global
regimes that can contribute to its objectives in more indirect ways. From the Programme of Action countering small arms proliferation through the Global Rust Initiative to AIDS, TB and malaria relief, many worthy initiatives should be furthered in light of this.

CTR is thus deemed a crucial task of global governance. NSEs are securitised here as issue-specific absences or insufficient performances of global governance, with the direct referent object being the state system itself as a key provider that universally provides for the security of individuals. (In that way, individuals’ security will be a referent object of securitisation indirectly.) CTR is conceived of as resting on three pillars: i) forms of state cooperation compatible with Westphalian sovereignty, i.e. conventional CTR; ii) forms of state cooperation that institutionalise a high degree of interference in at least one state party’s domestic affairs (as occurs in cases of international development cooperation between recipients and donors) – i.e. unconventional CTR; iii) state cooperation to reconstruct third-party states or state-building, i.e. irregular CTR.

CTR doesn’t necessarily transcend the more traditional interpretation of global governance as the evolution and operation of a system of international as well as, increasingly, trans-national regimes (Young, 1999: 1–23). That is because even state-building tends to take place within the framework of regimes regulating issue-specific relations at least between the state-builders, albeit initially without the involvement of the missing participant: the state to be (re)constructed.

One may be critical of the position of taking the state system as the referent object in the securitisation of the various NSEs that underlie CTR. Some may suggest that individuals and/or humanity should be the direct referent object, as that would be more appropriate, and not only in a normative sense. It could be argued that state-centricity would be too restrictive a framework to allow for realistically gauging the extent of measures necessary to preserve world security.

Such criticism cannot be brushed aside. However, even within a state-centric framework, measures more drastic than the ones outlined so far can be contemplated (for example, a more radical structural adjustment of the global economy through an adjustment of the regimes of world trade, aid, and debt relief). An economic order that allows for a more equal share of opportunities worldwide may mitigate the structural burdens weakening many of the states of the post-colonial world. However, the scales and the types of responses by rich democracies to the phenomenon of state failure are likely to be a function of the changing degree of securitisation (within the rich democracies) of the different NSEs emerging from dysfunctional states.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ENDNOTES

1 These are: ‘revolutionary wars’, ‘ethnic wars’, ‘adverse regime changes’ and ‘genocides and politicides’. (See SFTF, 2000: V.)

2 As described by the Political Instability Task Force (successor to SFTF), online: globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/pitfcode.htm#revdesc (last accessed: October 14, 2007).

3 Consider, e.g. the urban crime rates in major cities of states such as Brasil or the United States, the number of child deaths in India, or the number of illegal immigrants arriving into the EU every year. Rampant crime could be interpreted as a lack of an effective monopoly over the use of force by the state; a high number of child deaths may show a lack of state capacity to provide for reliable life prospects for citizens; and finally, a large number of illegal immigrants may lead us to question how effective a state’s control over its territory is. Yet none of the above mentioned countries are typically examined in case studies of failed states in state failure-related volumes, which shows the latent consensus to be that it wouldn’t be appropriate to discuss them in that context. That underlying statement itself isn’t debated here; pointing to it merely illustrates the need to better understand reasons for such thinking.

4 Consider in this light debates over whether currently insurgency-hit states such as Iraq or Afghanistan are ‘failed’ or not.

5 E.g. think of the Pashtun lands divided by the Afghan-Pakistani border, the Durand Line, often leaving different segments of the same tribe on different sides of the line.

6 Think here, e.g., of the Tuareg nomads in the Sahara and the Sahel. The lands they traditionally roam were divided up between Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Algeria and Libya. The Tuaregs launched several insurgencies since decolonisation to achieve independence or autonomy.

7 With reference to the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme, which contributes to safeguarding the ex-Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal since the 1990s.

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GLOBAL GOVERNANCE VS. STATE FAILURE

Geopolitical Narratives on Belarus in Contemporary Russia

IAN KLINKE

Abstract: This article questions recent attempts to label Russia’s policy towards Belarus as either imperialist or pragmatic. Applying critical geopolitics and narrative analysis, it is suggested here that Russia’s policy vis-à-vis Belarus is best understood as negotiated between three competing geopolitical narratives – fraternity, parasitism and paternalism. Clashing in their (spatial) representation of the Belarusian Other, these narratives have advocated different policies and implied dissimilar constructions of the Russian Self. Coexisting uneasily during the Putin era, these narratives only loosely resemble the dominant ‘schools of thought’ in Russian foreign policy.

Key words: (critical) geopolitics, narrative, Russia, Belarus

INTRODUCTION

Within the Anglophone academic debate on Russia-Belarus relations, it is possible to detect two dominant depictions of Russia – that of an ‘imperialist’ and that of a ‘pragmatist’. These images relate to a wider dispute on contemporary Russian foreign policy in which the two labels are diametrically opposed. After tracing this divide in the literature on Russia’s policy towards Belarus specifically and Russian foreign policy in general, it will be argued here that both ‘imperialism’ and ‘pragmatism’ should be avoided as mental compasses for explorations into the thicket of Russian foreign policy due to their conceptual imprecision, implicit normativity and partial perspective.

Following this brief discussion, the article will outline critical geopolitics and narrative analysis as alternative ways of understanding Russian foreign policy. Adopting a broad definition of geopolitics, critical geopolitics will be used to study the construction of mental and geographic boundaries that delimitate the Self from the Other through narratives of space/place and sovereignty. Narrative analysis will be used to avoid a rigid distinction between discourse and practice. Foreign policy practice is understood here as bound up with narrative impositions of meaning, which, operating on a number of discursive levels, enable and disallow certain policies.

Subsequently, the above theoretical apparatus will be used to dissect Russia’s contemporary discourse on Belarus. After a brief summary of recent developments in
bilateral relations, the article isolates three geopolitical narratives, which compete against one another in Russia’s policy towards Belarus, termed fraternity, parasitism and paternalism. This examination will reveal that Russia’s foreign policy during the presidency of Vladimir Putin has not followed one path, but has been negotiated between the imperatives formulated by a number of narratives. Finally, it will be shown that the three narratives only loosely resemble the dominant so-called schools of thought in Russian foreign policy. Schools of thought, like Westernism, Statism and Eurasianism, have become popular social constructivist lenses through which to investigate Russian foreign policy and could potentially serve as an alternative to the imperialism/pragmatism divide. However, this article cautions against the view of an overly deterministic causal relationship between these ‘schools’ and Russian foreign policy.

ADDICTION VERSUS SOBERNESS
The group of analysts describing Russia’s policies towards Belarus as imperialist has expanded rapidly in recent years. Their underlying claim tends to be simple: Russia remains the West’s uncivilised and megalomaniacal Other. Essentially, Moscow is said to be driven by an ‘expansionist siege mentality’ (Bugajski, 2004: 4), ‘neo-imperial ambitions’ (Zurawski, 2005: 90) or even its ‘imperial addiction’ (Blank, 2002: 147). The Russian ‘neo-empire’ is said to have made ‘aggressive’ moves to curb Belarus’ sovereignty (Hancook, 2006: 126) and establish Belarus as a ‘state satellite’ (Sushko, 2002: 128), or as a ‘fiefdom’ (Martinsen, 2002: 412, see also Sannikov, 2002: 227).

Importantly, the authors describing Russia as imperialist observe a primacy of political goals (status, power) over purely economic aims in Russian foreign policy (Sushko, 2002: 120; Nesvetailova, 2003: 159). The Union State between Belarus and Russia is interpreted as a compensation for Russia’s loss of empire (Martinsen, 2002: 401). Furthermore, Moscow’s (political) aims are often said to be driven by a non-Western imperial ideology. Whilst Janusz Bugajiski suggests that the Kremlin has been led by ‘a pan-ethnic, Moscow-centred statism’ (Bugajiski, 2004: 3), others claim that Russia has been guided by the theory of Eurasianism (Hancock, 2006: 126). Samuel Huntington has long warned of Russians behaving ‘not like Westerners’ but ‘like Russians’ (Huntington, 1993: 45) and Charles Clover has held that such a renaissance of Eurasianism is likely to spark off a third World War (Clover, 1999: 9).

The idea of Putin’s foreign policy vis-à-vis Belarus as pragmatic is a widespread alternative to the image of an imperialist Russian foreign policy. Inspired by a modest ‘rational national egoism’ (Isakova, 2005: 19), a pragmatic foreign policy is said to be at odds with ideological motivations. Pragmatism has been presented as a ‘sober […] view of Russia’s place in international relations, unencumbered by any ideological prejudices and stereotypes’ (Casier, 2006: 386; see also Koktysh, 2006: 28;
O’Loughlin et al., 2005: 323). This is, of course, interesting because ‘soberness’ stands in opposition to the aforementioned idea of an ‘imperial addiction’. Being a Russian pragmatist means opting for a centrist position that is either to be located between the poles of Westernism and Eurasianism (Duncan, 2002: 7) or between Westernism and Statism (Tsygankov, 2006b: 129). A pragmatic Russia is in line with Russia’s ‘vital interests’ by ‘economising’ Russia’s foreign policy (Casier, 2006: 385, 398, see also: Löwenhardt, 2005: 24; Nygren, 2005: 156; Isakova, 2005: 18).

Finally, the pragmatism label conflates pragmatism with realpolitik and realism despite emphasising the label’s non-ideological character. Whilst some scholars have equated pragmatic foreign policy with ‘realpolitik’ and ‘realistic’ foreign policy-making (Light, 2003), others have gone so far as to link the term ‘realistic’ to the ‘realist’ tradition of International Relations (Lynch, 2001: 23). More specifically, some analysts contrast the ‘ideological’ goal of reunification with the ‘pragmatic’ goal of keeping Belarus within Russia’s sphere of influence (Dakokhorst, Y. & Furman, D., 2002: 255; see also Koktysh, 2006: 28). Opposing pragmatism to ideology, Selezneva has defined the former as ‘a way of making short-term decisions grasping opportunities to achieve practical results, without considering the long-term consequences and in some cases even the morality of the decisions’ (Selezneva, 2003: 10). This is arguably also a crisp definition of realpolitik, which was defined by structural realists as ‘calculations’ that ‘serve a state’s interest’ and are based on ‘the necessities’ arising from the international system (Waltz, 1979: 117).³

We can identify three problems with the two labels at hand. Firstly, they are weakly conceptualised. The problem with the concept of imperialism as a label for Russia’s policy towards Belarus is that none of the authors employing the notion has based it on a firm conceptual socket, let alone engaged with the theoretical debates on ‘empire’ that have raged through the discipline of International Relations in the last decade.¹ The major conceptual weakness of the notion of pragmatism is that it describes itself as non-ideological despite connecting pragmatic foreign policy-making to realpolitik and ultimately to realism. After all, realism, as a cluster of ahistorical truth claims, is a theory and therefore an ideology.⁵ Those employing the pragmatism label seem to reproduce the myth that there exists a national interest independently of ideology that can be pursued pragmatically.

Secondly, the labels are implicitly normative, a fact of which the authors might not be fully aware. Whilst authors using the imperialism label seem to employ it as a verbal sword with which to distinguish a backward and aggressive Russia from a progressive and peaceful West, the pragmatism/realpolitik label seems to provide legitimacy to Putin’s policies in Belarus. Thirdly, the two labels only grasp certain aspects of contemporary Russian foreign policy-making. Perhaps most significantly, they are based on the tempting idea to assume that Russia has followed one clearly distinguishable path and hence can be understood by just one label. Nevertheless,
this should not distract us from the fact that both labels do capture elements of Russia’s policy in Belarus, as will be further elaborated below.

IDENTITY, NARRATIVE AND SPACE
Instead of viewing Moscow’s policy towards Minsk from a realpolitik perspective, this section outlines critical geopolitics and narrative theory as theoretical tools with which to unravel (Russian) foreign policy in its complexity. The analysis is based on the assumption that state identity is constructed in the discursive arena, in which different narratives compete against one another to establish knowledge and ultimately truth through references to space, place and sovereignty. State identity then functions as a reference point for foreign policy by enabling and limiting what can be thought, argued and done. However, foreign policy-making also impacts upon the construction of identity through discourse. Hence, there exists a ‘discursive stability between identity and policy’ (Hansen, 2006: 18).

At the heart of this approach lies an understanding of discourse not merely as an accumulation of texts or as sheer rhetoric that covers up ‘real’ material interests, but as a productive process – as ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972: 54). This article investigates one such practice – narration. The reason for this, as Campbell (1998: 34) observes, is that narration is integral to the constitution of identity and therefore should occupy a crucial position in the analysis of the above mentioned discursive stability between identity and policy. Furthermore, such a narrative perspective avoids the fallacy of an overly rigid agent-structure divide, as is so common to research in the field of International Relations (Suganami, 1999: 373). However, a narrative approach that focuses on written and spoken language does not mean to deny the existence of a material world, but to accept the fact that to disentangle the two would be a Sisyphean challenge. In the realm of geopolitics, it is precisely the narrative construction of the material (‘land power’, ‘sea power’) that is worth studying.

Narratives are accounts that have the characteristics of stories and therefore include a protagonist and a tripartite plot. Furthermore, narratives present issues in a sequential, linear and intentional form. Crucially, they narrate certain versions of the past, present and future (of a state, a nation or some other protagonist) in a way that is ‘geared towards action’ (Ciută, 2007: 192). Hence, narrative analysis must focus (1) on the way in which narratives impose meaning by stressing and integrating some facts whilst omitting others and (2) on the calls for action and the actions themselves that result from and are integrated chronologically within these narratives.

The idea to use critical geopolitics to understand Russian foreign policy is not new and has followed a perceived ‘resurgence of geopolitical thinking’ in Russia (Tsygankov, 2003: 102). Much of the literature has tended to focus on one specific form of geopolitics, namely that of the narratives of classical geopolitics (Smith, 1999; In-
Rooted in 19th century imperialist Europe, classical geopolitics tends to be investigated by critical geopolitics as a materialist discourse that is preoccupied with the determining role of geography in global politics. Although it recognises the importance of such narratives to contemporary Russia (especially to the far-right), this article employs a broader definition of geopolitics that also accounts for narratives that are concerned with geography and politics but evade classical geopolitical themes such as ‘heartland/rimland’ or ‘eternal conflicts’ between ‘land and sea powers’.

Therefore, geopolitics is conceptualised here as a ‘boundary-producing practice’ and as a discourse that ‘engages the geographical representations and practices that produce the spaces of world politics’ (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, 1998: 2–3; Campbell, 1992). Geopolitical narratives employ and transform ‘imagined geographies’, defined as ‘constructions that fold distance into difference through spatialisations’ (Gregory, 2004: 17). Such a critical geopolitical approach investigates the mental maps that are drawn between Self and Other by privileging certain understandings of space, place, borders and sovereignty over others. A broad conception of geopolitics recognises that geopolitics is never a monolithic body of thought, but a discursive structure which can be found predominantly in realist but also in liberal and even Marxist thought. At the core of geopolitics as a modern practice lies a ‘Cartesian perspectivalism’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996: 23), a privileged, neutral and detached gaze that is employed to produce geopolitical knowledge about Others, guide the conduct of statecraft and engage in the prophetic devising of grand strategy (Ó Tuathail, 1994).

Although it tends to be written about states and for states, geopolitical knowledge is produced on a number of levels, commonly distinguished by critical geopolitics as formal (‘intellectuals of statecraft’), practical (practitioners) and popular geopolitics (mass media culture) (Ó Tuathail, 2006: 9). The merit of these conceptual categories is not so much the ability to rigidly distinguish between them, but the attention they draw to the multi-layered and non-hierarchical process in which narratives of geopolitics emerge and operate. Therefore, although partially inspired by the social constructivist work of Andrei P. Tsygankov on Russian geopolitics (2003), this article will exceed his narrow (top-down) focus on formal geopolitics, manifested in his analysis of ‘schools of thought’. Apart from the formal geopolitics of Russian think tank analysts and university scholars, this article focuses on popular forms of geopolitics that surface in the Russian media as well as on the practical geopolitics of high-ranking Russian officials that is transmitted via interviews and speeches.

This article also departs from O’Loughlin, Ó Tuathail and Kollosov’s attempts to formulate a conceptual basis for the critical study of Russian geopolitics (O’Loughlin et al., 2005). Firstly, it finds their key metaphor misleading. Inspired by Smith (1999), O’Loughlin et al. claim that President ‘Putin is Proteus to his varying audiences’ (O’Loughlin et al., 2005: 323). However, the metaphor of a Protean mask
seems to imply that it masks something deeper, more real – an idea that would clash with the narrative understanding of foreign policy developed in this article. Secondly, the conceptual matrix offered by O’Loughlin et al. (324–325) is clearly geared towards their research aim, which is to exhibit the connection between ‘high’ and ‘low’ geopolitics. Studying the private imaginations of ‘ordinary citizens’, though, is at odds with this article’s approach, which is closer to that taken by the same authors in their analysis of ‘geopolitical storylines’ in the Russian political class after 9/11 (O’Loughlin et al., 2004). After all, the legitimisation of foreign policy via state identity is a public process.

The three geopolitical narratives in this article have been outlined in a somewhat impressionistic and tessellate style. They have, however, been organised along the lines of five key themes: their image of Belarus; their understanding of the relationship between the Russian protagonist and the Belarusian Other; their view of existing cooperation; proposed action; and their intellectual legitimisation. Furthermore, the way in which the narratives construct the past, present and future will be sketched.

INTEGRATION AND DISRUPTION

Although some observers have suggested that Boris Yeltsin was never genuinely interested in a union with Belarus (Danilovich, 2006: 163), the Yeltsin period, especially after the rise to power of Alexander Lukashenko in 1994, saw a flood of agreements between the two states, both bilaterally and under the umbrella of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). The 1992 agreement on monetary union, the 1996 Commonwealth of Sovereign States of Belarus and Russia, the 1997 Treaty on the Union of Belarus and Russia and, finally, the 1999 Treaty on the Creation of the Union State are amongst the key documents that govern the relations between Minsk and Moscow (Drakokhurst & Furman, 2002: 233). These treaties have enabled the two states to integrate their policies on a number of issues and to establish supranational institutions with which to administer their relations.

It is widely assumed that integration in the military sector has been more successful than in other sectors. Amongst security analysts and military experts, it has been commonplace to argue that this is a consequence of Moscow’s interests in Belarus’ geographical position and military infrastructure (Hedenskog, 2005: 133). In 1995, Russia and Belarus signed a contract which gave Russia access to an early warning station at Baranovichi and a naval communication facility at Vileika, valid for 25 years. In the following year, the two states created institutional structures for cooperation in military and security matters and started joint patrolling and joint air defence missions. Although not a fully-fledged military alliance, the 1997 Union of Russia and Belarus establishes mutual support in the case of an attack on one of the two partners, and in the late 1990s a number of decisions were taken to establish integrated troops under a unified command structure (Main, 2002: 9). Integration has
continued into the Putin era by means of a further institutionalisation of relations and single steps such as the leasing of Russian missile defence systems to Belarus (Deyermond, 2004: 1194). In late 2007 it was debated whether Belarus should be used as a geopolitical basis for operational tactical missile systems as a response to the United States’ plans to construct a missile defence system in Central Europe (Poroskov, 2007).

Integration in the economic sector has been comparably slow, which seems to be rooted in both Belarusian and Russian reluctance to fill the 2003 Single Economic Space (SES) encompassing Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine with substance. Furthermore, Lukashenko has tried to resist attempts of Russian capital to increase its role in the country (Piehl, 2005: 291). The agreement on monetary union, signed in November 2000, is the most far-reaching document on economic integration in Russia-Belarus relations. Originally it set out to establish a common currency between the two nations by 1st January 2005 (Nesvetailova, 2003: 154). However, after a lengthy tug of war, the rouble has not been introduced, and a realistic starting date has not been agreed upon either.

The two main disruptions in Russo-Belarusian relations recently have been conflicts related to Belarus’ dependence on Russian gas. In 2004 Gazprom demanded that Belarus pay a gas price higher than the Russian domestic price level, as Minsk had been charged only the Russian domestic price for gas up to then. After Minsk rejected Gazprom’s demands, the state-owned enterprise stopped the flow of natural gas into Belarus, leaving Poland, the Baltic states and Eastern Germany temporarily without natural gas (Grib, 2004). This escalated into a major incident that shook mutual relations. However, the root of the conflict, it is commonly held, was Belarus’ unwillingness to sell the control share of Beltransgas, the Belarusian pipeline operator via whose pipelines Russian gas is pumped into Central Europe. The open confrontation, which took place shortly before the Russian presidential elections, ended with an agreement that allowed Belarus to enjoy further preferential treatment with the same price level as before (Danilovich, 2006: 147). The conflict erupted again in January 2007 after a lengthy build-up of tensions throughout the year 2006. This time, Gazprom successfully managed to raise the price level of gas by 100% of what it had been before. Furthermore, Gazprom was able to secure half of Beltransgas’ shares for $2.5b (Lindner, 2007). As will be seen below, the three different narratives interpret the continued integration moves and the disruptions during the Putin era from different perspectives.

THE FRATERNITY NARRATIVE

The fraternity narrative initially emerged during the mid-1990s and has been the driving force behind the political, economic and military integration of the two states. It has (1) represented Belarus as a ‘fraternal nation’ and allied place, (2) treated it as...
a partner on equal footing, (3) constructed the Union as a success story and a beacon for the integration of the post-Soviet space, (4) encouraged (continued) economic and political support for the regime in Minsk, and (5) been legitimised through classical geopolitical forms of argumentation. From a temporal perspective, the fraternity narrative has viewed the (post-Soviet) past of re-integration positively, envisaging an integrated Union State in the future.

Although the fraternity narrative has weakened throughout the two terms of Vladimir Putin’s presidency due to the emergence of the parasitism narrative, it continues to play a key role and may well be resuscitated in the future. Although Putin initially won his sympathies with the Russian population without evoking the aim of a reunification of ‘fraternal nations’ (Nesitailova, 2003: 161), such phrases, popular in the Yeltsin era, have crept into Putin’s speech on a number of occasions. Even in the midst of the 2004 gas dispute, he stressed that ‘Russia will always be with the Belarusian people, with whom we have a common past, present and future’ (Grivach, 2004). In 2005 Putin spoke of his confidence in a dynamic future ‘in a spirit of trust and mutual understanding for the well-being of our two fraternal peoples’ (Putin, 2005c). Eight months later, Putin expressed his confidence on Lukashenko’s birthday in August 2006 that the Belarusian President would bring the ‘two fraternal peoples closer together’ (Putin, 2006b). It should be noted, however, that the notion of a ‘fraternal Belarus’ has been considerably less popular in Putin’s discourse than that of a ‘fraternal Belarusian people’, the latter of which may be used to emphasise a distinction between the regime and its subjects (Putin, 2007b).

At the heart of the fraternity narrative lies the idea of a Union based on the equality between two formally sovereign states. Although unification with Belarus has remained very popular in Russian public opinion (66% in 2006), the idea that such a Union should be based on equality between two sovereign states that are merely connected through close political and economic ties is considerably less popular (30% in 2006).7 However, this has not meant that the government has dropped the notion of equality. Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept has, for instance, called it ‘a priority task’ to strengthen ‘the Union of Belarus and Russia as the highest, at this stage, form of integration of two sovereign states’ (Russian Federation, 2000a, emphasis added). In 2002, Russia’s then Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that the issue was not about incorporation but about an integration between two sovereign states modelled on the European Union (Ivanov, 2002). Dimitri Trenin struck a similar chord, urging the two states to further integrate without entirely dissolving Belarus in the Russian Federation (Trenin, 2002: 142). The weakening of the fraternity narrative has not prevented the Russian President from reviving the formulation of equality for special occasions (Putin, 2006a).

The fraternity narrative has organised the events in Russo-Belarusian relations into a linear sequence of success stories that is directed at further integration based on
the Union State. Furthermore, Ivanov portrayed the Union with Belarus as a beacon of Russia’s integration attempts in the CIS. He stated that there was ‘no doubt’ that success in the Russo-Belarusian integration process would be a ‘powerful catalyst for integration across the Commonwealth’ (Ivanov, 2002: 85). Similarly, in December 2001, President Putin emphasised that the Union was the ‘only possible’ way forward (Sysoyev, 2001). In his 2001 address to the Federal Assembly, he stated that Russia would ‘continue the hard work of building a union state with Belarus and […] continue to encourage further integration in the CIS as a whole’ (Putin, 2001). Three years later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded in its annual report that despite some remaining ‘questions’, ‘the dynamic evolution’ under the Union State was continuing (Russian MFA Information and Press Department, 2005). The President also expressed his opinion in 2006 that the decision to create a union had been both ‘correct and timely’ (Danilovich, 2006: 126). Hence, the fraternity narrative evokes the geopolitical image of Russo-Belarusian integration as a vanguard phenomenon (or beacon) that will spark off a wave of re-integration throughout the post-Soviet space.

As mentioned above, Russia has supported the Belarusian regime economically by supplying it with gas at the domestic Russian price level. This support, which was inherited from the Yeltsin period, largely survived the disruptions in mutual relations and was only terminated in 2007. The fraternity narrative has enabled the continuation of financial support for Lukashenko’s regime in return for a commitment to the Union State (Grigoryeva, 2005). Although Putin’s government became increasingly critical of supporting the regime in Minsk due to the rise of the parasitism narrative, the administration made it known through the press that it would continue to ‘prop up’ Belarus’ economy with cheap resources if the Union were to materialise in a more substantial way (Dubnov, 2006).

Moscow’s ‘fraternal’ support has not only been of a financial sort, but has also consisted of considerable political support in international forums. In 2004, for instance, the Russian Foreign Ministry expressed its opinion that it considered Lukashenko’s referendum to change the Belarusian constitution an ‘internal affair’ (Vyacheslav, 2004). Moscow has repeatedly criticised the United States’ attempts to introduce sanctions against the regime in Minsk (Lavrov, 2004) and supported Lukashenko in both the 2001 and the 2006 elections, a support which Putin openly admitted (Borodin, 2006: 75). After the 2006 Belarusian elections, Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, backed Belarus’ depiction of the opposition rally as illegal and defended the regime’s violent actions (Lavrov, 2006). The Council of Europe’s critique of the elections was rejected as ‘biased and distorted’ (Russian MFA, 2006). Additionally, Lavrov dismissed those who suggested that Russia could raise human rights issues concerning Belarus in the international arena (Lavrov, 2006). Even in December 2006, only days before the eruption of the foreseeable gas...
conflict, Moscow defended Belarus in the UN Security Council against the US representative who had tried to place human rights abuses in Belarus on the Security Council’s agenda (Russian MFA Information and Press Department, 2006).

Besides the ‘common’ cultural heritage between Russia and Belarus, the main legitimisation for the fraternity narrative has been a ‘mild’ classical geopolitics, a discourse heavily occupied with space, spheres of influence and strategic necessity. Russia’s 2000 National Security Concept has, for instance, warned of ‘the possible emergence of foreign military bases and major military presences in the immediate proximity of Russian borders’ (Russian Federation, 2000b). In 2001, Vremya MN held, with respect to Belarus, that Russia should not lose ‘the only remaining allied geopolitical space on Russia’s western borders, the only reliable “fraternal” transit route to Europe, and a real, “substantive” guarantee that NATO won’t be on Smolensk’s doorstep a few years from now’ (Kondrashov, 2001). And even five years later, when relations between Russia and Belarus had turned somewhat sour, Pavel Borodin, the State Secretary of the Russia-Belarus Union State wrote an article in the Russian MFA’s journal International Affairs in which he praised the achievements of the Union State and lobbied for a commitment to the integration process. He revived the idea of Minsk as Russia’s ‘most consistent and reliable ally’ and as a ‘geopolitical bridge between Europe and Asia, which appreciably consolidates the positions of Russia as a great power’ (Borodin, 2006: 75). Here it becomes clearest that there exists an intimate relationship between the geopolitical narrative of carving out an allied ‘fraternal’ place (Belarus) in a desired space (the former USSR) and foreign policy action.

THE PARASITISM NARRATIVE

The parasitism narrative has rested on a different geopolitics than the fraternity narrative. It has abandoned the project of re-integration under the umbrella of the CIS and envisioned a European order of sovereign states in pursuit of economic gains. It has (1) represented Belarus as a parasite on Russia’s economy, (2) emphasised Belarus’ role as a fully sovereign state and a burden to Russia, (3) constructed the fraternity narrative and its key objective, the Union State, as a failure, (4) urged the Kremlin to be more concerned with its economic gains vis-à-vis Minsk and (5) drawn its legitimisation from geoeconomics. Contrary to the fraternity narrative, the parasitism narrative views the (post-Soviet) past as a flop, seeks a future of two separate and sovereign states and advocates an end to the subsidies in the present.

Arguably the harshest representation of Belarus has been the parasite metaphor. After talks with German chancellor Angela Merkel in January 2007, Putin made it clear at a press conference that Russia would not tolerate transit countries behaving like ‘parasites’ (Putin, 2007a). However, this was not the first time the President drastically revealed his displeasure with the Belarusian regime. In 2002, Putin famously
called for a separation of ‘cutlets from the flies’ (Plugataryov, 2002). Whilst there
has been divergence in opinion of how to interpret the latter statement, it is clear that
it could not have been uttered if the fraternity narrative had enjoyed discursive hege-
mony. However, The President has not been the only one to make such sweeping
statements. In 2002 the Russian academic Alexander Potupa said the following
about Belarus: ‘apes began losing their tails after life forced them to – they could no
longer lounge under the trees and lazily pick bananas. […] A country ha[d] to be
able to buy resources at world prices and produce competitive goods’ (Kuznetsova,
2002). In 2004, the Kommersant described Belarus as a ‘band of partisans’ ‘stealing’
gas from Russian pipelines (Grib, 2004) and in January 2007, Izvestia revived the
parasite metaphor by pointing out that Russia needed ‘an ally, not an arrogant par-
asite’ (Maksymiuk, 2007).

The second key characteristic of the parasitism narrative has been the represen-
tation of Belarus as a sovereign and essentially separate state, an act that carves Be-
larus off of its ‘Russian brother’ on the mental geopolitical map. Maybe the most
controversial statement in this respect is the one that the appointed Russian am-
bassador to Minsk made about Lukashenko in July 2005, which made relations go
sour. Causing disbelief in both Minsk and Moscow, Ayatskov told the Belarusian
president that he should understand that ‘Russia is Russia and Belarus is Belarus,
Putin is Putin and Lukashenko is Lukashenko. And in no case should he be puffing
out his cheeks and talking about [having been] in office there for a long time, and
that someone or other ought to be acting as his errand boy’ (Vodo, 2005). In slightly
more diplomatic terms, Kirril Koktysh from the University of Moscow emphasised
that any intention to raise Belarus’ gas prices is ultimately synonymous to attributing
to Belarus the status of a ‘sovereign and independent state’ (Koktysh, 2006: 28).
This was reinforced by Alexander Medvedev, vice-chairman of Gazprom’s execu-
tive board, who expressed his opinion that although Belarus wanted to be treated
as a province concerning its treatment on the Russian energy market, it was, in fact,
being treated by Russia as a ‘sovereign state’ (Tomashivskaya, 2006: 1).

The representation of Belarus as an economic burden on Russia’s economy (in it-
self a very visual image) has been an important component of the parasite narrative
and has frequently returned during the Putin years, affecting the way both states
have constructed their geopolitical identities. Liberal Kremlin critics have raised the
issue since the early days of Putin’s first term. Otto Latsis, for instance, wrote an
article called ‘What Russia Is Paying for Lukashenko’s Friendship’ for Noviye Izvestia in
2000, in which he claimed that Belarus was ‘trying to make Russia bear the losses
caused by inefficient production in an economy with poorly developed market rel-
ations’ (Latsis, 2000). In 2005 some of the underlying problems surfaced when Putin
publicly urged Lukashenko to resolve the technical issues that were hampering trade
between the two neighbours (Putin, 2005b). Five months later Pravda spoke of the
‘tenth anniversary of wasted dreams, empty talk, and millions of dollars pumped into the neighbouring dictatorship’. The article continued by asserting that Russia had been ‘supplying Belarus with cheap natural gas, which was resold at the world price. The profits were pocketed by the Lukashenko family. Russia did not get any concessions in return’ (Pravda, 2006).

Vladimir Putin has been known as a sceptic of Russo-Belarusian integration since the late 1990s. In 1999, Izvestia noted that Putin was striking ‘fundamentally new tones to Russia’s assessment of integration of the post-Soviet space’ (Novoprudsky, 1999). Putin spoke of a Russia that would move ‘carefully’ and ‘cautiously’ towards integration (Vaganov, 2000), and he repeatedly reminded Minsk that integration was not determined by ‘the speed and size of paperwork flow, but by real deeds’ (Danilovich, 2006: 115). Others went further in their critique. Sergei Karaganov, chairman of the editorial board of Rossia v globalnoi politike (Russia in Global Politics), questioned the success of the Union State and the motivation of Moscow and Minsk to drive integration forward (Karaganov, 2003). Vladimir Putin stated in 2002 that there could be ‘no attempts to restore the USSR at the expense of Russia’s economic interest’ (Deyermond, 2004: 1197). Furthermore, he held in 2005 that ‘those who do not regret the collapse of the Soviet Union have no heart, and those that do regret it have no brain’. (Putin, 2005a) Implied in the rejection of re-integration has not just been the fear that such a project would fail, but an economic understanding of how relations with Minsk should be organised, which stands in stark contrast to the other two narratives. The parasitism narrative has invoked a different geopolitical order: one in which Russia (in the role of a ‘normal state’) competes for economic gains amongst other sovereign states.

THE PATERNALISM NARRATIVE

The paternalism narrative has been built upon the geopolitical script of a continued conflict between East and West, in which Belarus plays a crucial role as a buffer between Russia and NATO. It has (1) represented Belarus as essentially ‘weak’ and implied its need for protection, (2) portrayed its relationship with Russia as that of a child to a parent, (3) rejected the idea of institutional equality between Russia and Belarus under the Union State, (4) called for Belarus’ incorporation into the Russian Federation and (5) been guided by the detached gaze of a classical geopolitics that silences and claims to protect (yet ultimately objectifies) Belarus. The paternalism narrative has idealised the (Soviet) past while dreaming of an imperial future and advocating the dissolution of Belarus’ sovereignty in the present.

The paternalism narrative has been the weakest of the three narratives during Putin’s presidency. Nevertheless, it is not to be underestimated as a force in the future, especially if it merges with one of the more established narratives. Whilst the borders between the fraternity and parasitism narratives have been clearly demar-
cated, the paternalism narrative has been closer to the fraternity narrative because it has shared a similar classical geopolitical outlook. Moreover, the aims of integration and incorporation are considerably closer to one another than to the goal of separation advanced by the parasitism narrative. In many aspects, the paternalism narrative is an extreme and revisionist version of the more mainstream fraternity narrative.

The main geopolitical representation of Belarus in the paternalism narrative has been that of a small state and a weak nation. These representations are not only to be found in extremist circles. Liberal analysts like Dimitri Trenin have also argued that there was ‘no reason’ to follow the idea of a union of equals. ‘Russia dwarfs its neighbour by a factor of 15 in terms of population, 25 in terms of GDP and budget revenues, and 11 in terms of trade volume’ (Trenin, 2005a: 69). In 2004 Putin emphasised that one ‘should not forget’ that the size of the Belarusian economy was only 3% of the Russian economy (Danilovich, 2006: 128). The notion of Belarus having a weak national identity has not been confined to Russian foreign political discourse, but has been equally popular in the West (Nevetailova, 2003: 153; Donaldson & Nogee, 2005: 21; Marples, 1999). In many ways the idea of a common culture has implied a weak Belarus that cannot exist meaningfully outside of Russia.

The paternalism narrative is somewhat harder to unearth as it does not enjoy full acceptance within the mainstream of Russian foreign policy discourse. Its underlying paternalistic rationale has often only been implied. In 2002, for instance, Russia’s ambassador told Lukashenko to remain ‘tactful and civilised’ (Yefanov, 2002). Putin announced upon praising his government for the successful bargaining with Minsk over the gas dispute that future negotiations were to be dealt with in a ‘serious and mature’ manner (Kolesnikov, 2007). This paternalism has also been reflected in fears that after the 2007 gas conflict, Europeans could be asking Russia the question ‘(C)an’t you deal with your transit country?’ (Shevtsova, 2007 emphasis added). Other examples have included references to ‘Moscow’s patience’ (Gamova, 2007) or the view that Belarusian leaders should see in Russia a ‘model to be emulated’ (Chugayev, 2006: 6). Hence, Belarus has been represented as an ‘unserious’, ‘naughty’ child whilst Russia has been constructed as a role model and / or a parent, whose patience should not be challenged. This has led to a rejection of the idea of equality between the two states. ‘We don’t need a common currency on the terms Belarus is proposing’, Anton Struchenevsky, an analyst with the Troika Dialogue Investment Company, told Vremya Novostei (Vigansky, 2004). This has resulted in what Deyermond has described as a ‘Russian reluctance to agree to arrangements endorsing structural equality between the two states’ (Deyermond, 2004: 1197).

At the centre of the paternalism narrative has been the explicit aim of incorporating Belarus. Although he framed it in words of ‘equality and freedom’, Putin es-
sentially proposed this incorporation of Belarus under the Russian constitution in 2002 (Plugataryov, 2002). The view that the Kremlin is aiming at the incorporation of all six of Belarus’ administrative areas plus Minsk as new oblasts of the Russian Federation has been advocated by the geopolitician Sergei Pereslegin. He has suggested that the Putin government could enter ‘a big political success by retaking “lost Russian lands”’ (Yasmann, 2007). Whilst some regarded Putin’s proposed incorporation as an aggressive imperialist act, the Kommersant interpreted it as a calculated move to propose an unacceptable agreement to Lukashenko (Kolesnikov, 2002).

The paternalism narrative has been especially strong in military circles. Despite the fact that post-Soviet Russia has been involved in a wide array of military conflicts on its southern flank, Moscow’s military strategy has remained focussed on an attack on its western border (Trenin, 2004: 226). This has provided Belarus with a privileged position as a military outpost, which has meant that it has been almost commonsensical to stress the importance of Belarus as a geopolitical bridgehead. An example of the strength of the paternalism narrative in military circles may be found in Military Thought, the Russian defence ministry’s journal on geopolitics. Here Lieutenant General Ostankov wrote that ‘[g]iven the historical and cultural proximity of our two peoples, and their sense of affiliation and identity with a single nation, one [...] possible objective would be the creation of a single federated state patterned after a unified Germany’ (Ostankov, 2006: 24, emphasis added). As the author did not discuss any other possibilities, he seemed to imply his preference for such an incorporation of Belarus, modelled not on the European Union, as is the case of the fraternity narrative, but on post-War Germany. Although the concept of identity may seem at odds with classical geopolitics, the idea that Belarus and Russia are actually part of one (‘organic’) nation is an integral part of 19th century geopolitics. A second piece, written by Colonel Lemeshevsky, is not so much significant for its rather technical body, but for the way in which Belarus was presented – as a peaceful nation threatened by the United States, which since 1991 found pleasure in invading small nations with weak economies and badly equipped militaries (Lemeshevskiy, 2005: 178).

The fact that the paternalism narrative has objectified Belarus as a ‘principal defensive bulwark and a forward base for power projection’ (Trenin, 2005a: 68) has meant that it has viewed Belarus as ‘de facto Russia’s strategic borders in the West’ (ibid.: 71). The Council on Foreign and Defence Policy spoke in 1999 of ‘incontestable geopolitical privileges’ that Russia was to receive ‘as a result of full integration’ (Main, 2002: 2). Other analysts emphasised Belarus’ role as a ‘shield against NATO’ (Platova, 2007). Nevertheless, not only the geographical position of Belarus has been vital to this objectification of it. The two military sites mentioned above have frequently been referred to as ‘real’ assets to Russia. Furthermore, as Belarus has not participated in arms control regimes, Russia, bound by the Missile Technol-
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ogy Control Regime and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, has been able to use Belarus as an alternative industrial base from which to export weaponry and military technology (Sannikov, 2002: 224). Of course, this geopolitical and strategic importance of Belarus has largely been reliant on the general geopolitical discourse that privileges the paternalism narrative. However, although its argumentative patterns (paternalism, geopolitics) are to be found in mainstream discourse, the aim of full incorporation has not been as dominant as the goals forwarded by the other two narratives.

THREE NARRATIVES – THREE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT?

A perhaps more nuanced and therefore more promising alternative to the bluntness of the imperialism/pragmatism debate distinguishes between a number of comparatively homogenous schools of thought through which Russian foreign policy is seen as being articulated. Although authors have disagreed as to the number and names of the key schools, it will be sufficient here to distinguish between three schools – Westernism, Statism and Eurasianism – as they occupy liberal, conservative and revisionist positions in the political spectrum. However, the above findings seem to suggest that the fraternity, parasitism and paternalism narratives are not congruent to these grand narratives of statecraft.

Westernism was arguably the dominant school of thought in the aftermath of the Soviet demise and has been marked by a faith in the superiority of liberal democracy and market capitalism, which Russia was to emulate as an apprentice of the West. Crucially, Westernisers have advocated the break away from the economic and po-
political ‘burden’ of the Soviet republics and the establishment of borders along the lines of a ‘little Russia’ that excludes the Republic of Belarus (Tsyzankov, 2006b: 59). Statism, which is commonly associated with the Russian Federation’s second foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov, presents a realist outlook on international politics and foreign policy making. Russia is seen as a great power whose national interests lie in the strife for a multipolar world order by balancing the hegemony of the United States. Though accepting the legal independence of the former Soviet republics, Statists have pushed for the military and economic reintegration of the former Soviet space (defined as Russia’s legitimate sphere of influence) under the legal structure of the CIS (ibid. 91–96). Eurasianism is used here to refer to a number of somewhat marginalised approaches on the far right and the far left of the Russian political spectrum. Russia is understood by Eurasianists varyingly as a bridge between East and West or as a unique civilisation fundamentally incompatible with Western values. Russia’s interests are seen as an emancipation from the shackles of Westernisation and the forging of alliances with its ‘natural allies’, such as Germany, Japan and Iran. Russia’s post-imperial borders are interpreted as an abnormality mutilated by the West. Therefore, Eurasianists advocate a restoration of the Soviet Union at a minimum or a return to Russia’s imperial and expansionist past at a maximum (Smith, 1999; Ingram, 2001).

Whilst it might seem that the fraternity narrative equals Statism, the parasitism narrative matches Westernism, and the paternalism narrative is just another version of Eurasianism, a closer look reveals a number of departures from the three schools of thought. It is especially the parasitism narrative that cannot be considered a mere reproduction of Westernism because it lacks an emphasis on liberal democracy, the idealisation of the West and the apprenticeship of Russia. Furthermore, the paternalism narrative only presents a very mild version of Eurasianism that seems more motivated by Cold War geopolitics than by a belief in antagonistic civilisations and the messianic duties of a ‘Third Rome’. Hence, it is important to stress the fluidness of the categories of Westernism, Statism and Eurasianism, a finding that underlines the erratic nature of the narrative competition for state identity. The schools of thought might function more as loose guides to statecraft than as rigid doctrines. Hence, the schools of thought approach must be treated with care as an alternative to the pragmatism/imperialism divide rejected at the outset of this article.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Concerning the way in which we are to approach and analyse foreign policy in general, this article hopes to have demonstrated the virtue of combining critical geopolitics and narrative analysis. It has drawn connections between narration and geopolitics by exhibiting the way in which specific narratives work with representations of space (East/West, the former Soviet Union), place (Belarus) and different
geopolitical metaphors (bridge, transit country, buffer). It has confirmed not only the centrality of spatial representations in foreign policy discourse, but the existence of an intimate relationship between the imagined geographies that geopolitical narratives conjure and foreign policy practice.

Furthermore, the article hopes to have demonstrated how a narrative approach can account for the chronology, linearity and intentionality that form an often unacknowledged but essential part of geopolitics. The discussion has also shed light on the way in which geopolitical narratives compete in the battle for state identity, a battle which does not unavoidably produce one victor (or discursive hegemon) at any given point in time. Furthermore, it has tried to unearth the embeddedness of different imperatives within narrative constructions and the way in which foreign policy practice is in a permanent process of responding to these calls. Congealed in the forms of ‘events’, these responses are either integrated into the narrative linearity or silenced. Hence, the act of narrating, just like the act of mapping, is not an innocent process, but an imposition of meaning (conscious or sub-conscious) that may even culminate in the waging of war, whether economic or military.

To understand Russia’s policy towards Belarus just in terms of one label (imperialism or pragmatism) is not only conceptually misleading but empirically untenable. It is also mistaken to call the recent eruptions in bilateral relations a turning point (Lindner, 2007). The Russian stance towards Belarus in early 2007 was made possible through the rise of the parasite narrative, a development that had commenced long before the 2007 events and which had already led to previous conflicts. It is, however, difficult if not impossible to make out a hegemonic geopolitical narrative during the Putin era, and it might be more adequate to conclude that all three narratives have coexisted uneasily. Although the fraternity narrative has suffered losses to its near hegemonic position during the late Yeltsin era, the Russian government continues to speak its language. Under these two established narratives, however, lurks the paternalism narrative, waiting for its moment in history – which might never come.

ENDNOTES

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2 Comparable metaphors are those of Russia as a neo-tsarist or neo-Soviet state.

3 Given that realpolitik is traditionally associated with an outlook that sees power and not money (although in practice these categories are difficult to disentangle) as the basic currency of global politics, the term ‘Neo-realpolitik’ might better capture the pragmatism camp’s emphasis on economic goals.

4 A notable exception to this is an article by Tsygankov that discusses Russian soft power imperialism. However, Tsygankov comes to the conclusion that the concept is not applicable to the Russian case (Tsygankov, 2006a).
I choose not to discuss this point in more detail here as the ideological nature and political role of realism has been dealt with in some length by critical theory (Cox, 1981; Ashley, 1981). It could, however, be added at this point that nationalism, which has been one of the main driving forces behind Putin’s so-called ‘pragmatism’, is similarly ideological.

The article is largely based on the analysis of government websites, ministerial journals and newspaper articles from the period between late 1999 and early 2008. Newspaper articles have been taken from the Anglophone Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press.

Numbers published in Russian Analytical Digest (18/07/2006).

It is questionable whether the fraternity narrative is part of a plan to integrate the whole former Soviet space. Whilst Belarus and Ukraine might be on the agenda, this is less the case for the Caucasus and parts of Central Asia, and the Baltic states have fallen almost entirely off Moscow’s radar in this respect.

Arguably, the paternalism narrative has also been connected to the term ‘near abroad’, which was first introduced in 1992. According to a St. Petersburg professor, the term highlighted the discomfort of accepting Belarusian (as well as Ukrainian) independence and the view that Belarus was indivisible from the very concept of Russia (Lomagin, 1996).

For a different view see Lo, 2002: 42.

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IAN KLINKE

GEOPOLITICAL NARRATIVES ON BELARUS IN RUSSIA

- Putin, Vladimir (2005a) ‘Interview with German Television Channels ARD and ZDF’. President of Russia (05/05). Online: www.kremlin.ru.
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Reviews
Roy Allison, Margot Light and Stephen White: Putin’s Russia and the Enlarged Europe


This impressive work by Roy Allison, Margot Light and Stephen White, *Putin’s Russia and the Enlarged Europe*, is a part of their wider academic project *Inclusion without Membership? Bringing Russia, Ukraine and Belarus closer to Europe*. In general, the authors’ aim is to address the growing risk of new dividing lines being formed on the eastern flanks of Europe after the dual enlargement of the European Union and NATO. In particular, they focus on the question of Russia’s current identity as it is perceived by both Russian foreign policy elites and the public at large. The interesting topic of Russians’ self-defined identity – European, Eurasian or ‘unique’ (purely Russian) – is treated in a rather constructivist manner in the sense that it is seen as socially and politically constructed and thus open to change. The emphasis is laid on the development of Russia’s political and security relations with the EU and NATO during Putin’s second presidential term. For the authors, an enhanced partnership with these influential Euro-Atlantic organisations, rather than Russia’s bilateral relations with separate European states, is crucial as it can act as a channel for the greater inclusion of Russia ‘into’ Europe. The central question of the book – whether a spill-over effect in EU-Russia and NATO-Russia relations is possible – implies a neo-functionalist approach.

The work is divided into seven chapters. The first one introduces the reader to the problem by setting out the structure and objectives of the rest of the book. In a reader-friendly yet scholarly way, Allison and Light summarise the arguments of the editorial team. Among the major obstacles in Russia’s political cooperation with the West, the ones the authors point out as particularly important are the Russians’ self-exclusion from the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which is deemed to be ‘a suit too small for Russia’s shoulders’, the consequent tension between the EU and Russia over issues connected to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the entrenched difficulty of the West in dealing with the increasingly centralised and defensively sovereign Russian state. For analytical convenience, the three most prominent trends in the views of the Russian foreign policy elites are defined as liberal westernizer, pragmatic nationalist and fundamentalist nationalist. Undoubtedly well systematised, this somewhat static definition of the elites’ opinions lacks a starting point, i.e. a historical reference to the time of Yeltsin, when the strategic foreign policy priorities of Russia were discussed and shaped for the first time after the fall of communism.

In the second chapter, Stephen White goes through the consolidation of Putin’s presidential authority during his first mandate. Very often, this form of ‘managed
democracy’ governance is inevitably compared by the author to the Tsarist regime of medieval Russia or to practices from the Soviet era. The foreign-policy, security and defence decision making apparatus of the Russian Federation, de facto fully subordinated to the Kremlin, is described comprehensively, occasionally including brief biographical references to some of the politicians closest to Putin and the most important policy actors. As a result of this over-centralisation of power, the overwhelming reliance on individuals (rather than on institutions), the poor coordination among foreign-policy-making units and the intellectual shortcomings of the Russian administration, major foreign-policy decisions are said to be made exclusively by Putin and a small group of his closest associates. White concludes the chapter by commenting on the general public approval of the course of Russian foreign and security matters adopted by Putin.

In chapter three, Margot Light notes that the Russian governing elite prefer to link issues of ‘low politics’ to progress at the level of ‘high politics’ when interacting with the EU. She places due attention on the inflexibility of the Brussels administration and its lack of a clear vision for the Union’s relationship with Russia. In addition, she charts the problem of Putin’s preference to cultivate bilateral relations with key European states and the exploitation of these relations with the aim to undermine Brussels’ unified political stance. The conditionality the EU uses in its approach to Russia is correctly identified as another serious systemic hindrance because the Russian Federation either regards it as humiliating or as a threat to its sovereignty. Finally, the soft security concerns of both parties are said to be a win-win field for joint action, but Light admits that they remain mainly in the sphere of planning.

The Russian security engagement with the EU and NATO is presented by Roy Allison in chapters four and five. For Allison, Russian policy makers tend to give a military dimension to all security issues. In contrast, their European counterparts prefer to work on soft security development. The overall impression this situation makes on Allison is that the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is more often seen as favourable by the Russians when it is perceived as evolving into a pan-European collective system in which Russia is going to be an equal partner of the Union. However, since Russia is a priori excluded from the decision making process in Brussels, the author views its interplay with NATO in the framework of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) as more probable. The dialogue within the NRC is seen as easier than the one between Russia and the EU, as the former does not demand any domestic change in Russia and does not carry out any supranational implications. Allison claims that if the anti-NATO, Cold War rooted feelings in Russian governing circles are to subside, NATO can serve as a means of rapprochement between Russia and the West. This argument clashes with his observation that the Russian elites are likely to accept large scale cooperation with NATO only if it evolves into a political organisation. Further on, though, Allison is convincing in arguing that Russia
will only agree on a format of common conflict prevention and crisis management operations with the EU if it is included as an equal partner in the Balkans with the provision that it will retain a dominant position in the CIS region. Finally, the author sums up that the values-free approach of the NRC is appropriate for developing pragmatic cooperation with Russia, but its capacity for being included into Europe is limited.

In the sixth chapter, Stephen White draws up a review of the Russian political parties’ platforms. He comments on the results of the surveys on Russian identity conducted by the authors’ team in randomly chosen Russian regions in the period 2000–2005. Some curious statements taken from the focus groups discussions are also included in this chapter. Russians are found to rarely identify themselves as Europeans, though their attitudes towards the EU are generally positive. Still, a clear majority declares that Belarus and Russia should merge into a single state while NATO is perceived with caution due to the negative feelings Russians still have about the USA. The Eurobarometer-style questions of the survey, presented in this chapter and applied in the analysis as a whole, demonstrate an original approach, although some parts (such as the statements made during the focus groups discussions) carry little academic value.

The last chapter, by Roy Allison, offers various scenarios for the medium-term future of Russia-EU and Russia-NATO relations. For him, the tendencies in the Russian foreign and security policies that crystallised under Putin’s second mandate are likely to be preserved regardless of the outcome of the presidential elections in 2008.

The study draws on a wide variety of sources, including official documents, political debates and surveys conducted specifically for the project, and interviews with Russian decision-makers. A look at the authors’ enduring research interest in the post-Soviet space and the list of joint publications they wrote on the topic reveals a continuity in their work and is a good indicator of the high quality of this investigation. The findings of the book also appear timely as they can serve as analytical instruments for tackling Putin’s strong opposition to the recent US plans for the deployment of anti-missile interceptor rockets in Poland and a radar base in the Czech Republic and the case of Russia threatening to veto a new Western-backed plan for Kosovo’s independence under the EU’s supervision.

However, the analysis is confined to Russian policy perspectives and public attitudes at the expense of giving little attention to the policy perspectives and attitudes in the EU and NATO, a fact that, though recognised by the authors, is not always justified by the overall results. The accent is placed on high politics, not ‘on the substance of economic and trade relations’, not least due to the ‘considerable securitization of Russia’s foreign policy agenda’ under Putin. Although this argument is well supported, the use of energy as a foreign policy tool rather than as an object of trade only receives limited attention.
Aside from these minor lapses, the book is highly recommendable to anyone who seeks to get some insight into Russian-European relations as well as to all who are interested in Russian foreign policy and European integration studies.

Bilyana Petkova

ENDNOTES


3 Ibid., pp. 11, 186.


6 Ibid., pp. 139–147.

7 Ibid., 195–201.


John O’Brennan: The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union


The purpose of this book is to analyse the Eastern enlargement and its importance for the European Union. O’Brennan’s book looks to establish the evolution of this process in both a conceptual and an institutional analysis. The focus is solely on the internal EU dimension; outer influences and impacts are intentionally omitted. The enlargement of 2004 is considered to be a qualitative step forward in the history of European integration. The narrator accents the voluntary quality of decisions made by sovereign governments to comply with the European Union, the ever-deepening supranational character of the contemporary Union and its common, highly regulated socioeconomic system. He openly admits that his narrative is a normative one and that: ‘Its main claim is that normative and ideational factors rooted in issues of identity, norms and values drove the eastern enlargement process forward and proved decisive in determining its content and form.’

Pat Cox, President of the European Parliament during the final enlargement negotiations of 2002, wrote the foreword of this book. As a true insider, he offers a brief insight about the importance of parliament in the enlargement process. He points out the vast amount of formal and informal work contributed by institutions to successful newly admitted democracies (emerging from the shadow of the former Soviet Union) in the EU. Cox recognises the difficulties and complexity of the enlargement, but at the same time he claims that: ‘Whatever challenges the new order poses they are as nothing compared to the cost in human, economic and political terms of what went before...’ And he welcomes ‘...the reunification, perhaps the first unification of our continent based on common values and exercise of free, sovereign engagement...’

The narrative itself consists of three concise parts. The first gives an empirical account of the evolution, which climaxed at the solemn admission ceremony in Dublin on 1 May 2004. The middle part of the book provides an analysis of the intra-EU institutional politics accompanying the process. In the final chapter O’Brennan moves to a higher level of analysis and tries to conceptualize the problematique from the perspective of various theoretical strands of thought.

The first part is called ‘The unfolding of eastern enlargement, 1989–2004’. Further, it is subdivided into three chapters according to the author’s perception of decisive milestones that took place along the way. For the purposes of this book, history starts with the disintegration of the Soviet bloc in the final months of 1989. The author describes the EU’s response to the largely peaceful revolutions that transformed Central and Eastern states and their eagerness to ‘Return to Europe’. He tries to cap-
tured the euphoric atmosphere that prevailed on both sides of the Iron Curtain in the first moments after the collapse of the oppressive regimes, and he points out the European Community’s quick acknowledgement of its ‘special responsibility’ for the newly reborn democracies. Then he proceeds by portraying the vanishing euphoria. Despite the EC’s ‘rhetorical support for the process of transition, the reality was that doubt and vacillation soon replaced Western enthusiasm’ ...as the EC found that its response to the emerging democracies became increasingly affected by the economic and political vicissitudes of both EC and global politics.” Close attention is given to the aid and reconstruction programs and financial support offered by the EC. He also finds proof that the western community contributed only a fraction of the resources it could have afforded.

The Copenhagen summit of 1993 is perceived as a major shift from distrust towards the perspective of a common future. ‘After Copenhagen the enlargement process took on a more identifiable and discernible shape as new modes of cooperation, adaptation and preparations for membership evolved.’ The road to the next Copenhagen European Council summit in December 2002, during which the admission negotiations came to a triumphant end, is closely mapped in the following sections of the first part of the book.

The author discerns influences on the intricate enlargement process from particular EU presidencies and summits and other events that had direct impact on negotiations. Furthermore, he continues to provide examples, stating that even if the political criteria of accession were non-negotiable, the economic criteria were a different matter and the EU was willing to make concessions to accommodate the most important requests of new members. In the final stages of the process, much depended on financial aid provided by the EU. Negotiations were focused almost solely on this area. When the deal was finally struck, ‘the overriding feeling, both in the EU and accession states, was one of relief that the negotiations, which had seemed to teeter on the brink of collapse at regular intervals, had been brought to a successful conclusion.” Even though, as the author implies, the spiritual aspect of the enlargement was brushed aside during these negotiations, the accession treaty was explicit. O’Brennan ends this part by supporting his claim that ideological factors were decisive to the whole process: ‘... Union represents a collective project: A project to share our future as a community of values.”

The institutional dimension of the Eastern enlargement is analysed in the second part of the book. In the individual chapters the formal and informal roles that are played by the European Council, the Commission and the Parliament are brought under scrutiny. The author looks to answer questions like ‘how and through what instruments do each of these institutions seek to assert their influence on the process, and which of the institutions has proved most important to enlargement decisions?’ He argues that although Article 49 of the treaty of European Union
attributes member states the decisive role through their influence in the European Council, a true understanding of how the EU system works in practice actually reveals a more complicated picture of the decision making process. He opposes identification of the Council as the only EU actor that matters. In his view, the Council itself is entangled in often-antagonistic requirements of individual member states. This makes a unanimous acceptance of specific candidates difficult to reach. During negotiations within the EU, the ‘widening’ problematique was often interlocked with the ‘deepening’ of the contemporary integration process, which added to the complexity of the situation. Furthermore, the Council was obliged to consult the Commission at all stages of the process and win the final approval of the European Parliament.

The Council of Ministers is not a monolithic structure. The author portrays the pitfalls of the institution by projecting a fragmented image of the Council, one that is filled with differing responsibilities. Fragmentation is supposed to be three-dimensional: territorial (differences in the preferences of individual states), sectoral (differences in the preferences of the sectoral Councils) and intra-institutional (differences in the preferences of the sectoral Councils, COREPER, the GEARC, and the presidency). During the accession negotiation, the crucial role within the Council structures was ascribed to the Swedish and Danish Presidencies, which succeeded in ‘facilitating the agreement and maintaining momentum in the process.’ They ‘emerge from analysis of eastern enlargement with particular credit’ as they ‘accelerated and eventually concluded the negotiations.’

The role of the European Commission is seen as central to the institutional politics of the Eastern enlargement. The author embeds his analysis in historical context and takes into account the functional-bureaucratic and normative-political functions of the Commission. The Commission was charged with the technical task of overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the EU’s requirement that candidate states adopt the community law in its entirety. It also took on the role of agenda setter and advocate of an ideological dimension of the enlargement; it stressed the importance of EU values as the underlying basis for membership.

According to Article 49 of the Treaty, the European Parliament only has veto power (the power to deny the accession of any candidate state during the final stage of the enlargement process). The book argues that despite this sole and explicit purpose for the institution, in reality the Parliament utilised various formal and informal instruments to influence the proceedings of the negotiations. The parliament’s main contribution is to be seen in its ‘insistence on full and unequivocal transposition and implementation of EU human rights norms’, which ‘influenced the content of legislation in the candidate states.’ In the author’s view, the EP increased legislative and oversight powers and ensured that the ‘parliamentary dimension of the EU’s most ambitious expansion was anything but marginal.’
The final part of the book is devoted to conceptualizing the Eastern enlargement from different theoretical standpoints. The enlargement is examined from a geopolitical, an economical, and a normative perspective. Even though O’Brien favours the normative interpretation, he does not neglect other possible explanations of the process.

Geopolitical explanations for the Eastern enlargements were long overdue according to the author’s opinion. He sees this enlargement as the first step of EU expansion in the Eastern and South-eastern direction. He emphasises the importance of thoroughly understanding the changes brought about by the enlargement for the EU, so that the Union may be able to continue the process itself. The EU borders might potentially reach the Middle East; therefore, no analysis of the enlargement would be complete without taking the geopolitical dimension into account. His analysis is based on a realist and neo-realist framework. The author places existential threats, which would appear with the occurrence of large-scale instability within Russia and/or Central and Eastern European States, among the most important geopolitical motivations. Thus the enlargement is envisioned as the EU’s attempt to secure its primal interests, to ‘lock in the CEE states into the EU orbit and guard against the westward migration of the problems generated by Russian instability.’ The author appreciates the importance of these factors, but he concludes that the enlargement ‘was built upon and unfolded from a much wider set of motivations on the EU’s part.’

From a realist’s perspective of power, the book continues on with a fluent explanation of the impact of economic power factors. The explanation relies heavily on Moravcsik’s European integration theory, specifically his interpretation of liberal intergovernmentalism. Moravcsik’s hypotheses are tested against up-to-date empirical data about the outcomes of the Eastern enlargement process. O’Brien closely studies the manifestations of aggregated national preferences coming from selected countries within the EU and observes how they match the neoliberal presumptions. He also compares the relative bargaining strength of the EU with that of the CEE states. The conclusion is unambiguous. O’Brien finds liberal intergovernmentalism incapable of sufficiently explaining the most important aspects of the enlargement process and proceeds to illustrate why he finds the normative reasons crucial to the process in the final chapter of the book.

This chapter explores the Eastern enlargement with the help of constructivist ideas about normative factors in international politics, ‘the EU self-conception as a community of values and the norm-rich environment which has underpinned the integration process and helped produce a distinct EU identity in world politics.’ The EU’s self-adulation was first reflected in the conditions that candidate states had to fulfil in order to be granted accession. This chapter elaborates on the importance of common values. The EU has put forth a lot of effort to integrate candidate states
into its world of values. The whole process was ‘dependent for success on a genuine coalescence between insiders and outsiders around a particular set of values and shared collective identity.’ O’Brennan’s final implication is that ‘normative desire to ensure peaceful, law-governed, democratic wider Europe consistently triumphed over narrower and more instrumental logic...’

John O’Brennan has done a great deal of precise work, creating a text summarising the decisive aspects of the Eastern enlargement of EU. He offers a conceptualisation of the most extraordinary enlargement of the European Union based upon up-to-date empirical data. The main contribution of the book can be seen in its analysis of the intra-EU institutional politics. This book can be recommended to those students of international relations who are seeking compact academic material about the latest developments in the given area.

José Pavuk

ENDNOTES
1 John O’Brennan is IRCHSS postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Limerick, Ireland. He was also visiting fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies, where he finished the manuscript for the book.
2 Ibid., p. 5.
3 Ibid., p. ix.
4 Ibid., p. xi.
5 Ibid., p. 15.
6 Ibid., p. 22.
7 Ibid., p. 24.
8 Ibid., p. 49.
9 Ibid., p. 50.
10 Ibid., p. 72.
11 Ibid., p. 84.
12 Ibid., p. 112.
13 Ibid., p. 131.
14 Ibid., p. 153.
15 Ibid., p. 157.
Daniel W. Drezner: All Politics Is Global: Explaining International Regulatory Regimes


This book seeks to explain who dominates the international regulatory regimes in the era of globalization. The author argues that what really matters are the domestic preferences of powerful government states. In opposition to Friedman’s (2005) flat-world notion that globalization has weakened the state, Drezner claims that states make the rules. Specifically, according to Drezner, state size still matters; the great powers – the US and the EU – remain the key players in writing global regulations due to the size of their internal economic markets. If they are in agreement, there will be effective global governance. If they do not agree, governance will be fragmented and ineffective.

The book is organized into two parts. In the first section, the author develops a theory to explain the relative power and preferences of the states, showing how market size and adjustment costs influence coordination outcomes by way of a rational-choice model. In the second part, the author tests the revisionist model of global regulatory governance on four case studies: the Internet, financial markets, genetically modified organisms, and intellectual property rights.

The simple game-theoretic model presented in Chapter 2 develops a theory of national preferences over regulatory standards. The assumption is that globalization increases the gross benefit of regulatory coordination. Borrowing the findings from Krasner’s (1976) analysis, Drezner claim that small states benefit from regulatory coordination more than large states do. Thus, great powers have a bargaining advantage that they can use to ‘cajole and coerce those who disagree with them into accepting the same rulebook’. An important corollary of this statement is that only gross power differences matter. Indeed, great powers are unable to use economic coercion to alter the regulatory standards of states that have a minimal power differential compared to them.

A few complexities enrich this simple argument. Drezner argues that regulatory preferences are mainly a function of the adjustment costs that states must face when switching national standards. Using Hirschman’s (1970) concept of exit and voice, the author posits that the more that domestic groups have invested in the status quo, the greater their costs of exit. Thus, in reacting to the impact of regulatory coordination, they are likely to use the voice rather than the exit. In turn, this leads governments to face higher adjustment costs, making them more reluctant to alter their regulatory standards, though globalization increases the gross benefit of coordination. A paradoxical, and somehow counterintuitive, result of this model is that the most powerful sources of great powers’ preferences are the least globalized ele-
ments of their economy, which have relatively immobile factors of production and thus higher adjustment costs.

Chapter 3 individuates and develops four categories of regulatory processes that depend on a divergence of interests between great powers and between great powers and other actors in the system. First, in the event of similarity in domestic interests among great powers and other governments, a harmonization of regulatory standards is the most probable outcome. Second, when great powers have close interests while small states face high adjustment costs, the likely route to coordination is by club standards. Third, in the presence of a divergence of interests between great powers, the outcome is one of rival standards. Finally, when benefits from cooperation are minimal and adjustment costs are too high, the result is sham standards.

In the second part of the book, the author discusses four case studies, attempting to place each of them into one of the categories outlined above. The author’s justification of his decision to analyze the global governance of the Internet and the financial markets is that in both of these areas, nation-state sovereignty is supposed to have been particularly weakened by forces of globalization. Thus, showing that a great power concert is a necessary and sufficient condition for effective global regulatory governance of both the Internet and the financial markets leads to a rejection of the claim that globalization has emasculated the state. Moreover, one case study involves the area of genetically modified organisms, in which the two major powers, the US and the EU, have diametrically opposed preferences. Finally, a case study on intellectual property rights is included as well, due to its importance in current academic debate.

Regarding the Internet, Drezner contests that part of the literature that claims that the web empowers networked non-states, thereby dampening the importance of the state in global governance. His argument is that ‘great power governments remain the primary actors in fashioning international regulatory regimes’ (p. 118). Thus, when the adjustment costs are low, the probability of effective global governance of Internet-related issues is high. Conversely, when states face high adjustment costs, no coordination is possible, and every country uses all the tools at its disposal in order to preserve its own regulatory standards.

Regarding the second case study, Drezner argues that the standards model of global governance best describes global financial regulation. Specifically, despite the emphasis of a large part of the IPE literature on International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the US and the EU tend to create club IGOs, such as the Financial Stability Forum or the Basle Committee, to ensure the control and enforcement of common financial standards. A corollary of this statement is that developing countries do not have much impact upon the global financial regime, and this is part of the reason why they have been particularly wounded by financial crises.
According to Drezner, ‘the case of genetically modified organisms provides an exemplary case of rival standards’ (p. 174). Indeed, the US and the EU have such divergent interests that they would face excessively high adjustment costs in implementing regulatory coordination. Thus, since other powers do not have such strong preferences on this issue, the US and the EU propose rival regulatory standards, trying to recruit as many allies as possible in the international system. However, as Drezner notes, this scenario produces an intriguing paradox: a bipolar economic order may still lead to a bipolar policy convergence.

Regarding intellectual property rights, Drezner admits that this case falsifies the revisionist model, bolstering the Global Civil Society (GCS) narrative about global economic governance. However, the author warns that ‘GSC did play a role in shifting policy on intellectual property rights – but the role has been exaggerated both before and after Doha Declaration’ (p. 201). Drezner concludes that missed variables in the revisionist model, such as the transaction costs to forum shifting, may have led to its poor short run prediction in the case study.

The book has two main flaws, one at a theoretical and another at a methodological level. First, by his own admission, the author borrows his analysis from Legro’s and Moravcsik’s two-step approach to international theory. The first step identifies the domestic preferences of states; given these preferences, the second step explains the bargaining outcomes coming from international cooperation among states. However, the analysis of domestic preferences is not spelled out properly by the author, who is mainly concerned with the internal market size of states and as a consequence neglects other important domestic features. For instance, there is no evidence in Drezner’s analysis of the importance of the type of regime or of domestic institutions. Both these factors are likely to shape states’ behaviour in international cooperation, as several recent articles have shown (Leeds, 1999; Svolik, 2006). This problem of missing variables may affect the goodness-of-fit of the revisionist model. Second, the case study approach may generate a problem of selection bias. Indeed, the selection of the four cases is only partially justified by the author. Statistical methods allow for an n-large analysis that would have avoided this problem. Further study should take this direction when the problem of operationalization of the dependent variable, i.e. effective regulatory coordination, is solved.

These two flaws notwithstanding, this is a thought-provoking and elegantly written book and an important contribution to the understanding of globalization at both an economic and a political level. Not everyone will accept its premises, but the book will edify any reader interested in the debate over current international circumstances and possible directions for the future.

Leonardo Baccini
ENDNOTES
1 Drezner is Associated Professor of International Politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is the author of US Trade Strategy and The Sanctions Paradox and has also published in the New York Times and in the Wall Street Journal. He keeps a daily weblog online: www.danieldrezner.com.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Adrienne Héritier with Carl-Fredrik Bergstrom and Catherine Moury: Explaining Institutional Change in Europe


The European Union has always been in a process of institutional change. It is rather paradoxical since according to the mainstream view of political sciences, its institutions represent stability and resist change. Therefore, this book by Adrienne Héritier raises the basic question of how to explain the permanent institutional changes in the EU, how and why they take place, and which theories lend themselves best to account for these changes. Héritier is at present a Professor of Political Science at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute in Florence, and she has written several books and papers on policy issues and decision-making processes. The introductory chapter of the book develops theoretically and at length the above mentioned research questions, which are addressed ‘empirically’ throughout the book. It provides a general overview of the literature it uses and offers an in-depth analysis of the theoretical approaches used to explain the conceptualisation of the driving forces and the underlying causes of institutional change. The author makes it clear at the very beginning that she follows the definition of D. North, in which an institution is understood as ‘an actor-created rule of behaviour guiding human behaviour’ (p. 3). To make a general case about the institutions, two perspectives are taken throughout the book, a process perspective and a structural perspective. The former indicates the factors driving institutional change with their underlying causal processes and their outcomes while the latter looks at the different levels and arenas of decision-making and at the types of actors involved.

After this short theoretical introduction (‘Theories of Institutional Change’) the main text of the book deals with five empirical cases of major institutional change in EU history. The majority of the book is devoted to developing and testing a model of institutional changes in these five cases. The five empirical cases investigated in the book indeed involve the main institutional rules governing the European decision-making processes in their long term development. They have been identified in the following terms by the author: (a) the institutional rule governing the role of the European Parliament in legislation; (b) the institutional rule governing the role of the Presidency in the decision-making process of the Council of Ministers; (c) the institutional rule governing the composition of the Commission; (d) the institutional rule guiding the control of the implementing powers of the Commission by the Council (comitology); and, finally, (e) the institutional rule to be followed in the investiture of the Commission.

All five cases directly or indirectly concern the ‘primary’ institutions of the EU – the Council, the Commission and the Parliament – and the main idea behind these
changes is the integrative bargaining process that leads through inter-institutional negotiations to the integrative (re)balancing of the Big Three. The intricate and complex relationships between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament have been described in this conceptual framework of endogenous and exogenous changes with functional and power-based approaches. In addition, the book argues that although the ECJ is often viewed in the EU as the least well known of the primary institutions, through successive treaty revisions, it has arguably still had a decisive influence on the development of all other primary institutions to the extent that some analysts have even complained about too much judicial activism.

The main research question of changing institutions evolves into a venture of actually bringing these two – functional and power-based – analytical dimensions together in a well-conceptualised and well-formulated way. The book is devoted to the developments in the Big Three and presents a comprehensive account of the process of institutional change through its analysis of inter-institutional decision-making. The Council has been described as the best-placed actor in the decision-making process, but the Commission and the Parliament have also been analysed in depth. In general, the author provides extremely useful insights into the EU decision-making system with special attention to the complex interactions between the above institutions and their subordinate bodies. The Council has been qualified as the decisive actor, but it has had to give up some power positions to the other actors in a bargaining process. This power bargaining has represented an endogenous pressure in the inter-institutional process. The author also examines the impact of the widening policy universe on the EU institutions, and thus she elaborates on a functionally widening world of the EU institutions that has represented an external pressure on them. Accordingly, there are some common features in all five cases since there has always been an exogenous pressure that evokes a functional argument and also an endogenous pressure that implies a rational choice argument. Finally, these two approaches are combined to produce a ‘soft’ notion of rationality or a ‘thin’ rational choice institutionalist theory in the book.

Out of the five cases, the most controversial one is the Council-Parliament relationship that has been analysed as the first case (a). Actually, this relationship goes through all five of the cases as a power redistribution process between the Council and the Parliament with the widening field of the co-decision legislative process. Therefore, the least controversial case is the second (b), which is only a power redistribution exercise within the Council itself. But in the final analysis, this change has also been provoked to a great extent by the external pressure of the widening policy universe as well as by the strengthening of actors of the Parliament and the Commission, since the Council has increasingly needed a specific organ, the Presidency, to negotiate with them. In fact, when the European Parliament has run into a conflict with the Council, it has used four major methods to increase its competence, fi-
nally producing the present co-decision process as an integrative balance between the Council and the Parliament: (1) the Council has had to make concessions to the Parliament because the Council believed that the Parliament was using normative arguments of democratic legitimacy; (2) the Parliament has extended its budgetary powers step by step, and these powers have become an important tool for exerting pressure on the Council; (3) the Parliament has called for redesigning the ‘higher order’ institutional rules, i.e. it suggested treaty revisions in its wider competence against the Council’s will, and (4) the ‘exogenous event’ of the successive enlargements has also led to the extension of parliamentary powers and the Parliament’s monitoring role in Council decisions since the Accession Treaties have been ratified by the European Parliament. This power shift is the general framework within which the author has put all the other institutional changes, including the one within the Council resulting in the widening powers of the Presidency in regard to both the rotating Presidency and the European Council. This internal articulation and differentiation of the Council has acquired a high importance in the last few years with the new system of team presidency and with the emerging special relationships between the European Council and the rotating Presidency. As the author emphasises several times, the competences of the European Council have been mostly informal and have been only partly formalised from time to time. Today, this can also be seen in the case of the institutional rules for the team presidencies.

Although some arguments are too long and complicated, with many repetitions in the descriptions of the five empirical cases because the author does not use the famous ‘Occam’s razor’, this book still constitutes a valuable contribution to the literature on the institutional changes in the EU. Despite the extensive literature on the EU basic institutions, this book presents a major contribution to contemporary EU studies literature with its concise and well-written chapters. The book as a whole demonstrates how complex the interactions of the basic EU institutions are as this excellent work brings us through many basic institutional changes in the various areas of Community policy. The present debate focuses on how the basic institutions can cooperate or act collectively to reach decisions effectively. The main argument of the book is that the EU has always been in a state of permanent institutional change, and obviously, with the Lisbon Treaty and the developments after it, many new changes are still down the road. This book is very useful not just in helping us to understand the changes so far, but it also helps us to understand the internal logic and driving forces of the new institutional changes that are ahead of us.

Attila Ágh
Blanka Říchová (ed): Government Models in Parliamentary Systems (the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Slovakia and Mauritius) [Vládní modely v parlamentních systémech: (Nizozemsko, Švédsko, Itálie, Španělsko, Slovensko a Mauritius)]


The editor of the reviewed publication is a prominent specialist in political science theories. Blanka Říchová acts as Head of the Department of Political Science at the Institute of Political Studies at FSV UK. She has assembled a team of authors who studied the problems associated with coalition governance in the following areas: Central Europe (Petr Just), Southern Europe (Malvíná Hladká and Lada Šušlíková), Northern Europe (Mats Braun) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Vlastimil Fiala). With respect to this content, the publication is a compilation of case studies which provides a synoptic and well arranged informative aggregate of information relating to the development and character of executive political systems in particular countries.

It is almost needless to emphasise how actual this subject is when viewed from a Central-European perspective. Therefore, the publication can be appealing to the broader public. The publication offers the possibility to familiarise oneself with the work of classic authors like W.H. Riker, R. Axelrod or A. de Swaan and provides topics for discussions about theoretical starting points for studies about coalition governments in democracies. The principal aim of the publication is: ‘to compare the internal transformation of systems which have been developing without any significant fluctuation after WWII to systems such as the First Republic in Italy, which have gone through significant transformations during the monitored period of time.’

The publication consists of an introduction (non-paginated) and six case studies. Each of them addresses a specific method of government formation. At first glance, a country’s choice for its political system is usually not determined by geographical pertinence. The draft of analyzed political systems has consciously been chosen to introduce governmental models: firstly, in diverse types of communities (segmented and non-segmented), secondly, in diverse types of development stages (stable democracy and transforming countries), and finally, in diverse types of party systems.

The first chapter (by Blanka Říchová), ‘Coalition governments in the Netherlands in 1964–2004’, is probably the most analytical part of the publication. It provides answers to the question of whether theoretical conclusions deduced by
representatives of the theory of coalitions comply with practice in the Netherlands. It confronts theoretical conclusions: ‘M. Laver and N. Schofield, who argue that the number of alternate coalition ties existing in a given situation determine the amount of negotiations necessary to move toward the optimal alternative, and A. Timmermanes with R. B. Andeweg, who conclude that the Netherlands is an exception in this case because local politicians don’t dedicate themselves to discussing alternatives that are not viable.’3 These conclusions may look trivial from the perspective of a Czech environment in which the majority of a potential coalition isn’t being negotiated within the post-election period. However, P. Just’s case study is evidence of the opposite. In the next section, the author determines the characteristics of coalitions in the Netherlands and then analyzes the influence of political system transformation on government formation during 1971–1994.

In the second chapter, Mats Braun focuses on government formation in post-war Sweden and analyzes the decisive role of the Social Democratic Party (SD) in the Swedish political system. Braun points to specific features of government formation in Sweden, e.g. stable minority governments of SD, unstable non-socialist majority coalitions. ‘This raises the question of whether there are special features related to Swedish political culture or the Swedish political system that favour minority governments.’4 He tries to analyse why SD decided to favour minority cabinets instead of forming majority coalitions. According to Braun, this fact was made possible due to: ‘the unconditional support of the Left Party for SD governments (and) ... (t)he constitutional setting and the non-existence of an investiture vote.’5 In a situation in which a minority government doesn’t have to have a majority in the parliament, minority governments are more likely to be formed. Braun has shown that in the Swedish political system, minority governments are normal and stable. The question is what would be the consequences of a constitutional change in favour of a ‘positive’ investiture vote. It could make minority governments impossible or unstable like the ones in the Czech Republic.

In the third chapter, ‘The Governmental Model in the Period of the First Republic in Italy’, Lada Šušlíková puts her mind to an ‘analysis of governmental behavior, its actors, the consequences of relevant factors on the political system and feedback from political representatives’.6 The author builds her hypothesis on the assumption that the following factors had a key influence in the matter: the electoral system, the structure of the party system, the specific political culture and the two main political parties’ insuperable differences in regard to foreign policy. Overall, the essay is very interesting, but there are parts of it which are too detailed and tedious, e.g. the part devoted to characteristics of the electoral system. Likewise, the parts dealing with the influence of the sub-culture on electoral behavior, corruption, and the polarisation of the Italian party system bear similar weak signs as they rely too much on the theory of the party system and branch away from the
subject. An indisputable benefit is one observation related to the party system in which the author quotes the opinion of the Italian political scientist Farneti, who considers the East-West cleavage as the key determiner of coalition behavior.

In Chapter 4, Malvina Hladká analyses the originations of five minority governments (at the central level) in her case study ‘The Creation of Minority Governments in Spain (1977–2000)’. The author separates the monitored period into four time bands, which always bear a certain specificity. Her effort to handle the contradiction between theoretical presumptions and practice in Spain is very interesting: Spain ‘is the only European country where none of the nine governments have been formed from more than one political party.’ The question is why governmental coalitions are not being formed if the winning party is usually not able to obtain a majority in parliament. This is in conflict with conclusions reached in the theory of coalitions. The author stipulates that the formation of minority governments is stimulation for broader theoretical discussion about the theory of coalitions. The author works with numerical gains of political parties (coalitions), but she does not familiarise readers with basic data, e.g. how many mandates are available in the House of Representatives and similar information. This can be perceived as a problem for some readers. The author concludes that the theory that minority governments are not a deviation or irrational but are the result of different objectives of political parties (central as well as regional) operating in various politico-territorial arenas cannot be applied in the case of Spain.

In the fifth chapter, ‘Coalition Governments in Slovakia 1990–2002’, Petr Just disserts upon the problems associated with forming coalition governments in Slovakia. He successfully attempts to set up a theoretical typology and the characteristics of particular coalitions. He also analyses specific features of the Slovak political system, which lacked the traditional cleavage of right wing vs. left wing until 2002. The author analyses election results and calculates theoretical options for coalitions in the given post-election situation, which are, however, in many cases not realistic due to specific cleavages. P. Just argues that office-seeking theory prevails over policy-seeking theory in Slovakia and that therefore, the situation is different from the one in Spain, which has gone through a similar crisis. The existence of a coalition in 1994–1998 which combined the extremes of the political spectrum is the best evidence for such a claim. The overall impression that I get from the chapter is that it is consistent, logical and comprehensive. As a whole, the case study provides interesting empirical data and, above all, original models of a potential minimum winning coalition and an analysis of why the most suitable options were not realised.

Vlastimil Fiala deals with a specific topic which is often omitted in Czech political science in the closing chapter, ‘Governmental Coalition in Sub-Saharan Africa (The Example of Mauritius)’. The author disserts upon problems of coalition gov-
ernments in what the author himself calls ‘one of the few stable democratic regimes in Africa’. The chapter is inspiring from an empirical perspective, but there are several disputable statements in it. I especially consider the following statement to be questionable: ‘...although there is a relative majority system that usually leads to a two-party system and majority governments in liberal democratic countries (e.g. Great Britain, Canada), there were only coalition governments formed from at least two political parties in Mauritius since it declared its independence.’ One can agree with the part of the statement regarding majority governments, but there are no two-party systems in GB and Canada. Another problematic item is, for instance, the following sentence: ‘African presidents are usually elected through direct presidential elections or by indirect elections,’ which implies that there is another (third) method being used in Africa. The truth is that there are cases of indirectly elected presidents who can be confirmed into the function through a referendum. Virtually, it is a combination of the first two methods of election. The main contribution of Fiala’s case study is that it introduces the theoretical problems of how to implement the influence of a specific election system (Block Vote) and of how to place an ethnically divided society into the theory of coalitions.

The publication fulfilled its defined goal. The case studies offer original conclusions, well-arranged empirical findings and analyses of whether the theoretical conclusions of the theory of coalitions correspond with these findings. The analysis of stable minority governments invokes questions about the propriety or impropriety of the set-up of constitutional principles in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, it is impossible not to notice the deficiencies which were already mentioned in the section dealing with the content of the publication. However, the majority of the objections relate to formal structure and not to the content. One last remark must apply to Mauretania, which appears as a deus ex machina in the subtitle of the reviewed publication instead of Mauritius. Regardless of these objections, the publication is an undisputed asset for Czech political science. The case studies offer answers to the unsaid question invoked by the cover of the book – whether it is a political program or rather a post that matters more to political parties during the formation of a political coalition (policy-seeking theory or office-seeking theory). The publication can be a good starting point in a discussion about the theoretical basis of studies of coalitions in Central Europe, where it may seem that office-seeking and policy-seeking theory both failed.

Martin Riegl
ENDNOTES:


2 Ibid., p. 1.

3 Ibid., pp. 9–10.

4 Ibid., p. 48.

5 Ibid., pp. 47, 58.

6 Ibid., p. 63.

7 Ibid., p. 102.

8 Ibid., p. 168.

9 Ibid., p. 164.
The relevance of regions and the matter of regionalisation are keywords in today’s world and especially within the European Union, where the phrase ‘Europe of the regions’ is omnipresent. Regarding the vastness of the topic and its different areas of research, there exists a respectable number of books on the market. One of those is the volume *Außenbeziehungen von Regionen. Europäische Regionen im Vergleich* by Jan Thiele, which also happens to be his dissertation. While numerous books prefer to stress the element of regionalism and attempts at increasing the autonomy of certain regions, Thiele has another approach. The essence of his work is neither the question of the political recognition of regions nor that of their attempts to achieve regionalism (or even autonomism). It is rather a systematic comparison of the foreign relations of different European regions. The starting point of his research is the fact that foreign relations of regions have greatly increased during the last decade. However, this phenomenon still lacks an appropriate analysis, especially in regard to the factors that influence foreign relations. Although he states that this is a general phenomenon, the core of the book is a comparison of regions in Europe with respect to their foreign relations and the motivation for those relations. This choice is justified by claiming that the impact of globalisation is best visible in the European case. For this purpose, he examines regions in Germany, France, Great Britain and Belgium. Altogether, he compares 52 regional entities. The methodical device that he uses to achieve this aim is the so-called fuzzy-set method developed by Charles Ragin, which Thiele describes as a middle course between the qualitative and the quantitative research approach. Through this method, he verifies the variables which he set up for the purpose of this study. Besides questioning the validity of these variables, he wants to examine the impact of regional foreign relations on the nation states and whether this behaviour is a sign of regions becoming global players as well.

In the introductory part of the book, Thiele defines his field and the aims of his research. His goal is to deliver an empirical survey of the motivations of European regions for maintaining foreign relations. The emphasis hereby lies intentionally on relations and not on foreign policy, as this is still a major domain of the nation state. Whether the foreign relations of regions stand in conflict with national foreign policy is another question asked by Thiele. In what follows, the working definitions are described. The most important notion is that of ‘region’. In this context, he refers to the definition of Hrbek and Weyand, who describe a region as a territorial unit di-
rectly underneath the central government but above the communal level and with an importance for the territorial organisation of the administration.¹ In this respect, regions are mainly seen as institutional divisions. This definition comes close to the one drawn up by the Assembly of European Regions.² Other thinkers criticise such definitions for being too restrictive for European regions and leaving out many units.³ However, for the aim of this analysis, which is supposed to be a work of systematic research, Thiele needs to apply very strict measurements to his definitions.

Following the introduction, the second part of the book is a theoretical chapter in which he describes the character, motivations and influencing factors of regional foreign relations in the context of globalisation. This part offers a good overview of the current discussion about the impact of regions and their further evolution in a globalised world. In this regard, he refers to the term ‘glocalization’, which is described as a ‘symbiotic correlation’⁴ between globalisation and localisation / regionalisation, i.e. international occurrences have an influence on the local level and vice versa. Today’s policy making becomes an increasingly complex construct, and it is an illusion to assume that nation states can control it individually and by themselves.⁵ Therefore, the subnational units/regions have a vivid interest in taking part in international activities. Another key concept that Thiele is referring to is the loss of national sovereignty and the associated delimitation of the nation state. According to his convictions,⁶ the proceeding globalisation leads to a weakening of the nation state. Hence, the regions need to become active themselves to defend their interests in the world. This development strengthens the regional level and provokes regions to increase their international practises.

Throughout the third chapter, Thiele develops the independent and dependent variables for his analysis. As potential causes of regional foreign relations, he presents interdependence as a functional explicative pattern and political regionalism as a cultural-normative explanation. He chooses his variables with these factors in mind. The independent variables to be checked are: foreign competences, financial strength, international economic interdependency and strong regionalist tendencies (also described as regionalism). On the basis of these characteristics, he explains the reasons for foreign relations of regions. The dependent variable is the degree of foreign relations of the regions. This variable is divided into three dimensions – the number of distinct regional partnerships, the number of international representations and the strength of engagement in European policy. For each of these variables, a so-called fuzzy-set is created. An explanation of the fuzzy-set method is also a part of the third chapter. According to ordinary set theory, an element either belongs in a set or does not (0 or 1). In contrast to ordinary set theory, the fuzzy-set method allows for a gradual assessment and therefore for more precision in research. Instead of simply ascertaining whether an element belongs in the set or not, Thiele differentiates various degrees of belonging by determining five
gradations between 0 and 1 – the higher the rate, the more the examined element belongs in the respective set. As already indicated before, the objects of his research are the German Länder (16 regions), the French régions (22), and the Belgian (3) and British (11) regions. These objects are not randomly chosen but represent an adequate variance for the independent variables.7

In the fourth chapter, Thiele examines the three already mentioned dimensions of the dependent variable by applying them to each of the 52 chosen regions. The same procedure is pursued in the fifth chapter for the four independent variables. Both chapters contain a great number of charts that mainly provide the data obtained through the fuzzy-set method, followed by a written explanation.

In the sixth chapter, Thiele analyses the created fuzzy-sets regarding their practicability and accurateness. If a calculated figure does not seem to match reality, the fuzzy-set method allows the researcher to modify the drawn up rules regarding the allocation of data. After analysing all the collected data, he comes to the conclusion that of the four set up independent variables, only two have a major impact on explaining the foreign relations of regions. These two variables are equipment with foreign competences and financial fittings of the regions. On the other hand, economical interdependence and regionalist tendencies are revealed as less decisive driving factors for regional foreign relations and are therefore of minor importance. Hence, his initial assumption about the importance of cultural-normative and functionalist motivation for foreign relations is only true to a limited extent. For this reason, Thiele changes his initial model of explicationary patterns and defines three patterns in accordance with the results of his analysis: foreign competences, financial strength and the combination of strong interdependence with strong regionalist tendencies are thus the determining factors for the distinct foreign relations of regions. Regarding the posed question of whether regional foreign relations are in conflict with national foreign policy, his results lead him to the conclusion that the relationship between the two is rather a cooperative and complementary one and that foreign policy is increasingly becoming a common task.8 The last chapter offers a short abstract and an outlook toward the future. Thiele concludes by stressing the importance of the nation state as the most important actor of foreign policy and hence relativises the previously mentioned loss of national sovereignty. An extensive annex then provides further information about the tested regions and more specific data on the fuzzy-sets.

This book is different from most other publications on the topic of European regions because it offers a new interesting approach in using the fuzzy-set method. However, that is also where the weak point of the volume is located. If the reader has never dealt with this scientific method before, the book might be challenging, although Thiele includes an explanation of his modus operandi. The text flow is often interrupted by charts, which seem quite overwhelming at first glance, but this is
probably the price of its highly empirical approach. Another point of criticism is the selection and the already mentioned definition of regions. Although he admits to the diversity and asymmetry of European regions, the question stays open as to whether one can compare the ‘French functional / planning regions’ with the ‘general-purpose governments of the German Länder’, i.e. these regions ‘differ so greatly in their nature’ that this might be a case of comparing apples and oranges.9 Thiele chose four model countries with different characteristics for his research in order to have a great variance. But still, there arises the question of whether and how far the results of this analysis would have differed if other states and regions – especially more disharmonious ones such as Italy or Spain – had been chosen. This certainly offers space for further research. Despite these objections, the book is a valuable contribution to the current academic discourse, especially because of its methodological approach and empirically rich analysis.

Stefanie Bröcker

ENDNOTES

2 ‘The term “Region” covers in principle local authorities immediately below the level of central government, with a political power of representation as embodied by an elected regional Assembly.’ (Statute of the Assembly of European Regions, chapter 2, article 2.2.)
4 Thiele, p. 28.
6 In this point of view, he is following the concept of Joachim Blatter.
7 Cp. Thiele, p. 93.
8 Ibid., p. 244.
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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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Visualising the EU in EU Enlargement

Boundaries of Balkanism in EU Accession Discourses

Toward a Conception of Welcoming and Cooperating Patriotisms

Global Governance vs. State Failure

Geopolitical Narratives on Belarus in Contemporary Russia