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Power Politics and Energy Politics

Two Sides of the Same Euro Coin

Markos Troulis

The growing EU energy market and the decline of its domestic hydrocarbon reserves have made the EU-Russia energy relations a very debatable and significant issue of the very near future. It is unquestioned that energy trade is found at the core of every political entity or group of entities desiring to be independent and self-helped. The current paper aims to discuss the theoretical legacy of this energy debate on the basis of international relations theory and international political economy underlining the significance of energy trade and its interlinkage to core aspects of security. In this respect, it is also analysed why natural gas is a special energy product and which are the limits between dependence and interdependence as well as the implications derived from each one of these.

Keywords: energy politics, IR theory, EU energy security, Russia, natural gas, grand strategy, European politics, relative gains, international political economy, strategy

Introduction

Energy politics is a growing domain affecting the core of EU market economy and consequently, the Union's survival as a distinct regional and global actor. Therefore, energy trade, its diversification, or the stability of the environment where energy exports to the EU take place are core aspects of member-states' political and economic autonomy in the world scene, European people's well-being and in general, the

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sustainability of Europe as we know it in the decades following World War II. The scope of this paper is to analyze the importance of energy security for the EU survival. Is the presence of the EU, as a distinct political actor in the global arena, interlinked to the energy diversification principle? Under which circumstances is the implementation of the EU diversification principle considered critical?

The current paper is structured under the purpose of clarifying the interlinkage of energy to politics and economics and consequently, the implications of the structure of the EU-Russia energy relations to the EU structure itself. More specifically, it presents the historical political-economic debate and then it clarifies its linkages to international relations theory and international political economy. Finally, it concludes with referring to EU energy security with an emphasis on issues of its natural gas dependence from external producers.

The Political-Economic Diachronic Debate

International anarchy urges states to struggle for their survival using any means necessary, since uncertainty about the intentions of the other is the rule. Starting from this assumption, geoeconomics arise as the conceptual amalgam of political and economic tools especially in the post-Cold War era, since when the cost of conflict has increased sharply. The notion of territorial sovereignty has signified that state position in the world scene is relative and it is estimated vis-à-vis the distribution of means among the actors. For this reason, 'as spatial entities structured to jealously delimit their own territories, to assert their exclusive control within them, and variously to attempt to influence events beyond their borders, states are inherently inclined to strive for relative advantage against like entities on the international scene, even if only by means other than force'.¹ In this respect, geoeconomics reflects the continuing existence of the competitive international system in the light of economic and trade antagonisms.² In other words, the conflictual substance of the international system is analysed on the basis of economic relations and use of economic tools towards implementation of national interests. Geoeconomic elements of power may contain 'natural resources, population, industrial capacity and level of scientific and technological development and innovation potential'.³ Thus, the geoeconomic dimension is the conceptual starting point for the relation between politics and economics.

The first assumption is that political and economic functions are complementary. In this regard, economic functions are manipulated for the sake of power maximization which is an essentially political goal. Such a mercantilist logic describes the state's struggle to maintain its position in the international system using economic tools. Besides, the liberalists of the 19th century defined security issues as the most important always in conjunction with economic prosperity when someone refers to state priorities. Thus, economic empowerment is the key towards the implementation of political and strategic goals and it is not a one-dimensional prosperity-oriented priority. In brief, Jacob Viner has made four complementary assumptions with regard to mercantilism.⁴ First, wealth is the absolutely necessary precondition for either maintaining status quo or implementing offensive action. Second, reversely, political power is also a valuable asset for accumulating wealth. Third, both wealth and military power are interlinked aims of a state simultaneously sought since it is doubtful whether either one precedes. Fourth, the security interest is the upmost aim and thus, economic concessions may be necessary in short-term. A classic example of economic concessions for the sake of long-term security benefits is the Navigation Act of 1651 as it is described by Adam Smith. Its core logic was the subversion of the Dutch position in the world trade even at the small expense of the gains of the United Kingdom.⁵ Therefore, the upmost mercantilist aim is power maximization relative to any other competitors on the basis of economic means accumulation. The mercantilist thought defines state at the core of the international economic gamble.

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Modern economic liberalism, also, defines resources accumulation and economic growth at the core of state aims. According to this idea, this happens because the governing elites are checked by citizens with the right to vote, who lobby for economic prosperity as a precondition for satisfying their consumption demands.⁶ In 1662, John Gaunt stated that 'the art of governing and the true politiques, is how to preserve the subject in peace and plenty', while Adam Smith referred to mercantilism as well as to himself when he said that 'the great object of the political economy of every country, is to increase the riches and power of that country'.⁷ Alexander Hamilton and Friedrich List were not out of Adam Smith's logic. For instance, Hamilton envisaged 'a nation in which sectional economies would interweave themselves into a common national economy and interest',⁸ while Charles Kindleberger,

some centuries later, remarked that ‘maximization of long run profit approaches very closely the long run political goal of trying to stay in business, that is keeping the economic unit or political community a going concern.’⁹

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Currently, the afore-mentioned complementarity is, also, visible in Robert Gilpin’s definition about international political economy. International political economy is constituted by ‘the market and powerful actors. Both components are necessary, and one cannot comprehend how either domestic or international economies function unless he or she understands both how markets work and how states and other actors attempt to manipulate markets to their own advantage’.¹⁰ Containing both markets and states in the same definition presumes that political economy is a domain of political issues which are ranked under the auspices of economic means. In 1971, Richard Nixon declared that the future balance of power will be determined accordingly. In his own words, ‘Western Europe, Japan and China as well as the USSR and the United States are the five that will determine the economic future and, because the economic power will be the key to other kinds of power, the future of the world in other ways in the last third of this century.’¹¹

In this sense, politics and economics coexist and co-develop under the prospect of the common goal of state survival and economic prosperity. The utmost national interest of increasing the preconditions of security is served by the simultaneous desire for power and wealth. Essentially, wealth is power and the above-mentioned remark is just a scheme for highlighting their complementarity. However, wealth, in order to become hard power, has to be mobilized and directed accordingly.¹² Besides, the content of economic threats themselves are often directly related to national security issues. Such economic threats usually concern low income or internal instability through inadequate employment and high inflation rates. Moreover, since economic threats result from the competitive international environment, they may concern even state sovereignty, meaning its capability to use its elements of power without limitations or subversions.¹³ For instance, in November 1973 in the occasion of the oil crisis, President Nixon called on the United States to ‘meet its own energy needs without depending on any foreign sources’, while Senator Jackson advocated the establishment of a Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to supply the U.S. military in times

of national emergency. Jackson was responding to the Department of Defence's claim that it needed sufficient oil supplies to be able to support a ground war on two fronts. All this resulted to the rise of strategic reserves from about 7.46 million barrels in 1977 to 546 million in 1999.¹⁴

Economic elements of power are integral parts of state power and pillars of its political-strategic position internationally and regionally. Accumulation of raw materials, technology, knowhow or the communication of a favourable investment environment confirm the above-mentioned assumption. Thus, 'almost every political question has an economic aspect, and once we move from the economic problems of Robinson Crusoe, almost every economic question has a political aspect.'¹⁵ Referring to historical examples, the post-war us primacy at the Western hemisphere is indicative. The Bretton Woods rules and the consequent economic and institutional international order reflected a dual procedure. On the one hand, it resulted from the us political and strategic primacy and the urgent need for balancing the USSR threat. On the other hand, this international order empowered the political and strategic regime of NATO.¹⁶

What the us favoured was an international order best described by the term 'hegemonic stability'. Hegemonic stability is the reflection of a system of international regimes functioning under the provisions of a dominant power having the role of the single stabilizer and of course, the leading power.¹⁷ Therefore, a system stabilized in hegemonic terms is both a cause and an effect; it reflects a certain balance of power and it, also, furthers the leading country's strategic reach. The strategic partnership between the us and Western Europe during the Cold War aimed to the balancing of the major soviet threat. The weak European partners buckpassed the cost of balancing to the us and the us improved their position in Europe in exchange. This relation was institutionalized by the establishment of the international order as we have known it. However, there are cases that economy becomes a significant weapon in the hands of the stabilizer and, due to shortages or long-term contracts, it acquires its role not for the sake of balance of threat but for the sake of its own imperialist purposes. Such examples can be found to the colonizing powers' policies in Africa and Asia or Moscow's priorities at the expense of the rest soviet republics in the USSR era.

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Power Politics, Interstate Antagonisms and Strategy Implementation

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For the above-mentioned reasons, it is more than obvious that power is the motive. The more powerful an actor, the closer to the implementation of national interest finds itself. Power represents the means for achieving survival. Taking into consideration that the actors struggle to survive and the game is zero-sum, this struggle for power takes place at the expense of the other's security. Thus, power is considered the means to change the other's behaviour either for maintaining status quo and deter its offensiveness or maximizing power implementing own offensiveness.¹⁸ In practical terms, power is reflected into two separate expressions interlinked to political and strategic results. It can be potential or putative, which means respectively either a pillar for building military power (effect) or a leverage for achieving strategic aims (power in outcomes).¹⁹ As far as it is defined potential, power is identified with military build-ups. Conversely, as a leverage and power in outcomes, it may promote economic primacy of a state on a market as a monopoly or a monopsony, it may determine decision-making processes of opponents and allies, it may restrict the opponents' economic capabilities undermining its growth prospects and it may symbolize its own desires.²⁰

Potential power contains population and wealth as those elements contributing to military build-up. Population contributes to the creation of big armies but, also, to the consolidation of a large internal market, which is the backup for decreasing external dependencies and broadening the prospects of industrial and agricultural production in the interior. Wealth is reflected by the measurement of GDP, which is affected by all the pillars of national economy, such as industrial and agricultural production, technological innovation as well as the stable and uninterrupted access to raw materials. Of course, there are many intervening variables determining national power, but GDP is the only measurable and relatively credible. In the case of energy politics, for instance, a state with large reserves of hydrocarbons – such as Norway – may proliferate its gains through an effective technical and organizational structure. However, there are also ineffective and underdeveloped energy-rich states – such as Nigeria – with limited gains.²¹ For this reason, the possession of energy resources is not efficient by definition. A state's capability to extract, use and trade this power determines its fate in the margins of the international system.

In the case of power as a leverage, it is a tool itself and not an intermediate for acquiring another tool. In these terms, there are two possibilities; (a) projection of hard power aims to contribute to the implementation of an economic goal with political implications; (b) exercise of economic power – for example, through embargo – aims to contribute to the gain of strategic benefits. According to Jacob Viner, ‘in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, colonial and other overseas markets, the fisheries, the carrying trade, the slave trade and open trade routes over the high seas, were all regarded, and rightly, as important sources of national wealth’. Thus, states owning the capability to mobilize economic goods remain to efficiently use raw materials as well as the conditions of international trade.²² What is stressed, here, regards the difficulties of describing the efficiency of hydrocarbons as a ‘weapon’. Is it an effective means or not? It is very important due to the absence of competitive substitutes in many cases. However, even if a producer uses efficiently the “energy weapons”, there are many limitations to its behaviour due to the fact that this economically efficient use of hydrocarbons creates growth, which should not be at risk.

In other words, there are many parameters towards analysing the strategic manipulation of energy and nothing is self-evident. The efficient manipulation of energy can be determined by the existence of substitutes, the magnitude of the internal market, the level of diversification of routes and producers, the geographical proximity to the production area or, reversely, to the threatening country. Respectively, the producer has also the interest for diversifying its markets, carefully including energy trade to its economic growth efforts and increasing its deterring capability in order to be able to deal effectively with any external pressures. The threat declines as far as the cost increases via a broadly interdependent economic structure. Stabilization results from the threat of a mutual cost and the limitation of asymmetries. When one part aims to exploit its relative advantage and maximize its gains, the other feels insecure taking measures to balance the threat and then, the partnership is destabilized. International system is constituted by similar actors in the sense that they are all state entities which are, however, unequal in terms of their capabilities.²³ Unequal capabilities lead to imbalances of power and then, uneven growth, which is a core cause of war and instability. Lowes Dickinson analyses the causes behind the World War I – which followed a period of great economic interdependence among the Great Powers – concluding that the Ger-

man economic growth and its conversion to hard power created a security dilemma for the rest powers of that era, meaning Russia, France and the United Kingdom.²⁴

Economic interdependence may render into one-sided dependence through the manipulation of the trading product. This may happen, if an actor feels powerful enough to maximize its gains risking its position. How powerful it is, it is determined relatively. Power is not measured as an absolute volume, but its distribution matters. Besides, the magnitude of the world market is very specific and the accumulation of any share by the actor A is a loss for the actor B. Thus, the more interdependent a relation the more politically stabilized it is, since it is of mutual interest a win-win situation to be kept. On the other side of the coin, relations of high one-sided dependence are identified with economic imperialism. Such a system cultivates the perception of mutual interest but, since this is imaginary and maybe a product of propaganda, the environment becomes extremely conflictual and even war-prone. Conflict of interest is 'a special case of conflict in general, defined as a situation where parties are pursuing incompatible goals.'²⁵ In the case of hydrocarbons, where substitutes are scarce, the mutual interest is the maximization of economic gains for both parts. The producer may export increasing quantities, while the consumer may satisfy its internal demand with cheap energy. If one part limits its dependence and diversifies its exports or imports respectively, then each one will be able to increase prices or limit quantities.

In these terms, the upmost aim is autarky. Taking into consideration that actors are uncertain about the others' intentions, they make efforts to take advantage of an economic relation because the more dependent an actor the larger cost it will have in case of an end of the partnership. On the other side of the coin, the less dependent an actor, the less threatened it feels. Therefore, rational actors take care even of their allies' policies, since power is relative and the level of dependence is identified with the interstate chasm created. Also, they cultivate their production share and technological innovations in order to be able to handle international transitions. Wealthy states, with high GDP and a large and prosperous internal market, handle international transitions more efficiently since they have the capability to channel their production to their interior instead of other states.²⁶ Thus, they are more flexible in their strategy-making.

The highest level of strategy is grand strategy. Grand strategy refers to the use of all available means (military, economic, diplomatic etc.) at a state's disposal, in order to achieve the objectives set by policy in the face of actual or potential conflict.²⁷ Grand strategy is formulated by the political leadership. It is grand strategy that deals with the fundamental issues of war and peace. Grand strategy will decide whether a state will go to war in order to achieve the objectives set by policy. In addition, grand strategy will align the military strategy of the war with the political, diplomatic and economic strategies that form part of the war effort, making sure that they interact harmoniously and that one of these strategies does not have a detrimental impact on another. It is the amalgam of means and aims defined for the purposes of the balancing effort. The balancing effort has two dimensions; internal and external. External balance aims to the implementation of alliances and the prevention of the opponent to form alliances from its behalf. Internal balance contains all these means contributing to the self-help of the state; economy, industry, effective bureaucracy and of course, military forces.

Why is energy important as one of the means of the internal balancing effort? Why is it interlinked so closely to the essence of survival and sovereignty? There are four parameters with regard to the inclusion of energy in strategy-making.²⁸ First, strategic planning is a complex procedure in the sense that it involves all those dimensions of power and organizational skills. Thus, it is not limited to the operational or the logistical level and consequently, it does not ignore crucial parameters of power such as energy. Second, an actor implements its strategy multidimensionally in terms of geography. This means that it has to look, for example, also to its energy supply apart from the theatre of conflict where the main threat exists. Third, national security involves at its core the accumulation of economic elements of power and often energy resources. Fourth, above all, an actor implements a certain grand strategy. This means that it is not limited to transitory threats or changes in balance of power, but it is interested in the distribution of power in the long-run. Therefore, it often focuses on energy or other economic factors instead of military ones.

Moreover, energy is a strategic good meaning 'an item for which the marginal elasticity of demand is very low and for which there is no readily available substitute [...] From the standpoint of international

trade, a strategic item is anything is needed to pursue a given strategy and that is relatively inefficient to produce at home'.²⁹ How strategic is a good depends on domestic consumption, domestic production capability, availability of substitutes and availability of alternatives which means how dependency rates are formulated. In accordance, if the EU domestic consumption increases, domestic production capability declines, the increase of substitutes is marginal and alternatives collapse, then energy increases its strategic significance and its character as a strategic good for the EU member-states while one-sided dependency rates present a sharp rise. Defining energy as a strategic good reveals its significance with reference to political sovereignty.

Energy Security and Natural Gas Dependences

Energy security is achieved in three stages; transit country, energy hub and energy centre.³⁰ These reflect essentially the steps towards achieving the highest possible energy security. A transit country receives certain transit fees (a) failing to put priority on domestic needs, (b) being satisfied with average transit terms and conditions and (c) not being able to re-export considerable amount of oil and gas passing through its lands. An energy hub has an extensive influence on a web of oil and gas pipelines as well as LNG trade not only in terms of ability to influence transit terms and conditions, but also to re-export some of hydrocarbons passing through this system. It owns pipelines, storing facilities, terminal stations, refineries and other capabilities. Compatibility between international agreements and domestic energy mix is of utmost significance to avoid negative impact of one on other and describes the level of success in terms of energy security. In a way, an energy hub may act as a quasi-producer as it may claim re-sale rights. Finally, an energy centre reflects a situation in which energy hub features have been supported by massive investments such as nuclear power plants, renewable energy program and a comprehensive infrastructure composed of additional refineries, natural gas storage facilities, LNG trains, vessels, marine terminals and ports. An energy centre requires achievement of sufficient energy intensity and a sustainable energy mix. In these terms, a state, which is an energy centre, diversifies extensively its domestic supply deterring any possibility to be dependent from any other actor. In other words, it succeeds if get-

ting energy in affordable and rationally defined prices reliably and uninterruptedly.³¹ Energy security is discussed even more intensely when referring to natural gas. Gas is traded on the basis of bilateral agreements between producer and consumer. Moreover, it is transferred via established structures, meaning pipelines, and thus, it is easy to be manipulated especially seeing that LNG (liquefied natural gas) technology is still inadequately used due to the long-term pipeline contracts especially with Russia. On the contrary, oil is traded in international markets in a way closer to the logic of free market and multilateral free trade.³² In addition, the increasing interest in gas is reasoned by the relevant predicted increase of world consumption from 23% to 28% by 2025.³³ In brief, easiness of political-strategic manipulation and the rising world consumption represent the two most important variables explaining the international interest in gas. It is indicative that the companies supplying Europe with natural gas today – such as the Russian Gazprom, the Algerian Sonatrach, the Norwegian Statoil, the Qatari Qatargas and Rasgas – are state-owned. The general rule is that if you have to import natural gas, then do it from as many differentiated resources as possible.

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Apart from the location of supplies, their number is important. This means that diversification of the energy imports still counts. The resiliency of the economy is increased and dependence on imports is lessened by improved methods for the use and recovery of the materials.³⁴ Thus, the efficient use of materials has a distinct role influencing basically internal consumption and afterwards, state dependence. As it has been underlined already, balancing dependence and transforming a relation into interdependence arises from communicating credibly that the cost of an end of the partnership will be mutually significant. A consumer is manipulated by a producer or an intermediate country under five specific circumstances.³⁵ First, when a consuming country has a large share of global energy supply, it may provoke a high cost to the producer at a time of a dissolution of the partnership. Second, when a consuming country has alternative producers and routes, it is evident that it reduces the level of its dependence. Third, the efficiency of the domestic infrastructure and the state's access to investment capital are very crucial. In other words, technology has its impact on politics. Fourth, apart from the diversification of energy supply, the economy itself should be diversified. This means, for instance, that economic

growth should not be left exclusively to energy-intensive industries. Fifth, domestic political strength and legitimacy of the regime make it credible to deal with any external affair, including energy politics.

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The European Union Member-states' Energy Security

The EU member-states' energy security can be achieved by the diversification of energy routes and producers. The diversification principle can be found at the core of the EU priorities with regard to the member-states' normal and uninterrupted energy supply. Thus, it is identified with the concept of energy security and, consequently, the economic stability of the Union. In these terms, the European Commission has defined energy security and particularly energy supply as 'ensuring that future essential energy needs are satisfied by means of a sharing of internal energy sources and strategic reserves under acceptable economic conditions and by making use of diversified and stable, externally accessible sources'.³⁶ Following this definition, energy security is considered and implemented to the extent that any consumer has stable and normal access to a viable pipeline network and, consequently, necessary energy reserves. In the anarchic and full of uncertainty inter-state system, this stable and normal access is secure only if it is diversified. Essentially, energy security means obtaining multiple choices and becoming as independent as possible. This is the crux of the matter for energy politics and this is where the meaning of pipeline diplomacy is derived from.

According to Henry Kissinger, 'aside from military defence, there is no project of more central importance to national security and indeed independence as a sovereign nation than energy security'.³⁷ Moreover, diversification of routes and producers is a precondition for energy security and consequently, state independence. Besides, 'a state that controls lines of communication has full strategic independence. It does not have to rely on the goodwill and protection of other states to access the resources it needs, project power where it wants, and maintain commercial relations with whom it wants. When a state does not have control over the routes linking it with the source of resources and other strategic locations, it falls under the influence of the power in charge of those lines of communication. This is why control of routes has always been an objective of states'.³⁸ Why the implementation of the EU diversification principle is considered critical? First, the inher-

ent significance of the energy product is an undisputed fact. The logic of the European Commission's above-mentioned definition is fully identified with the substance of gas as a strategic good. Strategic goods become more and more important as adequate quantities cannot be produced in the interior. As it has been mentioned previously, the definition of a good as strategic or the level of its strategic importance is not the same for the whole international system, but it is determined by internal consumption, internal – actual or potential – productivity, availability of substitutes as well as the level of dependence; i.e. to what extent energy imports are diversified. Here, someone could say that apart from monopoly there is, also, monopsony; Russia is, also, dependent on the EU market in order to keep its economic growth. This is valid in the current case study but not at the level that the EU is dependent on Russia. Russia – on its behalf – has opened its export markets for not being so vulnerable to possible turbulences regarding the EU-Russian energy trade. Indicatively, the country exports 37% of its gas to the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) even with low pricing, 14% to Turkey while, also, being paid high revenues for oil exports to China and other non-European markets.³⁹ Indeed, there is a pattern of interdependence but not at an equal level.

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Second, it is geoeconomics that matters. Geoeconomics is identified with the usage of economic means for the attainment of strategic aims as a result of the post-Cold War evolutions. The debate on energy security is both economic and political depicting the European states' strategic leverage in the world. The extent of an actor's possession of or accessibility to raw materials is a decisive variable when the correlation of power is measured. This is because raw materials feed the industrial and military capabilities and thus, they contribute to the implementation of national interests.⁴⁰ In this sense, the debate on the diversification principle refers to the member-states' core priority; their survival. Besides, in theoretical terms, energy represents an element of power in two ways; on the one hand, it is a means contributing to economic growth and empowerment in general and on the other hand, it is an effect defined as a tool for increase of strategic and political leverage. For these reasons, it is found at the core of peer hegemony's interests.

Third, in the recent years, the EU energy capabilities seem to decline sharply. Domestic production declined mainly with regard to the gas production in the North Sea. The output peak had been in 1999 and

production since then has been declining steadily creating problems not only for the UK's and Norway's trade balance, but also for the EU's energy supplies, which have to be covered increasingly by other producers. It is worth to be indicated that even the United Kingdom, which is a gas producer itself, proceeded to imports for the first time in 2004 satisfying 1% of its internal demand and what is more interesting and worrying is that, by 2030, this number will have climbed to 75%.⁴¹ It has been mentioned already that 'although about £14 billion (\$21 billion) was invested in the basin in 2013 on new production; maintenance and repairs cost a further £9 billion'.⁴² So, even the core gas producer among the EU member-states – i.e. the United Kingdom – becomes more and more dependent on imports. Overall, between 2004 and 2014, the EU internal production of energy fell sharply with 'the largest reductions being recorded for crude oil (-52.0 %), natural gas (-42.9 %) and solid fuels (-25.5 %), with a more modest fall of 13.1 % for nuclear energy'.⁴³

Fourth, the situation concerning the EU internal production seems to deteriorate because of the sharp rise of the internal consumption. The EU member-states have been demanding more and more energy in order to sustain their growth. The natural gas consumption rose about 30% in the 1990s, while environmental considerations suspended nuclear energy and oil trade development. At the same time, the development of renewables – basically wind and solar systems – is extremely slow and inadequate to meet the increasing internal demand. This is why it is argued that substitutes are not developed adequately. Furthermore, the close to 209 Mtoe (million tonnes of oil equivalent) of natural gas gross inland consumption in 1990 rose to almost 387 Mtoe in 2013.⁴⁴ Under this lens, a declining production fails to satisfy an increasing demand.

Fifth, peripheral instability seems to put into question any potential for cooperation with the alternative route of North Africa. One of the potential arteries is North Africa, but since the beginning of the Arab Spring revolts, it has been destabilized significantly. The Arab Spring started out from Tunisia in 19 December 2010 after a street vendor's self-immolation. It was in this country where the first regime change took place in 16 January 2011 as a result of the revolts. Nevertheless, the most significant case study is Libya, which had been exporting gas to Europe already. The end of the civil war found Libya in chaos with the status of pariah state and absolutely eliminated from the world

scene. Nowadays, Libya is politically torn and its future as a unified state is uncertain. During the Libyan Arab Spring, a new democratized polity model was demanded since Qaddafi's autocracy was not acceptable anymore. However, at the expense of Libyan nationalism, it is indicative that individual groupings even claim their independence. Consequently, due to Qaddafi's divisive policies which were not compatible with his rhetoric, Libya's future polity remains unclear. Such evolutions have set back investments on gas reserves, which are poor anyway. It is indicative that Libya, which supplies Italy with gas via the Green Stream, is 45th in the world ranking of gas producers.⁴⁵ In 2015, the EU gas imports from Libya represented 2.2% of the total volumes, while the respective gas imports from Algeria, between 2014 and 2015, fell from 6.3% to 5.4%.⁴⁶

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Sixth, as has been underlined already, the EU's increasing need for energy imports has been met by Russia. Considerations that energy dependence could become a political problem has led Europeans to look for alternative supplies and declare the principle of diversification. The great dependence on Russian resources led to the subversion of EU principles of market economy and competitive economic environment. It also led to a limitation of security of gas purchases for the member-states' markets due to relevant instability in transit countries such as Ukraine. Such tensions and the consequences regarding gas purchases have proved to be substantial obstacles highlighting the need for diversification. It is indicative that about 80% of the Russian gas purchases crosses Ukraine towards the EU market, while the dependence of some EU member-states reaches, for instance, 89% in the case of Bulgaria and 100% for Slovakia.⁴⁷ For this reason, political instability in Ukraine seems to affect energy security and consequently economic growth in the EU.

Conclusive Remarks

It is an undisputed fact that energy becomes more and more intensive a core political and economic tool identified with the implementation of national interest. It serves political goals, while energy politics is conceptually defined as a domain of increasing interest towards the maximization of relative gains. Thus, considering that state is the principal actor behaving in a selfish way and making efforts to increase its benefits at the expense of the others either they are opponents or not

since it is uncertain about both of them, it has also to implement a long-run strategic framework and secure its energy supply accordingly. The possibility of conflict or antagonism always exists, but it can be limited when there is a clear co-perception that an end to the partnership would be of high cost. In these terms, Russian energy domination in many member-states should worry the Union since the level of potential cost is not equal, the destabilization mainly in Ukraine creates problems and their growth sustainability is related to an actor not hesitating to follow activist strategies.

Natural gas exploitation and trade, exactly because it represents a very special case, has become a field of great interest due to its easiness of manipulation. For six specific reasons, the implementation of the diversification principle tends to become a core interest for the EU in order to sustain its global role and its member-states' economic growth. The theoretical and historical roots of the political-economic debate have proved that it is about a gamble of international politics with the state characteristics and simply with differentiated means. Power politics is still present and energy politics is an integral part of it.



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The Narrative of the Czech-Israeli Strategic Relations in the European Context

Marek Čejka

This article is a particular case study that analyzes the causes and assumptions of how the Czech political elite looks towards Israel and how this view affects the fact that current Czech-Israeli relations have such a high standard in the European context and that the state of Israel has one of its staunchest allies in the Czech Republic.

Keywords: Czech-Israeli Relations, The Czech Republic, Czechoslovakia, Israel, Václav Havel, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Strategic partnership, Czechoslovak Jews, Zionism

On 29 November 2012 at the UN General Assembly, a high-profile vote was held. It was about the advancement of the status of Palestine in the UN to that of a non-member observer state. The Palestinian request was eventually supported by 138 countries, 41 countries abstained from the vote, and 9¹ were against the request. Not only in the European Union, of which the Czech Republic is a member, but also in Europe as a whole and in the neighboring continents of Asia and Africa, you could not find a state that fully supported the position of Israel in this matter – except for the Czech Republic. What is the context of this unprecedented behavior of the Czech Republic towards the state of Israel?

In terms of its quality, the year 2012 was not an anomaly in Czech-Israeli diplomacy. Practically from the very beginning of the independent existence of the Czech Republic it clearly made it known that it is a



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very strong ally of Israel. This is certainly a continuation of the tradition of Czechoslovakia, which had a friendly approach to Zionism and Israel. The fact that between 1950 and 1989 there was a long ideological rift between the two countries, and that for a long time the relationship was even completely interrupted changed little about Czechoslovakia's support for Israel. During the rule of President Václav Havel (1989–2003), Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic became one of the most prominent supporters of Israel. But even Havel's departure from politics did not mean that this tendency would just freely continue. During some of the following rightist-liberal Czech governments the position of the Czech Republic towards Israel even became one of uncritical support in some ways. In turn, sometimes the EU policy towards Israel, regardless of the Czech membership in the EU, was criticized by the Czech politicians. What are the factors connected to such a strong bond between the two countries in the European and world context? Is it actually a deep historical bond, stemming from the very beginning of the Czech and Israeli statehood? Or is it mainly related to the current political establishment in the Czech Republic and to the position of a group of influential politicians who have – at least for a certain period of time – considered the emphasis on the Czech transatlantic relations more important than the Czech Republic's relations with other members of the EU in some aspects?

The following text aims to identify and define the key points of the narrative which justifies or justified the pro-Israeli positions of the Czech political elites – regardless of whether we are dealing with the narrative in the context of a democratic Czechoslovakia (1918–1938, 1989–1992), the Czech Republic (since 1993) or the dissident counter-elites in communist Czechoslovakia (1948–1989). To conclude, the text specifies why the Czech relations with Israel are so unusual and specific and makes some generalizations in this regard.

The article continues the discussion on Czech-Israeli relations that is currently taking place in the Czech Republic. In most cases, this discussion is not a scientific discussion, but rather a popular discussion set in Czech newspapers, the Czech media and various public discussions in the media, especially those on public television.² Publications and monographs on this topic which are more academic are devoted especially to more historical aspects of the Czech-Israeli, or Czech-Jewish and Czech-Zionist, relations – e.g. Dagan, A.; Hirschler, G.; Weiner, L. (1984); Dufek, J., Kaplan, K., Šlosar, V. (1993); Pěkný, T. (1993); Yegar,

M. (1997); Čapková, K. (2005); Zídek, J., Sieber, K. (2009); Kieval, H. L. (2011), and partially also Rucker, L. (2001) and Tureček, B. (2011).

In the introduction let us define the nodal points of history which strongly affected the quality of Czech (Czechoslovak)-Israeli relations and which were so crucial in the shaping of the narrative of the attitudes of Czechoslovak and Czech political elites towards Israel. Based on an analysis of the mentioned works, these points may be divided into six groups:

1. The historically positive relations of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia (1918–1938) to Zionist movement, and the key role of T. G. Masaryk in this respect.
2. The Czechoslovak support of Israel and the arms supplies Czechoslovakia sent to Israel in the years 1948–1951.
3. The reactions of dissident counter-elites to the strong anti-Zionism and sometimes even anti-Semitism of the Czechoslovak communist regime in the years 1950–1989.
4. The strong rise of the Czech-Israeli relations since 1989 and the role of Václav Havel in this respect.
5. The Czech Republic's alliance with Israel as an expression of Czech Atlanticism³, or, in some cases, Czech Atlanticism in connection with Islamophobia.
6. A romanticized or biased view of the Middle East, Israel and Palestine on the part of Czechs.

The historically positive relations of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia (1918–1938) to Zionist movement and the key role of T. G. Masaryk in this respect

The current quality of the Czech-Israeli relationship has its roots, surprisingly, in times long before the emergence of Czechoslovakia and the state of Israel. One of the most frequently remembered facts in this respect is the positive relationships of some Czech intellectuals and politicians to the Jews or to the Zionist movement in the times before the First World War.

The anti-Semitic wave in Europe at the turn of the 19th century gave rise to numerous publicized scandals. The most known of these was the Dreyfus affair in France in 1896. Also in Austria-Hungary between the years 1867 and 1914 twelve lawsuits concerning alleged ritual murders by Jews were filed.⁴ However, the case of this sort that received the

most media attention was a case in which there was also a conviction of the accused – the so-called Hilsner Affair (1899).

The well-known Czech professor and politician (and later the first Czechoslovak president) Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) marked the Hilsner trial as unjust and anti-Semitic. Masaryk then started to be attacked by Czech nationalists and there was even a failed assassination attempt on him in 1907.⁵ This engagement brought popularity to Masaryk among Jews throughout the world and also helped him in his later political activities with the establishment of Czechoslovakia, securing the admiration and support of the Czechoslovak Jews.⁶ During his presidential term Masaryk was a supporter of Zionism, and his first foreign journey led to Palestine and Egypt in 1927. It was also not a coincidence that the First Czechoslovak Republic held several conferences of the World Zionist Organization.⁷

The former dissident and later president of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic Václav Havel was strongly inspired by Masaryk's approach. Havel wrote the following:

As president I appreciate the justice, humanity and impartiality of my great predecessor, T. G. Masaryk, who boldly addressed the Hilsner Affair ... He risked his popularity, his movement and also the publishing of his magazine just for the sake of the truth. In his view, every nation, and especially a small nation, must have a moral idea for which the nation lives and which contributes to a better harmony of mankind. Masaryk wrote: "Anti-Semitism is, in my opinion, our pain, and only our pain. It harms us, disgraces us, makes us coarse ..." As the president of a nation that had just gotten rid of its totalitarian regime, I would like to remind us of Masaryk's words: "A nation which itself is not morally strong cannot be saved just by politics."⁸

The situation of the Jews in Czechoslovakia in the late 1920s and 1930s was actually quite favourable even though there was a deterioration of the situation of Jews in European countries at this time. It was not just about the free and rich cultural and political life that was available to them in Czechoslovakia (which started already during the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), but the Czechoslovak Jews were even allowed to officially register under an 'Israelite religion' and a 'Jewish nationality'. This stemmed not only from a personal initiative of President Masaryk, but also from the attitudes of the Czech intelligentsia, which – based on its experience of fighting for national

recognition – also sympathised with the efforts of Jews to realize their ideals. The Czechoslovak recognition of the Jewish nationality was unprecedented, and the country also acknowledged the Jewish national unity and the right to national self-expression of Jews. But these positive approaches to Jews were not only idealistic, but they also had their pragmatic aspect: the recognition of the Jewish nation also had the purpose of formally “reducing” the number of German and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia.⁹ Many Jews in interwar Czechoslovakia declared their nationality to be German or Hungarian, and their main language was German or Hungarian. However, the greatest sympathy of non-Jewish Czechs/Slovaks towards Jews was aimed primarily toward Jews who spoke the Czech/Slovak language.

The position of T. G. Masaryk in Czechoslovak politics during his presidential term (1920–1935) was almost unshakable. Similarly, today, Masaryk occupies an exceptional position in the modern Czech historiography and is constantly mentioned as a positive role-model. There is no doubt that his relations towards the Jews and later towards the Zionist movement have become an important factor for many non-Jewish Czechs/Slovaks’ positive views of Czechs/Slovaks of Jewish origin as well as the Jews in general, the Zionist movement and, later, Israel in general. An important role in this was also played by the President’s son Jan Masaryk, who was later a very popular Czechoslovak Foreign Minister. T. G. Masaryk’s and general Czech attitudes towards Zionism and Jews were also influenced by the suppression of the influence of Catholicism at least in the Czech part of the First Czechoslovak Republic. For some Czechs, Catholicism itself was an unpopular symbol of the old regime and was also connected with some traditional anti-Semitic prejudices based on Catholic-Christian anti-Judaism. For that matter this kind of anti-Semitism was fully revived after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (1938) in the fascist Slovak state, where the bond between the fascist regime and the Catholic clergy was very clear.

The Czechoslovak support of Israel and the arms supplies Czechoslovakia sent to Israel in the years 1948–1951

After World War II, Czechoslovakia very actively and effectively supported the creation of Israel. In 1947 Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, the son of the first president of Czechoslovakia, was very active in regard to this issue at the United Nations. The Czechoslovak diplomacy was

also represented among the eleven countries in the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which was created on 28 April 1947, and participated in a discussion concerning the question of Palestine in a special sub-committee for Palestine of the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 1947. On 29 November 1947 the Czechoslovak representative in the General Assembly voted for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state.¹⁰ Less than three months later, on 25 February 1948, the communist coup took place in Czechoslovakia. However, the Soviet Union supported the creation of Israel, and thus the new Czechoslovak government recognized the independence of Israel on 19 May 1948, a mere five days after its birth. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were then established on 3 July 1948.

One of the most often mentioned milestones of the relationship between Czechoslovakia and the emerging Israel is the fact that Czechoslovakia was closely involved in the supply of weapons and combat aircraft to the newly established state and in the training of the Israeli army. This occurred at the time of the strong international isolation of Israel during the first Israeli-Arab war in 1948–1949. This Czechoslovak activity should be judged in the light of the fact that the aid was provided at a time when Czechoslovakia was experiencing the change of its political regime to the openly undemocratic Stalinist regime. Additionally, Czechoslovakia received quite high sums of money for the outdated arms it sold to Israel even when the young State of Israel was in a very critical economic situation. It is also evident that the Czechoslovak aid was granted with the consent of Stalin's Soviet Union, which supported the creation of Israel as a counterweight to the pro-Western Arab regimes. Thus, in this case, Czechoslovakia worked as a kind of proxy-regime of the Soviet Union for the first time.¹¹ But when in a relatively short period of time it became obvious that Israel was leaning more towards the Western bloc, the USSR and the entire Eastern Bloc (including Czechoslovakia) substantially revised their attitudes toward the Jewish state in the early fifties.¹²

However, aside from the motives behind the arms sales, or the political situation in Czechoslovakia in the late 1940s, it is certain that the weapon supplies to Israel proved a valuable service at a very critical time when other states refused to provide similar assistance to Israel. Israel has many times reminded others of the fact that at the time the delivery of Czechoslovak arms 'saved' Israel.¹³ In the contemporary

Czech Republic (however, less so in Israel) the arms supplies are in the minds of many people and are mostly very positively remembered as 'the Czech contribution to the establishment of Israel'. Although there are no sociological surveys in this field, it seems that the arms supplies came to be a part of modern Czech historical mythology. The Czechs often see themselves as 'a small peaceful nation which is – even now – in some jeopardy by German and/or Russian interests'. Israel, for many Czechs, also embodies the 'little nation which is under a constant existential threat from its Arab environment'. The Czechs, who often do not see themselves as great warriors (they rather see themselves as Hašek's satirical soldier character Švejk), at least helped a nation that they befriended by sending military aid to it and thus prevented Israel from facing a similar situation as what happened to them as a result of the Munich Agreement in 1938, when their European allies abandoned them and gave them over to the mercy of the Nazis.¹⁴ In this mythology the Czechs actually had a key influence on the 'rescue' of the Jewish state and laid down the 'historical bond' between the two countries. However, the fact that the context of the weapon supplies was considerably more complex than this simplified scheme is not so well known.

The reactions of dissident counter-elites to the strong anti-Zionism and sometimes even anti-Semitism of the Czechoslovak communist regime in the years 1950–1989

In May 1949 the Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett came to Prague, and in March 1950 a mutual economic agreement between Israel and Czechoslovakia was signed. This was the first Israeli trade agreement with a foreign state. But the exact same time was also the beginning of the end of the Czechoslovak-Israeli friendship. Starting in 1950, the mutual relationship significantly cooled, and in 1951 the mentioned agreement was terminated. This change was related to the Czechoslovak vassal attitude towards the Soviet foreign policy. At that time it had become quite clear that Stalin had miscalculated because the expected international political orientation of Israel towards the Soviet bloc would not happen. Thus from February 1951, all of the Czechoslovak weapons deliveries to Israel were stopped. The support for Israel was very quickly replaced by a staunch anti-Zionism and even a strong anti-Semitism, which was embodied especially in the Slánský trials in the early fifties (see below).

Anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism were the new official political line of the communist regime, but among the general public, the situation was less clear. The Czechoslovak Communist régime also had a number of opponents in addition to its followers. Some were members of the new counter-elites – mainly supporters of previously existing non-Communist parties, private entrepreneurs, former members of the ww2 resistance, etc. – but others were simply critics of the regime hidden among the general public. The first group, in particular, soon became the subject of harsh persecution by the regime. Both streams of opponents of the regime, however, retained a generally positive view of Jews and secret sympathies for Israel.

The first consequence – and a very extreme one at that – of the worsening Czech-Israeli relations was the Slánský trials in 1952, which came to be the first openly anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist trials in the countries of the Communist bloc. Out of all the political trials that took place in the Soviet Union in the thirties and in the Communist satellite states at the beginning of the 1950s, the Prague Slánský trials were the worst case of anti-Semitism.¹⁵ During the Slánský trials the first Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel, Eduard Goldstücker, was convicted. There were also the subsequent trials of the Israeli citizens Mordechai Oren and Simon Orenstein, which not only had a strongly anti-Zionist character, but also involved attempts to fabricate a link between Zionism and Titoism.¹⁶ Moreover, the emigration of Jews to Israel was banned in Czechoslovakia in 1950. In Israel the Slánský process had a specific response: besides the official protests of the Israeli government against the persecution of Czechoslovak Jews and Israeli citizens, there was also a terrorist attack on the Czechoslovak embassy by a radical nationalist group called ‘The Kingdom of Israel’.¹⁷

Another aspect of the change of policy of the Soviet bloc toward Israel in the early fifties was the emphasis on the Arab national and anticolonialist movements, and the Palestinian national movement in particular. Some of the Arab states escaped from the former British and French influence on them, and in their foreign policies they started to be sympathetic to the Soviet line. One of these countries was Egypt under President Nasser, which became increasingly anti-Israeli. The creation of Israel and the defeat of the Arab armies in the Israeli war of independence (with the help of the Czechoslovak weapons) had been, in general, reflected upon very negatively in the Arab world. Earlier Czechoslovak arms sales to Israel were condemned by Arab countries,

and the Czechoslovak government was very interested in making the whole thing fall into oblivion. It was one of the reasons why Czechoslovak anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism were so strong in the beginning of the fifties and why the new Czechoslovak arms contracts with Arab countries, mainly with Egypt, started to grow in scale.

In the context of the above-mentioned anti-regime attitudes of some Czechoslovak citizens, logically, Palestinian and Arab national movements supported by the Soviet bloc lost much of their popularity among these critics as well. This happened despite the fact that the Arab states and the Palestinians themselves never became open allies or satellites of the Soviet Union. From the early fifties to the mid-sixties, relations between Israel and Czechoslovakia remained very cold. However, diplomatic relations were suspended formally only on 10 June 1967 after the outbreak of the Six Day War. This was because under instruction of the Soviet Union, most of the satellite states followed the Soviet example at this time. Paradoxically, some cautious displays of public sympathy for Israel were possible in Czechoslovakia a year later – in the short period of the so-called ‘Prague Spring’ in 1968. This was allowed primarily in relation to the Fourth Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers’ Union, where some alternative views on the establishment of the Czechoslovak anti-Israeli position after the Six Day War were publicly presented.¹⁸ After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which was launched on 21 August 1968, however, such views were again silenced. In the years after the suppression of the Prague Spring (the so-called period of ‘normalization’ of the years 1968–1989) the power in Czechoslovakia was again seized by the Communist comrades loyal to Moscow, and Czechoslovak foreign policy returned once again to a strongly pro-Soviet track. During most of the Cold War the Soviet Union and its satellites politically, militarily and propagandistically supported the anti-Israeli struggle of the Arabs, including the PLO. In the years 1959–1989 hundreds of people from countries of the Arab world passed through a special training program for guerrilla warfare in Czechoslovakia. In 1976, the PLO established a direct diplomatic representation in Czechoslovakia, and in 1988, after a meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Algiers, Czechoslovakia even recognized the ‘Palestinian state’ which was proclaimed there. It led to a paradoxical situation in which the actually existing State of Israel did not have its diplomatic representation in Czechoslovakia, but the non-existent Palestinian state did. During the

years of “normalization”, Czechoslovakia was one of the few countries of the Soviet bloc which did not permit Israeli citizens to enter their territory.¹⁹ The governmental campaign to discredit the dissident informal civic initiative called Charter 77 mentioned that it was founded on the instructions of ‘anti-Communist and Zionist foreign centrals.’²⁰ These attitudes also affected the main camp of the Czech dissidents in the seventies and eighties and had an impact on their attitudes and sympathies towards Israel. Charter 77 itself mentioned the question of Jews and Israel in one of its main documents.²¹

After the Czechoslovak communist regime fell, many of the former dissidents became influential Czechoslovak (and, later, Czech) politicians and their political views on Israel remained similar. In this context, in addition to Václav Havel and Jiří Dienstbier, one could mention other names of former dissidents (and future politicians) such as Michael Žantovský or Alexandr Vondra as examples of this tendency.

Only in 1988 did the first serious changes in Czechoslovakia’s political relation to Israel appear. During a plenary session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 1988, a meeting of the foreign ministers of both countries took place. The Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs announced here the intention to send a delegation of consular officials and economists to Israel, as this delegation was to explore the possibilities of development of mutual relations between the two countries. In February 1988 a Czechoslovak government trade delegation visited Israel. Also, at this time, the first trade agreements between companies from both countries were signed, and Israeli tourist groups were given permission to visit Czechoslovakia.²² But the final breakthrough was the fall of the Czechoslovak Communist regime in November and December 1989.

The strong rise of the Czech-Israeli relations since 1989 and the role of Václav Havel in this respect.

Relations between Czechoslovakia and Israel went through an almost meteoric rise after the fall of the Communist regime on 17 November 1989. This turnover was associated with the general unpopularity of the communist regime among the broader Czechoslovak public at the end of the eighties, and also with the Czechs’ sympathy for its opponents and their admiration for the Western world, the USA and its allies. The newly acquired freedom of speech gave the Czechs and Slo-

vaks the opportunity to publicly discuss themes and opinions that had been publicly suppressed for decades, whether by official censorship or by self-censorship. Positive pieces of information about the USA and Israel were among the main formerly suppressed themes.

A key role in the significant turnover in the Czechoslovak-Israeli (and later in the Czech-Israeli) relations was played primarily by the former Czechoslovak dissidents led by Václav Havel. At the end of 1989 he was elected as the first non-Communist president of Czechoslovakia since 1948. One of the first things which Havel advocated in foreign policy was the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel. They were thus reestablished on 9 February 1990 during the visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens in Prague. Czechoslovakia thus became, after Hungary, the second former Soviet satellite that resumed diplomatic relations with Israel. In practice, the whole event was surrounded by great expectations and a mood of euphoria. At a meeting with President Havel, Arens thanked Czechoslovakia for the supply of arms and the training of Israeli pilots in 1948. President Havel also suggested that Czechoslovakia could be a mediator between Israel and the PLO at the time. This proposal, however, soon proved to be unrealistic because very soon the Czech-Slovak federation became mired in ever deeper problems that eventually led to its disintegration into two independent states in 1992. The role of the mediator in the peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians was in the meantime quite effectively taken up by Norway.

The turbulent rise of the Czechoslovak-Israeli relations was also accompanied by the restoration of Israel's diplomatic mission in Prague on the 17th of August, 1990, this time at the level of embassy. Also at this time, the Czechoslovak embassy was reopened in Israel.²³ Due to the Czechoslovak respect for the special international status of Jerusalem it was reopened in Tel Aviv. During the first official journey of Václav Havel to Israel (he was the first of the top leaders of the former Soviet satellites in Central Europe to visit Israel) in 1990, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Then in October 1991, a reciprocal visit to Czechoslovakia from the Israeli President Chaim Herzog took place.

President Havel's relationship to Israel and Judaism was very complex, and its description could be divided into several points:

1. During his life, Václav Havel was inspired by Jewish culture and by Jewish Prague and its culture (including works by Franz Kafka,

who influenced Havel's literary work) and was friend with many Czech Jewish personalities, many of whom were also dissidents and signatories of Charter 77. In one of his texts from 1990, Václav Havel stated the following:

As a dissident, I lived in a so-called ghetto and I myself learned about the kind of irrational injustice which can not be tackled in any other way than by a sense of personal freedom which can not be destroyed by any external oppression. The state in which we lived until the fall of 1989 was not able, from the beginning of the dominion of communism, to express itself in regard to the Jewish question, and it was only a certain Charter 77 document that attempted to address this issue in the Communist era.²⁴ The Communist state supported anti-Semitism in the fifties after some major anti-Semitic trials, and the regime was involved in the Palestinian conflict in the sixties, seventies and eighties. By doing these things, the regime was liquidating the Jewish problem from a position of strength rather than helping in the process of solving it. I often think about what the Czechs and the Jews had in common in their respective histories. We were both small nations whose continuing existence was not a given. The eternal struggle for survival and a sense of uncertainty were reflected in the cultures of both nations and in their behavior. Writers and philosophers took on the roles of politicians in both nations, and both nations have traditionally cultivated their respect for a book which kept their language and traditions alive. In particular, they both had respect for the book of books, the Bible. Czechs and Jews have always turned to the past; they looked to it for their strength and comfort, and they often mythologized it. They ran to the family for privacy, and from that stemmed their skepticism, distrust of nobility, and low concern for the general interest, but also their sense for making fun of themselves and not taking themselves too seriously. Masaryk's ideal of humanity as a religious thought is perhaps as close to Judaism as to Christianity; it is also an expression of the people's nationality, because for centuries, nothing else was allowed.²⁵

The text above gives a quite accurate picture of Havel's thinking about the relationship between Czech (and more specifically the Czech counter-elites in Communist times) and Jews. Václav Havel identifies

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Relations*

the position of dissidents in Communist Czechoslovakia to a certain extent with the position of the Jews in the ghetto in general. He criticizes the communist regime not only for its anti-Israeli approach, but also for its support of the Arabs. Finally, he also identifies what he believes to be the main link between Czechoslovakia and Israel – they are two small states in a dangerous international environment. Although Havel also mentions a certain ‘mythologization’, he himself introduces a certain romanticization of the two nations by referring to their relationships to the Bible (eg. in reality, the Czechs are one of the most secular nations in the world, and Zionism was a revolution against traditional Jewish religiosity) and automatically combining Jewish and Israeli issues together.

2. For most of his presidential term, Havel’s sympathy for Israel was not made evident only by his uncritical adoration of it. Havel was trying to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in its complexity, and he was aware and critical of various aspects of Israeli policy. This was reflected in his (unrealised) proposal to mediate the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, his several meetings with Yasser Arafat (including Arafat’s visit to Czechoslovakia in 1990, which had been planned already during the communist regime) and the fact that he invited not only Israeli but also Palestinian intellectuals to Forum 2000 conferences²⁶.
3. Havel’s sympathy for Israel was based on the political attitudes of the counter-elite in the Communist regime and was thus – like the sympathies of a number of other dissidents from the communist bloc – a natural sympathy. An example of his attitude is the fact that he was one of the world politicians who fought for the abolishment of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 (1975), which compared Zionism with racism.²⁷ This resolution was also supported by Communist Czechoslovakia. In this context, Havel’s sympathy for Israel greatly influenced the former Soviet dissident of Jewish origin and later the Israeli politician Nathan Sharansky. There was apparent mutual respect and inspiration between the two men. Sharansky and Havel were connected not just by the parallels of their dissident periods, but also by their political careers – Sharansky and Havel became influential politicians in their respective countries during roughly the same period of time, so the two men had also opportunities to meet at various international forums. During Sharansky’s political career his views

crystallized in the context of the influence of the Israeli right and American neo-conservatism. As for Havel, his views shifted in a similar direction mostly after the end of his presidential term in 2003. In June 2007, for example, Václav Havel organized, jointly with Nathan Sharansky and former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, the Conference on Democracy and Security in Prague, which had the support of several neo-conservative think-tanks. In 2010, along with several other neoconservatives Havel supported Aznar's initiative called The Friends of Israel, which aimed to 'create a counterweight to attempts to de-legitimize Israel and its right to live in peace and defensible borders'.²⁸

In summary, Havel's attitudes towards Israel were developing both during his presidency and after it. They ranged from very positive but balanced positions to the rather one-sided and uncritical views he held after the end of his presidential term. The shift in his attitudes could be related to the period after the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada (after 2000) and also to the overlapping period after 9/11, when a number of right-wing and liberal intellectuals in Israel and in the West shifted their views more to the right.²⁹

The Czech alliance with Israel as an expression of Czech Atlanticism, or, in some cases, Czech Atlanticism in connection with Islamophobia

Even if we looked at the Czech-Israeli relations with references to *only* the legacies of T. G. Masaryk and Václav Havel, it would be probable that the present attitudes of the Czech Republic towards Israel would be positive. But it is also possible that their quality would be comparable, for example, with the quality of the relations of other Central and East European countries to Israel. They would therefore be probably good, but not elevated to the level of strategic partnership as they actually are today. Such a high standard in the relations would probably never have been reached without a certain group of Czech politicians and officials, some of whom are former dissidents. Many of them – such as the mentioned Alexandr Vondra, Vladimír Žantovský, former Prime Minister Petr Nečas, former Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, Minister of Foreign Affairs Karel Schwarzenberg and the diplomats Tomáš Pojar and Miloš Pojar – could be seen as being a part of the Czech liberal-right on the basis of their political views. In this

case their pro-Israeli stance is mingled with their strong support for trans-Atlantic ties, especially the Czech Republic's partnership with the USA and the Czech Republic's membership in NATO. But pro-Israeli views are also present in other parts of political spectrum – most notably by populist president Miloš Zeman where is his one-sided pro-Israeli sympathy mingled with Islamophobic aspects.

A romantic or biased view of the Middle East, Israel and Palestine

Czech public opinion also plays an important role in the general Czech public view on Israel. It could be said that in the Czech Republic there is a relatively strong interest in topics related to Judaism and Israel. This influences the sympathies of many Czechs towards Israel. There is, for example, a great interest in books and other publications related to Jewish and Israeli themes (both fictional and scientific texts), an interest in various cultural events and lectures related to Judaism and/or Israel, etc. These topics are also generally known through various Czech-born cultural personalities of Jewish origin (eg. Rabbi Löw, Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud), as well as through a variety of romanticising literature and stories (eg. by Ivan Olbracht).

This knowledge, in combination with the not very high standards of Czech news-reporting about the Middle East events (see below), causes the minds of Czechs to mix various concepts together. Many Czechs have, for example, a quite good knowledge of the history of the Czech (and, followingly, the Ashkenazi) Jewry and Judaism. In the Czech mind Judaism is also almost automatically associated with Western culture. This is supported by various European discussions on the 'Judeo-Christian' roots of European civilization. From a point of view that considers the very long tradition of the European anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust, however, it seems to be a quite purposeful concept. On the other hand, the Czechs generally have a very low awareness of things like the Jewish Sephardic culture or the Jewish Middle Eastern (Mizrachi) culture, without which it is very difficult to understand current Israeli politics, for example.

The Czech view of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is influenced by the poor quality of the Czech mainstream news discourse. The news discourse is based mostly on a recycling of various news items from news agencies, focusing almost purely on issues related to conflicts (wars, terrorism, and political violence) and lacking commen-

taries with deeper insights. Generally, the Czech mainstream news sources also rather lean towards the Israeli view of Middle Eastern affairs.

Czechs generally have only very limited experience with a multi-cultural society – and in light of the current wave of Middle Eastern violence and fundamentalism – Islam and Arabs are viewed as especially suspicious by many of them. In the minds of Czechs, Israel plays a much more positive role and is culturally closer to their way of thinking. Followingly, there is quite a high level of Islamophobia in the Czech society, even if there is only a very small Muslim community in the Czech territory.

The opinions of Czechs are also affected by various public figures (eg. by the openly Islamophobic views of the Czech president Miloš Zeman). It is also interesting that in the Czech Republic there is a growing impact of various one-sided organisations and lobby groups that support Israel, and in some cases, also the Palestinians, for religious or ideological reasons.³⁰

Conclusion

Due to the facts mentioned in the text, we can understand that the current quality of the Czech-Israeli relationship is not entirely clearly generalisable. On the contrary, it is based on various complex causes and historical events that are related to the six issues defined above. But still, it is possible to observe a certain guiding line that connects the history of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938), and even the period of roughly the two decades before its founding, with the current Czech politics and the current high standard of the Czech-Israeli relations. There is a clear link between Václav Havel and his colleagues from the dissident movement – who, together with him, became prominent personalities of Czech and Czechoslovak politics after 1989 – and the positions of President T. G. Masaryk toward Jews and the Zionist movement. The Czech Republic's sympathy for the oppressed nation and, later, the threatened state is to some extent a reflection of its own historical experience, and to a certain extent also a Czech national myth. The Czech elites and a part of the Czechs in general historically see themselves as *'a small peaceful nation which was (and, for many, still is) subject to the interests of great powers (mainly Russia and Germany) and in this respect suffered the betrayal of its Euro-*

pean and democratic allies (the Munich Agreement of 1938).’ The Czechs have, in this mythology, ‘a unique experience from modern history ... and they perceive a certain parallel of themselves in modern Israel’. In their imagination Israel is ‘also under a permanent threat from its hostile environment, and is also threatened by its Western allies – especially by some European Union countries and their appeasement politics. While so many EU states are creating a new Munich appeasement through their policies, the United States and its help are something that the Czechs and Israelis can always rely on.’

Such parallels offer at first glance a certain logic (albeit a very simplified one), but if we compare the position of Czechoslovakia in the international environment before World War II with the development and positions of Israel after 1948, the common similarities would be only very superficial. In the 1930s, Czechoslovakia eventually became the only democratic state in Central Europe. Nazi Germany made increasing demands in regard to its border areas. In 1938 Czechoslovakia was abandoned by its main ally as France signed the Munich Agreement. This situation meant for Czechoslovakia the loss of its strategic border areas populated by German nationals. This meant a de facto loss of any defense against Nazi Germany, which used this situation in a very short period of time to occupy the rest of Czechoslovakia.

In year 1948 Israel was in a very different situation than pre-ww2 Czechoslovakia. It was a completely newly established state, and for quite a long time before its creation it was clear that such a creation would provoke adverse reactions from the surrounding Arab countries. The ambitions for its creation were perceived by the Arabs primarily as a continuation of the European imperialism in the region of the Middle East, where a tumultuous decolonization was just taking place. After the establishment of Israel the expected war broke out, but Israel – with the help of the Soviet Union, which for this purpose used the new Czechoslovak communist regime’s armament supplies – was able to win the war and stabilize its situation.

After its victory Israel was still in a hostile international environment, but its army increasingly exceeded those of all of its hostile neighbors, partially because it was the only country in the region which developed nuclear weapons. Although Israel quickly lost the support of the Soviet Union, soon afterwards it acquired a strategic ally in France and subsequently it gained another powerful strategic partner in the United States. A few decades after its founding, Israel also managed to con-

clude peace agreements with some of its enemies and thus stabilize its position even more.

The hostility towards contemporary Israel is related especially to the unsolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the changes that occurred in this case since 1967. Thus, even at a first glance, some significant differences between the geopolitical position of Czechoslovakia before 1948 and that of Israel after 1948 can be seen.

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Nowadays the mutual bond between the Czech Republic and Israel is mythologized and distorted mainly by some Czech politicians. They see Israel as 'a pillar of Western civilization and Euro-Atlantic relations', or more specifically, they see Israel as 'a defender of Western civilization against the threat of terrorism and Islam'. Overall, a constellation of diverse influences created a unique combination that brought about one of the strongest bilateral partnerships between two countries in contemporary international relations. There is no doubt that this alliance brings with it a lot of positives in the mutual relations at various levels. Although the Czech Republic is not a particularly geopolitically important player, on the other hand, to have such an ally in the European Union, one which will almost literally interpret Israeli political positions, is very advantageous for Israel. The question is what will be the future development of the Czech-Israeli bond; however, this is not a question that falls within the scope of this article.



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Notes

- 1 Israel, USA, Canada, the Czech Republic, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Panama.
- 2 e.g. Fingerland, Jan (2009). 'Proč Češi straní Izraeli', In *Lidové noviny*, 17. 1. 2009.
- 3 Atlanticism is a belief in or support for a close relationship between Europe and the USA, or particularly for NATO.
- 4 Pěkný, Tomáš (1993), *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, Sefer: Praha, p. 185.
- 5 Pěkný (1993), p. 187.
- 6 Čapková, Kateřina (2005), *Češi, Němci a Židé? – Národní identita Židů v*

- Čechách, 1918–1938, Paseka: Praha, p. 34.
- 7 Specifically, these were held in Karlovy Vary in 1921 and 1923, and in Prague in 1933.
- 8 Havel, Václav (2012), 'Dva malé národy', In *Roš Chodeš*, No. 2, Vol. 74.
- 9 Yegar, Moshe (1997) *Československo, sionismus, Izrael*, Victoria Publishing and East Publishing: Praha., p. 25.
- 10 Zídek, Petr; Sieber, Karel (2009), *Československo a Blízký východ v letech 1948–1989, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů*: Praha, p. 128.
- 11 Zídek, Sieber (2009), p. 129.
- 12 Dufek, Jiří; Kaplan, Karel; Šlosar, Vladimír (1993), *Československo a Izrael 1947–1953, Doplněk*: Brno, p. 5.
- 13 See, e.g., Strašíková, Lucie (2008). Hugo Marom: Izrael přežil hlavně díky československým zbraním, II. 12. 2008, ČT24.
- 14 For a wider picture of Munich in the Czech discourse see Slačálek, Ondřej (2010), 'Boj o národ. Obrazy Mnichova ve sporech o českou zahraniční politiku', In *Mezinárodní vztahy*, Vol. 45, No. 4.
- 15 Yegar (1997), p. 136.
- 16 Rucker, Laurent (2001). *Stalin, Izrael a Židé*, Rybka Publishers: Praha, p. 207.
- 17 Pedhazur, Ami; Perliger, Arie (2009). *Jewish Terrorism in Israel*, Columbia University Press, New-York, p. 176.
- 18 Cysařová, Jarmila: Sjezd spisovatelů 1967, available at: http://www.totalita.cz/60/60_09_01_01.php (accessed 10. 10. 2013).
- 19 Even in this era of the normalization there were some bizarre exceptions to this policy – despite the ban on Israelis entering the territory of Czechoslovakia some Israeli communists and representatives of the PLO were allowed to hold talks in Prague (Rudé Právo 1977). Also, during the normalization the Soviet Union allowed the immigration of some Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel several times. The Jews then traveled by special trains through the territory of Czechoslovakia to Austria.
- 20 ÚSTR: Antologie ideologických textů, available at: <http://www.ustrcr.cz/cs/anticharta-ukazka-textu-1> (accessed 10. 10. 2013).
- 21 e.g. Prečan, Vilém (ed.): *Charta 77 (1977–1989), Od morální k demokratické revoluci (dokumentace)*, Dokumentationszentrum a Ústav pro soudobé dějiny ČSAV, Bratislava 1990, p. 363.
- 22 Yegar (1997), p. 185.
- 23 Izenberg, David (1990). 'Prague Embassy Open', In *The Jerusalem Post*, 19. 8. 1990.
- 24 Havel was apparently referring to the Charter 77 document from 1989 entitled "Criticism of the devastation of the Jewish cultural heritage in Czechoslovakia and the suppression of the role of Jews in Czechoslovak history" (April 5, 1989; 28/89).
- 25 Havel, Václav (2012) 'Dva malé národy', In *Roš Chodeš*, No. 2, Vol. 74.
- 26 Forum 2000 is an annual international conference of the Forum 2000 Foundation which pursues the legacy of Václav Havel by supporting the values of democracy and respect for human rights, assisting the development of civil society, and encouraging religious, cultural and ethnic tolerance. It provides a platform for global leaders, as well as thinkers and

- courageous individuals from every field of endeavor, to openly debate and share their views on these critical issues (see <http://www.forum2000.cz/en/about-us/>).
- 27 Ruby, Walter: 'Havel Speaks Against Anti-Zionism Resolution', In *The Jerusalem Post*, 19. 8. 1990.
- 28 Izenberg (2010).
- 29 See, e.g., Sitaru, Laura: Stereotypes about Islam and media-intellectuals: representative trends in "talking" about Islam after 9/11, available at: [http://acmcu.georgetown.edu/spotlight/Sitaru%20-%20Stereotypes%20about%20Islam%20and%20media%20intellectual.pdf_\(accessed: 10. 10. 2013\)](http://acmcu.georgetown.edu/spotlight/Sitaru%20-%20Stereotypes%20about%20Islam%20and%20media%20intellectual.pdf_(accessed: 10. 10. 2013)).
- 30 It is possible to mention here the activities of the Evangelical groups ICEJ and the Zion Christian Centre. In the case of Palestine, one pro-Palestine group that is very active in the Czech Republic is the International Solidarity Movement (ISM).

Czech Responses to Thatcher and Thatcherism

The Evidence of the
Newspapers, 1984-2013¹

Gerald Power and Jaroslav Weinfurter

This article explores change and continuity in the evolution of the mainstream Czech and Czechoslovak discourse on Thatcherism and Margaret Thatcher's own political persona. It examines the attitudes and positions on these matters as expressed and channelled through Czech-language mass print platforms, intended for broad public readership. Elaborating on the intricate and interest-infused roles that print and other mass media play in the design and architecture of socio-political discourse, the reception of Thatcher and Thatcherism in the Czech lands will be shown to have relied heavily on the affective, symbolic and inter-symbolic parameters and signifiers of the respective ruling political discourses that defined the key periods and transitions from the 1980s onwards. Ultimately, the study reveals the manner in which the image of Margaret Thatcher and her legacy have been synthesised and established in the Czech popular – as well as professional – imagery, memory and parlance, only to be transformed, re-synthesised and re-established again.

Keywords: Thatcher, Thatcherism, Czech Thatcherism, Czech transformation, Czech(oslovak) media.

The question of how Thatcher and Thatcherism were received in Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic² remains largely unex-



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plored by historians and political scientists. Focus has tended to centre on the career and policies of Václav Klaus, self-proclaimed Thatcherite and leading force behind the rapid development of a market economy, parliamentary democracy and Western integration in the Czech Republic after decades of Soviet-inspired and -enforced Communism.³ Concepts such as ‘Thatcherism, Czech-style’ and ‘Czech Thatcherism’ – developed, it must be said, by Anglophone political scientists – have highlighted parallels between Thatcher’s Britain and Klaus’s Czech Republic of the 1990s. Peter Rutland concluded that Klaus invoked Thatcher and other figures of the New Right for rhetorical purposes, while in reality his neo-liberal programme was shaped overwhelmingly by pragmatism and opportunism; the policies of Klaus’s ODS (Civic Democratic Party) were a ‘curious form of Thatcherism’.⁴ Seán Hanley has revealed common economic and philosophical influences among British Thatcherites and the 1990s Czech Right, and suggests that both movements faced similar political circumstances in their respective decades. Adopting Stuart Hall’s concept of Thatcherism as a hegemonic project, Hanley argued that 1980s British Thatcherites and the 1990s Czech Right successfully confronted the same challenge of securing popular consent for an ideology originally developed by theorists inhabiting the political margins.

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Nonetheless, important gaps in our knowledge remain. Little is known about how specific Thatcher policies were regarded by Czech observers, even less about how Thatcher was perceived outside the rarefied circles of Czech intellectual and professional political circles; Thatcher’s portrayal in the Czech media and her standing among Czech women (for the politicians and intellectuals were almost all men) remain unexplored. This article proposes to fill, at least partially, one of these gaps, by examining how Thatcher and Thatcherism were portrayed in Czech newspapers and current affairs magazines from the mid-1980s until her death in 2013, with a view to postulating more broadly on the position of Thatcher in a Czech context. It begins with a discussion of the relationship between politics and the print media in the Czech context before and after 1989. The greater part of the article is comprised of a series of case studies of Czech press responses to Thatcher and Thatcherism. For the Communist era, reactions to the 1984-5 UK miners’ strike and Thatcher’s 1987 Soviet Union visit are examined. Post-1989 case studies include Thatcher’s resignation as premier, her visits to Prague in 1990 and 1999 and her death. We

show that under Communism Thatcherism was portrayed as the antithesis of Czechoslovakia's socialist values, while after 1989 Thatcher and Thatcherism were framed as exemplars for a nation in the process of liberal-democratic state-building and consolidation: a 'cult' of Thatcher became established. Between the late 1990s and 2013 the cult of Thatcher remained firmly entrenched, but, in a turn which reflected widespread disenchantment with post-1989 politics, Thatcher was presented once again as a kind of antithesis, as her apparent resolve and integrity were contrasted with a Czech political establishment often criticised for weakness and corruptibility.

Media, Politics and the Czechs

The present article adopts as a theoretical starting point the old Gramscian thesis – along with its modern reiterations and applications – that journalists, newspapers and media in general are highly instrumental in the 'production and dissemination of ideas and knowledge' and are potentially crucial vehicles of state-approved political ideology, depending on the extent of the synergy between the media and the state.⁵ To quote Stuart Hall, the media and related institutions should be seen as not only having 'reflected and sustained the consensus' but as 'the institutions which have helped to produce consensus and which manufactured consent'.⁶ In other words, the acts of selecting, framing, disseminating and validating knowledge – all being the defining features of the media's *modus operandi* – is inevitably a political act that renders the media a resource, ready to be tapped into by political interests or the interests of the ruling ideology. Czech newspapers' reception of Thatcher and Thatcherism represents a pertinent case study of the so-called media-politics nexus in practice. As we shall show, in Communist times the connection between the state and the media was near-absolute. During the Klaus era between roughly 1990 and 1997 the media-political nexus remained strong, facilitating a largely favourable media response to his agenda (reminiscent of Hall's observation of Thatcherism's success as a hegemonic project in 1980s Britain). From the late 1990s state-media synergy was reduced and discourse became more fractured. To expand on these latter points, and complete our opening *tour d'horizon*, a brief note on the Czech press is called for.

Both the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion and the 1989 Communist collapse had seismic impacts on the Czech print media. The comparatively liberal journalism of the Prague Spring was viewed by the Soviet authorities as a direct threat to the stability of the Eastern Bloc, and the Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia was partly driven by a determination to control public discourse. In the aftermath of the invasion, the Czechoslovak Communist Party asserted its grip over the media and reclaimed its monopoly on the dissemination of public information. Newspapers were published either by the Communist Party itself (for example, the national daily *Rudé právo* [Red Justice]), or by institutions with Party approval, such as the Union of Socialist Youth, whose daily *Mladá fronta* (Young Front) was the second most important newspaper; trade unions, authorised political parties as well as the regions also had their own newspapers. Of course, market forces did not apply. Rather, titles were accorded a certain amount of paper according to the degree to which each adhered to Party orthodoxy. *Rudé právo* was accorded the largest amount, and had a print-run of over a million in the 1980s.⁷

The reporting of politics was stringently controlled, and framed in terms of a Communist 'us' and a capitalist 'them', with the subtext being that victory for 'us' was inevitable.⁸ Nor was this pattern disrupted by the glasnost initiative. Glasnost, along with perestroika, was paid lip-service by the Czechoslovak government, which remained wary of Gorbachev's initiatives until the regime's collapse: the glasnost-era media enjoyed appreciably greater freedoms in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary than in Czechoslovakia. There was some alternative to the state-controlled media. Samizdat material, including the newspaper *Lidové noviny* (People's News), was read by a small circle of dissidents; there was a wider audience for Western radio; but both forms were risky and, in the case of foreign broadcasting, subject to constant jamming efforts. For many Czechs, there was no consistent or easily obtainable alternative to the state-sanctioned media.⁹

The crumbling of Communist Party power in 1989 triggered major change in the Czech media. As part of a general attack on Communist-era practices, restrictions regarding media ownership and control were lifted by the Press Law of March 1990. Newspapers became privately owned businesses within the rapidly developing market economy and could be established or acquired with relative ease.¹⁰ Foreign ownership and the drive for profits accelerated change: tabloid news-

papers with sensationalist stories and heavy concentration on entertainment and smut appeared. The leading example of this, the daily *Blesk* (Flash), quickly became established in the top three selling newspapers. Established titles were forced to reinvent themselves. This was hardest for *Rudé právo*, with its intimate links to the Communist Party; it survived, however, and was the second largest selling newspaper in 1995, by which time its name had altered to the less overtly Communist *Právo. Mladá fronta* emerged from the Velvet Revolution with greater credibility than *Rudé právo*, as many of its journalists had championed the challenge to Communist rule. However, it too underwent significant alterations, including the addition of the word *Dnes* (Today) to its title. During the 1990s the *Mladá fronta* part was progressively minimised in the masthead, and the paper became conventionally referred to simply as *Dnes*.¹¹ *Dnes* was the top-selling daily by 1995 with a print-run of 348,000. Another title that survived the Velvet Revolution was the former samizdat *Lidové noviny*, which, although having enjoyed unrivalled moral capital at the start of the new decade, has not managed to establish itself as a leading read.¹²

Despite the 1990 Press Law newspapers remained closely attached to the political establishment. In the crucial years of neo-liberal transformation during the early to mid-1990s, the press – and the media in general – was remarkably compliant with the striking turn in government policy and ideology.¹³ Several causes of this can be identified. First, there was a general public backlash against the Communist Party and its rhetoric immediately after 1989; by the same token, former dissidents and advocates of a market economy and Western engagement, previously denied space in public discourse, suddenly became co-opted into the journalistic fraternity, their commentaries and opinion pieces now greatly esteemed. Additionally, Klaus and his allies proved capable of courting, persuading and intimidating the media: ample column inches were allotted to interviews and commentaries with and from Klaus, while in 1995 an aborted bill by Klaus's minister of culture Pavel Tigrid would have severely restricted journalistic freedoms and rights. Finally, newspaper editors and owners were prepared to use their titles as 'mouthpieces' of ODS-led governments for ideological reasons: they approved of the unfolding political and economic reforms and regarded the ODS as the legitimate driving force behind those reforms.¹⁴

From around 1997 the press began to shake off partially its subservient attitude to government. This turn has been interpreted as a

response to declining newspaper sales which was itself stimulated by public dissatisfaction with a staid and unchallenging print media.¹⁵ It also stemmed from the revelation that members of Klaus's ODS party had taken bribes as part of the privatisation process, a scandal which caused the collapse of the government. Concurrent economic problems and rising unemployment laid bare some of the recklessness of the rapid transition to the free market and led to an erosion of trust in the hitherto dominant neo-liberal doctrine: the pattern of consensus between people, media and politics had been broken.¹⁶ In this altered context, there was a partial relaxing of the politics-media nexus, although there was to be no revolution. Self-censorship continued to be practiced by editors and journalists and unwritten 'rules' continued to apply regarding which political issues could be raised. The press remained fertile ground for the powerful to project their influence and for journalists to help mould consensus.¹⁷

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'And they call it democracy ...': Thatcher before 1989

Czech reportage of the 1984-85 UK miners' strike and the 1987 visit to Moscow highlights the myriad of negative ways in which Thatcher and Thatcherism were portrayed in Communist times. Both *Rudé právo* and *Mladá fronta* covered the strike in great detail, drawing upon their London correspondents in addition to British sources including the *Morning Star*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The strike, then, was a convenient vehicle for highlighting the 'reality' of Western life, and contrasting it with conditions in a benevolent Communist state such as Czechoslovakia. Within the reports, terms such as 'anti-citizen', 'anti-human', 'anti-social', 'inhuman' pepper the descriptions of government action.¹⁸ These are the terms in which one of the few explicit pre-1989 references to Thatcherism was offered: a headline story in *Rudé právo* of November 1984 spoke of "Thatcherism" i.e. unfeeling plans of high capital to the detriment of the workers.¹⁹ Nine months earlier *Mladá fronta* informed its readers that Thatcher's policies were about 'constantly increasing unemployment'.²⁰

Although in the early months of the dispute there were cautious predictions that the strikers could succeed, there was also a blunt realisation of the price of failure. According to the London-based correspondent Aleš Benda, writing in *Mladý svět* (Young world) magazine,

'If the miners are to lose their struggle, the Conservative government can be expected to proceed even further with its anti-working class policy.'²¹ Moreover, attention often centred on the British media, judiciary and the police (on one occasion compared to Nazis), which were dismissed as being Conservative Party dupes, under ironical headlines such as 'And they call it democracy ...'²² Meanwhile, Thatcher's apparent disregard for the interests of the British working class was contrasted with conditions in Czechoslovakia. Much was made of the invitation extended by the Czechoslovak coalminers' union to their British counterparts and their families to holiday at a Slovak resort in October 1984. Reports related how the visitors marvelled at witnessing a workers' state in action. Enticing comparisons between both countries were duly drawn: 'In capitalist Britain workers and their families starve when they rise against the government's plans to destroy jobs, mining communities and trade unions. Socialist countries (on the other hand) send these workers food and invite them over for a holiday.'²³

Thatcher's role in the controversy and the importance of her 'iron' character were often emphasised. Writing in *Mladý svět*, Aleš Benda summarised the state of the dispute in September 1984. He noted that the strike, as winter approached, would be a test for the Conservatives and in particular Thatcher, 'who has built her career on her reputation of being the "Iron Lady"'. She is famous for not making any concessions to strikers, unions and Left-wing pressures.'²⁴ This was reiterated on a *Rudé právo* front page two months later, which noted that the strike was entering a critical stage for Thatcher and her government. 'Not only is Margaret Thatcher's image as the "Iron Lady", unprepared to make any compromise, at stake. She wants to break the miners. Their victory would mean her political defeat.'²⁵ In January 1985 *Mladá fronta* blamed Thatcher for the failure to reach a settlement that would allow the strikers to return to work: the NUM's negotiations with the government had been nothing more than a 'waste of time'.²⁶

Where the miners' strike reveals the Czech press's reception of domestic Thatcherism, our second case study, Thatcher's 1987 Moscow visit, casts light on Czech reporting on Thatcher the diplomat. In contrast to prevailing Western views of the visit, the contemporary Czech newspapers accounts were steeped in negativity and cynicism. For example, the reporting of the meetings with the Soviet leadership tended to contrast a reactionary and stubborn Thatcher with an open-minded and reasonable Gorbachev. The Soviet leader was shown labouring to

establish 'trust' between the West and the Soviet Union, and to broker a nuclear weapons deal by offering major concessions, all of which Thatcher rebuffed 'with a hardness that is typical for her'.²⁷ Gorbachev was cast in a professorial light, with the role of pupil for Thatcher, especially on the subject of perestroika.²⁸ Gorbachev's presentations on the inherent superiority of socialism, perestroika and the USSR's enlightened foreign policies were quoted and summarised at length; far less space was given to Thatcher's remarks in defence of NATO and nuclear deterrence.²⁹ An opinion piece reflecting on the meeting effectively sums up the official Czechoslovak perception of Thatcher the diplomat: 'Let us hope that the lesson she took from the open dialogue in Moscow will project itself into practical steps by her government ... The present day requires new thinking'.³⁰

The notion that Thatcher represented old thinking and Gorbachev new was the most prevalent aspect of the Czechoslovak reporting of the Moscow visit. *Rudé právo* criticised Thatcher's flawed perception of the Soviet Union as belligerent and committed to spreading Communism; according to the newspaper, this view had been entirely disproved by Gorbachev. It maintained the time had come for open-mindedness and trust but concluded that 'we feel that Britain and her prime minister are not playing this role as well as they could'.³¹ *Rudé právo* returned to this theme in an article reflecting on the outcomes of the visit titled 'Old thinking meets new'. Here, the picture of Thatcher as pre-détente relic was given its greatest elaboration. The article began: 'Two worlds, two ways of thinking, two world concepts have met in open discussion'. It identified Thatcher's famous stubbornness as the sole reason for the failure of the USSR and the West to reach an arms agreement, and continued that, for Thatcher, 'nuclear weapons are almost a blessing. She thinks the USSR is a real threat. How much bias and anti-Communist grudge can be felt from an opinion so detached from reality!'³² *Mladá fronta*'s conclusion was similar. 'We can hardly consider it a new way of thinking', was its assessment of the UK's security position.³³ Its edition of 3 April summarised the comments of an Anglophone Soviet apparatchik, who had presented a critique of Thatcher's Cold War policy on British television. The article summarised his claims: that the Soviet people were 'appalled' by Thatcher's attitude; that if both the USA and the USSR followed her approach the result would be a 'catastrophe'; and that President Reagan was 'more forward-looking' than Thatcher, even if his methods were faulty.³⁴ The final opinion piece on

the visit, written almost a week after its conclusion by Ivana Štěpánková for *Mladá fronta*, reiterated the motif of Thatcher the captive of nuclear deterrence. Štěpánková declared that Czechoslovakia had a role to play in achieving a gradual change of attitude in the West; she then made a rare Czech reference to Thatcher's appearance on Soviet television, which merely stated that it confirmed that 'she is not ready to be a partner in this new way of political thinking'. Like many other Western politicians, Štěpánková grumbled, Thatcher did not understand 'new thinking'.³⁵

'A Much-Needed Example': Thatcher after 1989

In mid-September 1990 Thatcher visited Prague and Bratislava. In stark contrast to her diminished popularity in Britain, the prime minister was enthusiastically received by both public and politicians in Czechoslovakia. 'Applause for the Prime Minister' ran a headline in *Lidové noviny*, reporting on the rapturous reception for Thatcher's address to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly.³⁶ Thatcher's Czech admirers would continue their 'applause' in the following years, as her personality and policies were radically reappraised to suit the changing circumstances. The domestic political context was the burgeoning political Right, which rapidly mobilised to occupy to a large extent the discursive vacuum left by the departing Communists. Another factor was Thatcher's image as an outspoken critic of Communism and advocate of the powerless majority and the dissident minority of citizens living under Communism: this has been central to her appeal in a Czech context from the 1990s down to contemporary times. There were also concrete connections between Thatcher's government and the new democratic leadership, by way of state visits and UK government-initiated investment and expertise-sharing programmes. Finally, there were changes in the post-1989 Czech press, which, as we have seen, rapidly loosened itself from the shackles of Communist Party orthodoxy. Ultimately, whether a journalist wrote for *Dnes*, *Lidové noviny* or even the left-wing *Rudé právo*, Thatcher embodied a range of appealing principles and characteristics – including commitment to the free market, forceful leadership, staunch opposition to Soviet-backed Communist rule and benevolence towards the Czechs – which ensured that she was accorded a special position as an avatar of good governance and ethics.

The cult of Thatcher was advanced in the reporting of her fall from power, which was presented as a coup. On 23 November 1990 *Dnes* included on its front page an opinion piece by journalist and centrist political commentator Viliam Buchert, claiming that Thatcher's troubles had started when 'some' MPs expressed a desire for a change of leader ('uneasiness', it was explained, was an 'everyday companion of the Conservatives'). The breaking point came when cabinet members threatened to resign, culminating in Thatcher's self-sacrifice for the sake of her party. Buchert ended with the declaration that her departure 'is to the detriment of Britain and the whole of Europe' before finishing in English, '*Good luck, Mrs Thatcher*'.³⁷ *Dnes* identified Michael Heseltine as the man who 'eliminated the Iron Lady' and 'the multi-millionaire ... behind the fall of Margaret Thatcher',³⁸ while the same newspaper framed Thatcher as the victim of a plot, 'mostly [by] young men who sensed an opportunity to stand up against the authoritative boss'.³⁹

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As her premiership ended, Czech reflections on Thatcher and Thatcherism were distinctly favourable. Buchert's report is typical: Thatcher was the 'most successful politician of the post-war period. Her influence was evident not only in all spheres of British life but all around the world'.⁴⁰ Similarly, *Lidové noviny* rehearsed her record-breaking success in elections and asserted that she 'changed Britain beyond any recognition'.⁴¹ It noted that among Thatcher's greatest achievements was her breaking of the trade unions which were described as being more powerful than the parliamentary opposition.⁴² Reference was made in *Dnes* to Britain's 'economic growth in the 1980s' and to how Thatcher had 'rescued Britain' in that decade.⁴³ Even *Rudé právo* asserted that she had 'strengthened Britain's international position', 'made Britain great again' and 'helped to repair the British economy'.⁴⁴ Thatcher's leadership style was praised; and traits which were derided in the 1980s, such as her direct style and stubbornness, were now portrayed as attractive and helpful.⁴⁵ *Lidové noviny* averred that she 'was always respected internationally because she always went straight to the point, clearly and directly'.⁴⁶

In terms of her foreign policy, there was consensus that Thatcher had played a major part in the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. Before her September 1990 visit to Czechoslovakia, Jiří Rohan's detailed profile of Thatcher affirmed that opposition to Communism and championing of democracy and liberalism had been

the guiding principles of her foreign policy: Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution had been a vindication of these principles. Thatcher was presented as a benevolent influence on Czechoslovakia, with a long-term interest in the country's efforts at building democracy.⁴⁷ After her resignation *Lidové noviny* reflected that through her 'highly-principled attitude towards totalitarian regimes she contributed to the victory of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe where she will be missed'.⁴⁸ According to Ivana Štěpánková (now a Washington correspondent for *Dnes*), Thatcher made a crucial contribution to ending the Cold War by understanding and encouraging the reformist Gorbachev – a striking *volte-face* from the same journalist's analysis of the 1987 Moscow meeting.⁴⁹

Thatcher's resignation and the passing of power to John Major was a major preoccupation for Czech journalists and commentators. She was widely commended for her political nous and integrity. Štěpánková's extended report for *Dnes* was headlined 'Maggie leaves with honour'; it portrayed a great leader who had chosen the right moment to leave: 'She can retire with her head held high'.⁵⁰ *Rudé právo* concurred, calling her decision 'statesmanlike'.⁵¹ The manner in which the transition to Major was handled was described by *Lidové noviny* as 'dignified and civilised'.⁵² Interest in Thatcher's fall seems to have had particular resonance in a Czech context. Then-president Václav Havel was quoted in the press expressing his approval of Thatcher's decision. He called it a 'fair, sporting act' and stated his wish to one day step down from high office in the 'same sporting manner'.⁵³ That the Czechs could learn about democracy from Thatcher's example was advanced in Jiří Leschtina's London report for *Dnes*. For Leschtina, the episode was less about Thatcher's decision to resign than the effective, and entirely peaceful, exercise of the popular will. He then made the connection with his own country explicit. Ruminating on Thatcher's career, he concluded: 'Isn't her career, including the dignified and timely termination of it, a much-needed example for our prenatal democracy, that firm but fair and democratic policy-making is possible?'⁵⁴

Thatcher's exemplary image can also be observed in the coverage of her visit to Prague in 1999, where she accepted the highest state honour (for her role in undermining Soviet Communism) and unveiled a statue of Winston Churchill outside the British embassy. The speech at the unveiling ceremony exhorted the Czechs to 'cheer up!' and continue their pursuit of greater liberty and prosperity. Despite its overtones

of the 'preachy' style alluded to in a Czech newspaper nine years earlier;⁵⁵ the speech and Thatcher were feted. A decade after 1989, it was a timely reminder of the significance of the Czech achievement from a 'recognised heroine of the end of the Cold War', in *Lidové noviny's* words.⁵⁶ Thatcher's speech was the subject of a lengthy reflection by Pavel Tigríd in *Dnes*. Tigríd, who had recently served in the Klaus government as minister for culture, had previously been a long-term exile who had left Czechoslovakia for France in 1948. He offered an interpretation of the 'cheer up!' speech that stayed true to the original meaning while using a good deal of poetic licence:

All of you Czechs, Moravians and Silesians, buck up! Stop your whining! Be optimistic! Don't underestimate yourselves! Don't belittle the most important thing that you've gained – your freedom ... It is up to you to choose to identify yourselves with this newly free country. The chances and preconditions for it seem good. Take advantage of them. Use the new democratic tools that you've been given to effect change and remove the structures you no longer find agreeable. Cheer up and live happily in peace and freedom.⁵⁷

Almost a decade after Leschtina's comments on Thatcher's resignation, Tigríd's version of the 1999 speech shows that Thatcher remained a potent device for Czech commentators attempting to plot the nation's political future.

Thatcher's 1999 visit was of particular significance for the Czech Right. Addressing the UK Conservative party conference in 1995, the then-premier Klaus declared that his government's 'own approach has been founded on principles very close to British Conservatism. We have been directly influenced by it ... We have been inspired by your example and your long tradition and we hope that our experiences with dismantling Communism and building up of a free society will, in turn, be inspiration for yourselves'.⁵⁸ By 1999 Klaus was in no position to express such a sentiment. In the 1998 parliamentary elections the Social Democratic Party secured a majority while the Communist Party made major gains. Thatcher's visit was thus regarded as a fillip to an ailing Right. An article in *Lidové noviny* the day after the statue speech noted that Thatcher was 'pouring new hope' into conservative Czech politicians (she met with Klaus during her stay in Prague).⁵⁹

Yet the same article ultimately struck a pessimistic note, and serves as a bellwether for developing Czech perceptions of Thatcher and

Thatcherism. In contrast to Klaus's 1995 speech, *Lidové noviny* affirmed that 'Parallels between British Conservatives and the ODS are, naturally, limited'; this was above all because the ODS lacked the Tories' 'political will and resolve' to effect major change. Thatcher's resignation and the transfer of the leadership was also recalled and compared unfavourably with the Czech Right, which had failed to produce a challenger to the unassailable Klaus: 'Thatcher stands for political loyalty, and also replaceability, which is something Czech elites still need to realise'.⁶⁰ That Thatcher could serve as a mirror to reflect the shortcomings of Czech national politics was elaborated on in an article in the news magazine *Respekt* by Jan Macháček, a veteran anti-Communist turned prominent journalistic critic of Klaus's economic reforms.⁶¹ In a piece which complemented Tigrid's article in *Dnes*, Macháček used the substance of Thatcher's speech at Prague Castle on the occasion of her receiving the Order of the White Lion to pass a scathing judgement on the Czech political establishment. He fulminated against the prevalence of corruption, the lack of political openness and the perversion by politicians of the rule of law. Nevertheless, Macháček concluded that Thatcher's visit demonstrated that there was room for optimism. Leaders such as Thatcher showed that 'it is possible to change the world by being politically stubborn, brave in promoting ideals and selfless'.⁶² By the end of the 1990s, therefore, Thatcher and Thatcherism adopted an ambivalent position in Czech discourse: as an inspiration and endorsement of the Czech transition to democracy, but also as an ideal standard with which to compare (sometimes unfavourably) the nation's political leaders.

'The Churchill of our Times': Remembering Thatcher in 2013

As the news of Thatcher's death broke on 8 April 2013 the tabloid *Blesk* proclaimed, 'Great Britain is in tears. The Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher (died aged 87) has gone to heaven'; it called her Britain's 'beloved politician'.⁶³ Beyond the tabloids, reaction was less crude but the sentiment similar. Three extended articles exemplify this: political scientist Alexander Tomský's front-page article for *Lidové noviny* titled 'The only man in the cabinet';⁶⁴ Hynek Fajmon's 'Thatcher? The Churchill of our times'⁶⁵ (also in *Lidové noviny*); and journalist Jiří Sobotka's six-

page obituary for *Respekt* magazine headlined ‘Butch lady Margaret Thatcher’.⁶⁶

Given their backgrounds, it was likely that Tomský, a conservative who resided in Britain, and Fajmon, an ODS member and a Eurosceptic MEP, would both recall Thatcher positively. Tomský selected the miners’ strike among other examples when highlighting Thatcher’s steely resolve, and identified the ‘right to buy’ scheme as an example of how Thatcher had improved the British economy. He proceeded to defend Thatcher’s ‘no such thing as society’ remark, before claiming that she destroyed the snobbish oligarchy of the English public school network within British politics, replacing it with a meritocracy. Fajmon’s piece was the most detailed of several comparisons between Thatcher and Churchill.⁶⁷ Fajmon averred that while Churchill had saved Europe from Nazism, Thatcher helped rid Europe of socialism, promoting democracy in its place. For Fajmon, the key motif of Thatcher’s career was her contribution to ‘freedom’ in Britain and beyond. His article concluded: ‘Thatcher is a symbol of the conservative revolution and Western civilisation’s crucial turn of direction in the second half of the twentieth century. That is why she already occupies an esteemed position in the pantheon of greats that Britain has given to the world’. (Much of the tone of Fajmon’s encomia was echoed in an article by Tomáš Ježek, the minister for privatisation in the early 1990s, who claimed that Thatcher could always identify the ‘true golden kernels of our Euroamerican civilisation ... She knew exactly what is evil and what is good.’⁶⁸) Jiří Sobotka’s article credited Thatcher with arresting British decline and guiding the country to prosperity and enhanced status. The most sober of the authors, Sobotka revealed that Thatcher’s premiership contributed to a long period of Conservative unpopularity and the rise of New Labour, but his piece ended on an almost wistful note, as he compared the ‘decline’ of the West in 2013 with the position of Britain in the 1970s, before concluding ‘it is easy to guess how [Thatcher] would deal with it’ – though no elucidation was offered.

There was space for criticism. The Leftist *Právo* carried quotes from socialist Czech politicians identifying anti-social or financially irresponsible aspects of Thatcherism – including drawing a link between 1980s deregulation and the 2008 global financial crisis. *Právo* also mentioned Thatcher’s support for authoritarian regimes; likewise, the obituary

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in *Respekt*, acknowledged that ‘in other parts of the world’, Thatcher’s closeness to General Pinochet and her condemnation of Nelson Mandela damaged her reputation.⁶⁹ The editor of the Left-leaning online portal *Deník referendum* authored a balanced summary of Thatcher’s life which, rarely for a Czech publication, commented on how ‘masterfully’ she had used ‘spin doctor and public relations’ techniques to enhance her appeal.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Jan Macháček, whom it was previously noted had taken inspiration from Thatcher in 1999 for her idealism and selflessness, now adopted a contrarian position on Thatcher’s legacy, arguing that, far from representing any universal ideal in terms of political approach, Thatcher had simply been ‘in the right place at the right time’.⁷¹ However, the conservative press was notably disinclined to criticise. *Dnes*, for example, dismissed hostile British commentators as ‘left-wingers and people from the regions’: it reminded readers that Thatcher had won three successive elections and was therefore regarded by most British people as a successful politician.⁷²

Thatcher’s close links with, and continued relevance in, the Czech lands was another prominent aspect. *Hospodářské noviny* journalist Petr Fischer went so far as to announce that Thatcher’s death ought to prompt the Czech nation to begin reassessing the entire post-1989 resettlement.⁷³ There were widespread laudations for her role in the fall of Communism, including in *Právo*, and for the personal interest she showed in British-based Czech dissidents.⁷⁴ Fajmon claimed her appeal was more universal: ‘for us Czechs during the 1980s’, he wrote, ‘we told ourselves that she must be a really courageous woman, when she is so feared by the comrades in the Kremlin, who through TASS created the nickname “Iron Lady” in order to damage her.’⁷⁵ Thatcher’s role in the post-1989 transition in Czechoslovakia was elaborated upon in a lengthy article in *Lidové noviny* entitled ‘Reform hurts, she warned the Czechs’. It recalled Thatcher’s 1990 visit to Czechoslovakia, characterising her as a sage with precious advice on economic restructuring for the ‘Thatcherite’ Klaus.⁷⁶ Sobotka gave due attention to Thatcher’s influence on Klaus and the ODS, but also showed how other Czech politicians from both Right and Left (including former Communists) had been inspired either by her policies or her personality and achievements.⁷⁷ Thatcher’s hostility to deeper European integration was also touched on approvingly in several articles – surely reflecting the largely unenthusiastic Czech attitude towards EU membership.⁷⁸ Fajmon listed her opposition to deeper union among her ‘greatest merits’; Tomský

credited her with foreseeing the economic and political dangers of a more united Europe.⁷⁹

But Thatcher and Thatcherism were also invoked by critics of post-1989 Czech developments. A thoughtful article in *Hospodářské noviny* by Petr Fischer strove to identify the fundamental aspect of Thatcherism that transcended ideological divides. Fischer concluded that it consisted in Thatcher's ability to take politics from 'its ideological heights back down to earth': Thatcherite democracy was visceral, confrontational and social. According to Fischer,

In the Czech Republic, this legacy from the Iron Lady goes unheeded, as all local salon Thatcherites are utterly petrified of this dimension of politics. We are afraid of protests, we fear political mobilisation. We are far more comfortable with the naive and idealistic fantasy that democracy is a symbolic affair conducted on the level of language, the wounds of which don't hurt.⁸⁰

More commonly, commentators used Thatcher as a standard against which to appraise the Czech Right, especially Klaus. Tomáš Ježek, in a guarded reference to Klaus, noted that Thatcher was firmly rooted in Great Britain and its traditions; it was this background that distinguished her from and, indeed, baffled, 'all of her imitators and venerator, even in the Czech lands', who had proved more brittle in their values and beliefs.⁸¹ A more overt comparison with Klaus came from Pavel Bratinka. A pivotal figure in 1989, Bratinka co-founded the neo-liberal Civic Democratic Alliance; the party remained firmly in the shadow of Klaus's ODS and Bratinka left national politics in 1998.⁸² In an interview with *Dnes*, Bratinka lamented that Czech governments of the 1990s had been 'socially-orientated' rather than Thatcherite; he held Klaus primarily to blame. Klaus, he maintained, had led a nation that was still excessively dependent on the state rather than practicing the self-reliance which Thatcher had preached; he had not heeded Thatcher's advice from 1990 that 'reform hurts'. Bratinka concluded that it was ultimately a question of personality: unlike Thatcher, Klaus had been unwilling to take risks. In support of this, Bratinka contrasted a Czech rail strike that lasted for two days before Klaus capitulated with, unsurprisingly, Thatcher's response to the UK miners' strike (a point echoed by Jiří Sobotka in *Respekt*).⁸³ For Bratinka, Thatcherism was an ideal that the Czech Right had been not just unable but unwilling to emulate.

Conclusion

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Margaret Thatcher was and is a global figure; and it is surely appropriate that Thatcher historians are beginning to engage seriously with her reception and impact beyond the confines of the United Kingdom. Because of the immense changes that unfolded there in the late 1980s and 1990s, states such as Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic offer particularly revealing examples of the international dimension of Thatcher and Thatcherism. Over three decades Czech newspapers reported and reflected upon Thatcher and her policies. Seldom were the observations dispassionate and disinterested: on the contrary, the striking continuity amidst the change that the Czech lands experienced from the 1980s to the 2010s is that Czech (or Czechoslovak) journalists and commentators found in Thatcher and Thatcherite Britain useful vehicles for reflecting – often casually but sometimes profoundly – on their own state and society. In Communist times Thatcher and Thatcherism were vilified as anti-social and hypocritical; reportage of the UK miners' strike showed Thatcher's Britain, replete with Dickensian capitalism, as the opposite of the benign Czechoslovakian workers' state. The 1987 visit to Moscow again contrasted Britain with Czechoslovakia and the rest of the Warsaw Pact: the latter, under the guidance of the enlightened Gorbachev, were portrayed as pacific and progressive, while the former, under the reactionary leadership of Thatcher and Conservatives, was cast as belligerent and outdated.

After 1989 Thatcher was embraced by the Czech political elite and a cult of Thatcher became established in the press. The transformation of Thatcher's image from Communist folk-devil to liberal-democratic sage can be related to the close relationship between the Czech state and the media, as well as the rapidly changing political, ideological and economic contexts in which that relationship existed. Thatcher and her ideals, anathema in Communist times, were highly compatible with the post-1989 elite, keen to purge the state of its Communist legacy and to introduce many aspects of the Western liberal-capitalist model, just as Thatcher had seemingly purged Britain of socialism. The Czech media, largely in tune with these goals, presented Thatcher as a figure to enlighten and inspire. Meanwhile, when commenting on the specific case of Thatcher's 1990 resignation, Britain was presented as a political utopia, where democracy was deeply embedded and high-minded politicians relinquished power for the public good. Comparisons were also drawn in the post-Klaus era from the later 1990s

until Thatcher's death. Frequently, the purpose here was to evaluate the neo-liberal Klausian experiment, as well as the post-1989 settlement more generally. For some commentators, Klaus had failed precisely because he had been unwilling to fully implement Thatcherite policies and to emulate his mentor's metallic determination. Across a broad spectrum of newspapers the cult of Thatcher as the embodiment of firm but honourable politics remained entrenched; her death was the signal for much sentimental reflection and the rehashing of clichés surrounding the 'Iron Lady's' personality and achievements. In these various ways, therefore, Thatcher occupied a rare position in the Czech context: a Western leader who for over thirty years had immediate relevance in that country's political discourse. From this perspective, the somewhat hyperbolic description of Thatcher in April 2013 as 'the Churchill of our times' begins to look apposite.

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Notes

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- 2 We deliberately present evidence of 'Czech' responses to Thatcher and Thatcherism even for the 1980s and early 1990s, the period when the Czech lands were still united with Slovakia. This reflects the fact that even before the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics in 1993, each national group had long been served by its own set of newspapers: a truly 'Czechoslovak' newspaper service did not exist (unlike television or radio). Moreover, as several Czech newspapers from Communist times continued to operate after 1989 and 1993, it seems justifiable to confine our focus to the Czech side. See Owen V. Johnson, 'Failing Democracy: Journalists,

- the Mass Media, and the Dissolution of Czechoslovakia', in *Irreconcilable Differences: Explaining Czechoslovakia's Dissolution*, eds. Michael Kraus and Alison Stanger (Lanham, MD, 2000), p. 166.
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 - 8 Bednařík, Jirák, and Köpplová (2011), pp. 340-41; Petr Fidelius (1983), *Jazyk a Moc*, Munich: Arkýř.
 - 9 Bednařík, Jirák, and Köpplová (2011), p. 338; Owen V. Johnson (1999), 'The Roots of Journalism in Central and Eastern Europe' in Jerome Aumente et al. (eds.), *Eastern European Journalism: Before, During and After Communism*, Cresskill: Hampton Press, pp. 24, 28; Jerome Aumente (1999), 'The Role and Effects of Journalism and *Samizdat* Leading up to 1989', in Jerome Aumente et al. (eds.), *Eastern European Journalism Before, During and After Communism*, pp. 62-63; Steve Kettle (1996), 'The Development of the Czech Media Since the Fall of Communism', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 12(4), p. 45.
 - 10 Tomáš Klvaňa (2006), 'Czech Media during the Transformation Period', in *Transformation: The Czech Experience*, Prague: People in Need, p. 128.
 - 11 Bednařík, Jirák, and Köpplová (2011), pp. 371-76; Kettle (1996), pp. 45-47; Jakub Končelík, Pavel Večeřa, and Petr Orság (2010), *Dějiny českých médií 20. Století*, Prague: Portál, pp. 258-60; Ray Hiebert (1999), 'Transition: From the End of the Old Regime to 1996', in Jerome Aumente et al. (eds.), *Eastern European Journalism*, pp. 110-11, 141.
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- 21 *Mladý svět*, 12-18 June 1984, p. 24.
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- 39 *Dnes*, 29 November 1990, p. 5; see also *Rudé právo*, 23 November 1990, p. 1.
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- 44 *Rudé právo*, 24 November 1990, p. 3; 29 November 1990, p. 7.
- 45 *Dnes*, 24 November 1990, p. 3.
- 46 *Lidové noviny*, 23 November 1990, p. 4.
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- 49 *Dnes*, 24 November 1990, p. 3; see also *Rudé právo*, 24 November 1990, p. 3.
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Gerald
Power

Jaroslav
Weinfurter

Establishing the Complexity of the Islamic State's Visual Propaganda

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Security analysts have not systematically studied visual discourses, even if they apparently play a prominent role in current propaganda efforts. The article intends to address this disciplinary insufficiency by introducing an inter-scientific approach to analysing large visual data samples. The article illustrates the method by applying it to the dataset comprised of the IS's visual stills. To achieve this goal, the article will first introduce an archive compiled by utilising the knowledge of IS's content dissemination strategies. Second, the article addresses narrative techniques used to effectively convey the message of an alternative worldview. Finally, the text introduces a computational method based on probabilistic topic modelling. Reflecting the results of its application, the article argues that with the growing complexity of the resulting topic sets there is an increase in the probability that the propagandist effort in question represents an attempt at a systematic articulation of a holistic socio-political order alternative to the status quo.

Keywords: Islamic State, probabilistic topic modelling, visual propaganda, revisionism, social media

This article argues that the Islamic State's (IS) visual propaganda should be perceived as an attempt to introduce a holistic socio-political order serving as an alternative to liberal worldviews. The audiences of Western media periodically seized by the virulent dreadfulness of decapitation scenes have a natural tendency to perceive the jihadist propaganda as pointless violence potentially arousing fears. This distorted



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perspective readily summons a cycle not unlike the one discovered by August Ferdinand Möbius¹. The trajectory of its perpetual circles passing first through a repugnant provocation reaches the point of its departure by retaliatory strikes, only to begin a new round of a possibly endless iteration. Devised by its perpetrators as a ceaseless cause of socio-political ripples, it strives to embroil liberal democratic societies in an apocalyptic standoff resolved only through an annihilation of the other.

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However, there is a coherent deeper level underpinning the grim realities that portrays the diverse schemes of vile atrocities perpetrated by the self-styled IS or various al-Qaeda affiliates. The following analysis will show that the IS complex propagandistic endeavour has employed various strategies to build alternative socio-political orders. Using social media imagery, IS attempts to depict and consequently establish a utopic vision that treats the reality as an obstacle that needs to be levelled in order to yield a space for a new socio-political order. The article further claims that to fully grasp and understand these complex phenomena, machine-generated analysis is required to overcome the limits of human perception.

Empirically, the issue of IS visual production has been tackled by several authors providing human interpretation of limited sets of visuals² or large sets of visuals that seem to surmount individual comprehension³. Additionally, there have been attempts to produce blueprints describing computational architectures assisting in the analysis of extremist content online.⁴ While recognizing this scholarship, we intend to overcome the limited epistemological capacity of these approaches producing idiographic studies with a constrained empirical reach. In doing so, we seek to contribute to the rising debates introducing computer-assisted qualitative analysis methodologies applied to processing big data within social science⁵. Thus, the aim of our endeavour is to develop a computational approach that would attempt to address the current methodological deficiencies of the analytical apparatus employed to process visual phenomena.

The article will be divided into the following parts. First, we will briefly address the foundations of the IS strategy introducing enticing utopian visions. After this, we will elaborate on the IS dissemination strategies employed to spread the visual content followed by the explanation of our approach to capturing the stills and forming the unique archive of IS visuals. The next section will outline our methodology

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combining a content-oriented computer assisted method based on probabilistic topic modelling with a reflexive analysis used to interpret the machine generated results. An intuitive understanding of the dataset would imply that at the holistic level, it represents an attempt to articulate a virtual alternative of the social, political, and economic order. However, given the volume of the dataset this hypothesis seems highly conjectural. Any of the anthropocentric epistemological approaches cannot settle this issue in a satisfying manner, for the puzzle lies beyond the reach of anthropic cognitive capabilities. Therefore, the phenomenon itself is directly unobservable and requires a methodological treatment which is not founded upon reflexive interpretation of the empirical input. The method proposed in the present text attempts to address this issue as follows. If the input dataset exhibits the level of complexity pertaining to a systematic attempt at articulating an alternative order, the method will output topics diverging with respect to



the low-level visual motives, however, converging on the conceptual level, that is regarding the patterns of socio-political activities. Empirically, we believe that one can judge the character of the propagandist effort according to the level of complexity of the product it generates. In other words, an increasing level of complexity increases the probability that the propaganda conveys an alternative conception of socio-political order. To better learn the difference, refer to the results of the analysis provided in Appendix I.

*Islamic
State's
Visual
Propaganda*

Propaganda as Socio-Political Alternative

When prescribing an order of socio-political conduct, most of the pre-15 jihadi groups could display only a bleak historical 'wreck record'. Despite the existence of a methodological groundwork established in Abu Bakr Naji's 2004 treatise *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*, inability to carve out an order from self-induced chaos prevailed. Perhaps the first indication of the upcoming change in the strategic conduct and propaganda undertakings was the inception of Ansar al-Sharia groups in Tunisia and more importantly Libya in 2011⁶. These groups, albeit inherently violent as their ideological forbearers, exhibited instrumental interest in socio-political conduct anchored in a purist interpretation of Sharia that they would impose in the areas suffering from a power vacuum. The mature version of this disposition was firmly embedded into the mechanisms guiding the daily routine of the self-styled 15. It would be mistaken to portray the group as endowed with a considerably higher potential to foster and maintain a socio-political order since its foothold is greatly self-exaggerated. The visual propaganda inflating the capacity to build a semblance of an ideal society is, however, painting precisely such deceptive picture. That is a picture of seamless utopia brimming with abundance of everything for anybody who answers the call and comes to the lands of the Caliphate. The virtual precursor is continuously filled with scenes of market stalls overflowing with food and shelves bending under the weight of the Hisbah-sanctioned consumer goods intertwined with a selective imagery of frenetic improvement and construction activities elevating the public spaces closer to the utterly surreal. The diorama foreground is a stage of repetitive charitable events scripted in the rigid fashion of a recurrent totalitar-

ian bliss. All of this unfolds against a poetic backdrop of rustic landscape imagery subtly focused on its innate pastoral traits.

If we could abstract away all the cases of recruits drawn to the ranks of the self-styled IS due to their pathological fascination with violence, a considerable number of those that remain could be seen succumbing to the alluring effects of the group's visual propaganda. If one transmits an incessant social-media staccato of grandiose utopia imagery, some will come and help build the next more advanced virtual and (more importantly) physical layers and the cycle of exponential materialization begins. These strains of visual propaganda, although in a disparate phase of rudimentary, are now converging across the diverse terrain of Sunni jihadism clearly in a bid to replicate the success of the self-styled IS. The case of the failed IS Caliphate well demonstrated the effects of reality-suppressing visual propaganda flooding social media. This in an attempt to paint a deceptive picture of sustainable utopias capable of providing the potential recruits and their families with the righteous life-style the liberal democratic societies allegedly cannot offer.

Tracing the IS Visual Content

As outlined above, the ascent of the IS prompted advancement in narrative efforts designed to usher in attempts at establishing alternative forms of social, political and economic organization. The IS methodical approach to the daily portrayal of societal routine disseminated via the crowdsourced conduits of social networks exhibits a potential to create a deeply engaging experience. An ideologically receptive individual was met by an incessant staccato of world-building propaganda that sustains the feedback loop of cognitive estrangement. Indeed, this phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the case of the IS's visual propaganda. For the present work, the main analytical interest lies in its subset comprised of images purporting to depict the daily life in sustainable and ever-expanding islands of the just societal order predicated upon a rigid interpretation of Islamic scripture.

The setting presented a unique analytical opportunity because it exhibited promising potential to yield a dataset of substantial size. The dataset would then be an ideal testbed for developing an empirical argument supporting the claim that the visual production represents a truly comprehensive rendering of an alternative socio-political order.



The prerequisite for an analytical undertaking of this kind is continuous compilation of an offline archive of sufficient volume that would allow performing computer-assisted analysis. The archive itself is also

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crucial for the specificities of the lifecycle of extremist content online. Even though it is posted and further disseminated in a way designed to attain high degrees of redundancy, long-term content retention does not reach the sufficient levels. When piggybacking on 3rd party publication platforms, the data are actively removed, and attempts at deploying self or friendly operated platforms proved to be similarly unsustainable.

The necessary software toolset needed for automatic archive compilation comprised of the image sets described above consists of a link detector and robot mirroring the discovered content for the subsequent analysis. The rate at which the data are downloaded successfully is partially determined by the delay between the content inception and the detection/mirroring countermeasures that 3rd party publication platforms frequently deploy to roll back the volume of uploaded extremist content. The speed was of the essence even in the cases of now largely defunct self-operated platforms, since they flickered under the pressure of hacktivist attacks or shutdowns by service providers. Any kind of deferred batch downloads thus yields an incomplete data archive.

Being aware of these constraints, shortly before the proclamation of the IS Caliphate in June 2014 we implemented and deployed a system based on the design described in the previous paragraph. The resulting computer assisted analysis described further below is based on the image dataset that was automatically compiled using this system. We could distinguish three consecutive shifts in the IS image distribution patterns, each signifying different stages in the attempted level of the group's virtual presence.

After the proclamation of the IS's Caliphate, the distribution of propaganda images stabilized at the first of the mentioned phases. The base unit of image propaganda assumed the format of an image set originating in one of the newly established *wilayats* (provinces) depicting a particular strain of civil or military activity. These sets, accompanied by the group's branding graphics, were then uploaded to a content sharing site (publication platform) ready for dissemination. Throughout the first phase, the group's platform of choice was the marginal justpaste.it. The site, although technologically trivial in providing a simple WYSIWYG editor ability to directly upload multimedia and generate sharable URLs, became to a considerable extent a standard, later repeatedly copied to attain similar functionality. The method

of sharing small sets of thematically convergent images was itself later imitated by a wide variety of other Jihadi groups.

The generated URLs leading to the prepared content were then disseminated via the group's Twitter social graph. In this case, what was needed for the successful compilation of the data archive was a scan of Twitter (via the Search/Streaming API) for the links to the content that needed to be mirrored. This, for the reason described above, was best accomplished in a fully automatic manner. However, it became apparent that the tenuousness of virtual presence was not limited to the group's Twitter social graph, due to the fact that the shared content was indeed affected in a similar way. The difference, however, is that unlike the social graph (which was repeatedly regenerated, although never to the original magnitude), the content when removed was not generally uploaded again, especially in the cases of image sets that are the subject of the present analysis. This raised a significant issue because the persuasiveness of sustainable alternative order is largely predicated upon the depictions of daily routine contained in now actively suppressed image sets. The solution that emerged involved introduction of greater redundancy levels which marked the beginning of the second phase.

At this stage, two different approaches were employed to attain sufficient levels of content redundancy. First, self and friendly operated platforms were deployed shadowing the core functionality of justpaste.it to bypass its measures against extremist content. The image sets were usually cross-posted to assure their survival at least in one copy. The second approach comprised of scaling of the piggybacking enterprise to include more 3rd party platforms to the same ends as in the case of imitators. Both approaches turned out to be flawed and thus unsustainable for the following reasons.

The deployment of the first justpaste.it epigone manbar.me occurred in November 2014 and was followed by several others throughout the rest of 2015, with the pace of epigone deployment slowing towards the last third of the year. The complete list of justpaste.it epigones included in the resulting dataset is located in Appendix II. However optimistic such a strategy of achieving content redundancy may seem, the lifespan of the epigones proved to be limited. Usually based on the popular WordPress content management system, a combination of lack of skill on the administering side and of various attacks or service providers' cancellations tended to make the career of an epigone,

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and of the data it carried, a short one. Despite the fact that number of epigones made a successful recovery, their existence remained mostly tenuous. Several months of operational history of the first generation became weeks in the second and days in the cases of the last, most amateurish, attempts. Some epigones were even proxied by Cloud-Flare (a company providing services helping to mitigate wide variety of cyber-attacks), which prolonged their survival but ultimately did not help in escaping their inevitable end.



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The strategy to scale up the dissemination using a broader set of 3rd party publication platforms analogous to justpaste.it ended in a similar fashion. The trend became observable in the first third of 2015 with the use of dump.to and lasted throughout 2016. The complete list of used/exploited 3rd party publication platforms included in the resulting dataset is also located in Appendix II. The failure of the piggybacking scheme had two possible causes. The first one is tied to the shutdown of a platform by its proprietor who realized the site plays an active role in the IS content distribution enterprise. The second cause

of failure was the pressure of attacks that various hacktivist groups inflict upon the sites identified, sometimes incorrectly, as hosters of the is's content. The last standing website was shortwiki.org, which played a role in the dissemination of daily digests (see below). The failure of both strategies caused a fallback to the first phase methodology, which was then altered in several aspects. The inability to secure uninterrupted operation of friendly platforms and bleak prospects of exploited sites drove the is image content almost exclusively back to justpaste.it. The effort to attain higher levels of content redundancy was however not abandoned. Since actively chased and removed, the image sets were now uploaded to justpaste.it somewhat desperately in a multitude of copies. Putting the likelihood of such scheme to attain higher levels of redundancy aside, it exposed the fact that the current is Twitter social graph was unable to disseminate all the links to the uploaded copies. The only innovation of this iteration introduced in April of 2016 was the explicit trigger of content capture by Internet Archive (archive.org). Although the site is generally hostile towards extremist content, the mirrored image sets are intact.

Finally, a last remark about the image sets needs to be made regarding the phenomenon of the daily digest. Appearing in the second phase, it first introduced, among other information, a pictorial summary of



is activities published every twenty-four hours. Interestingly, its daily release time, despite some shifts, followed a consistent schedule. Originally, it contained only banners and links to the image sets, and with the ensuing crisis of the third phase whole image sets were included to further the quest for redundancy and the desired content endurance. Over time it became an information hub, with its pictorial core surrounded by links to videos, proselytization pamphlets, nasheeds, Islamic calendars, press releases, magazines, the IS operated radios, links to the official IS accounts on various communication platforms (such as Telegram), to name just a few examples. Overall “The Daily Prophet” represented perhaps the most advanced method of content syndication the IS was able to devise. It successfully raised the redundancy levels and at the same simplified the access to the content itself. Nevertheless, it still depended on 3rd party publication platforms and content sharing sites that lay outside of the group’s control, thus failing to mitigate the original risk of content removal. Presumably realizing the unsatisfactory condition and intrinsic value of digests, in May of 2016 the group begun to package monthly archives of “The Daily Prophets” and share them by various means.

Reflecting upon the knowledge acquired throughout the process of the dataset compilation, although limited to the image sets, an assessment of the technological side of the group’s often recognized media operation does not render a competent picture. After nearly two years of constant attempts to develop a reliable sharing method that would maintain an easily accessible and comprehensive image archive, the group reached the point of departure, losing most of the publicly shared content. Despite the currently available technological means and the role of visual content in inducing the state of cognitive estrangement, IS failed to solve the foundational issue of durable content distribution.

Methodology: Bayesian Mixture Models Applied towards Topic Modelling

The methodological apparatus of the traditional social science struggles with the vastness and dynamics of the empirical domain. Computer-assisted approaches generally help to process humanly ungraspable empirical domains, thus effectively scaling up individual research capability. Our intervention introduces stochastic-based (non-determin-

istic) methodology that has been largely dismissed by traditional social science. We tend to believe that this direction constitutes a potentially rich space for convergence of two methods – probabilistic modelling and reflexive analysis. In a nutshell, the contribution lies in the machine identification of the topics that do not necessarily correspond to the topics a human would identify, therefore better representing the Big Data virtual alternatives of the actual ones.

Source:
Author's
archive

The input dataset, whose formation was described above, amounts to a complete archive of the IS's propaganda imagery we collected





Source:
Author's
archive

over the period between 16th August 2014 and 12th July 2015. The total number of pictures before deduplication reached 134 845. After we performed a simple checksum-based deduplication the total amount of images decreased to the final figure of 78 977. Despite this measure, a certain level of duplication remained as expected since not all the duplicates were bit-exact copies.

To address the complexity of the 1s's visual propaganda we designed and implemented an exploratory tool able to deliver rapid insights into the vast, humanly ungraspable visual data domains. The following lines will describe the architecture of the successfully functioning model. The first pre-processing stage loosely adheres to the 'bag of visual words' model originally conceived as an ensemble of successive methods for image classification tasks. Image key points are extracted and descriptors subsequently computed using the SIFT (Scale-Invari-

ant Feature Transform) algorithm⁷. A codebook (vocabulary of visual words) is formed via a standard clustering method k -means⁸ executed over descriptors acquired from a suitable data subset. In the aforementioned experiment, the codebook (vocabulary) dataset covered a 14-day period around the first anniversary of the 1st Caliphate proclamation (25 June 2015 – 8 July 2015) supplemented with a small number of what I term “seasonal extras” – even to the lands of the Caliphate, spring comes only once a year. The composition of the codebook (vocabulary) dataset reflects the result of year-long sedimentation processes that have accrued the shape of the current 1st socio-political practice. In total numbers, the 5 000 visual-word vocabulary (codebook) was based on the dataset of 348 images, of which 10 % was allocated to the aforementioned seasonal extras. With the vocabulary prepared, SIFT descriptors were computed for the images of the main dataset; these were then matched, using L^2 norm, with the closest vocabulary word, thereby iteratively transforming the main dataset to its vocabulary representation.

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After the pre-processing, the method proceeded with utilisation of a Bayesian mixed membership model. The goal of the mixed membership models is to describe high-dimensional multivariate datasets in terms of concise sets of latent (directly unobservable) variables. This means that there is an underlying model whose parameters describe the posterior (conditional) probability distribution over the latent variables in terms of the observed data. In other words, it expresses a probabilistic relation between fragmentary empirical observations and the unobservable structure that generates them. The process can be described as an advanced form of clustering assigning observational units to the latent structure. The difference between the traditional clustering methods and the mixed membership models lies in the assumption that controls the assignment process. The mixed membership models operate on the assumption that instead of a single affiliation, an observational unit belongs to, or in other words is generated by, a combination of several latent variables⁹. This one-to-many relation between an observational unit and the latent structure is given as a vector of continuous non-negative latent variables that add up to 1¹⁰.

The values measure a proportion which an individual latent variable assumes in an observational unit. This leads to the conclusion that each observational unit can be represented as a Bayesian mixture of the latent variables whose values are approximated by the model.

Then, even if there are two observational units consisting of identical latent variables, they still might be, and probably are, different for the proportions given by the values of the latent variables. This amounts to perhaps the most non-reductive approach towards knowledge representation. The latent components describing or generating the high-dimensional observational units to a certain degree repeat; their proportions structuring the individual mixtures differ, however.

Recently, the mixed membership models have been successfully implemented in several areas of applied statistics including the analysis of document collections, network analysis, analytical applications in social and health sciences or population genetics; the most innovative result are currently being generated in the confines of the mixed membership models of text¹¹. This area has been dominated by derivatives, optimizations and improvements of Blei's et al.¹² highly influential work on probabilistic topic modelling, more precisely by latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA).

LDA presumes that the observable phenomena, in this case textual documents, exhibit varying mixtures or proportions of unobservable topics¹³. The topics pertaining to the analysed document set are conceived of as distributions over a fixed vocabulary (unique words found in the set) and as such represent the latent structure¹⁴. LDA itself describes the probabilistic generative process responsible for producing both the latent topic structure and the content (words) of the observable phenomena (documents). The process is given as follows: '[...] for each document in the collection, I generate the words in a two-stage process, [i] randomly choose a distribution over topics, [ii] for each word in the document (a) randomly choose a topic from the distribution over topics in step [i], (b) randomly choose a word from the corresponding distribution over the vocabulary'¹⁵. If reversed, the generative process is a case of Bayesian inference which, holding the document set constant, attempts to answer the question of 'What is the likely hidden topical structure that generated my observed documents?'¹⁶.

Conclusion: Reflexive Analysis

Building on the argument outlined in the introductory part of the present article the following section will illustrate the resolution of the puzzle. With respect to the empirical input comprised of the 15 propa-

ganda picture sets we would argue that it indeed represents a systematic attempt at articulating a holistic social, political, and economic order. Moreover, this statement stems directly from the result of applying a Bayesian mixture model to discern an unobservable generative structure represented as the revealed topics. A conventional way of utilising the results of probabilistic topic modelling, that is of the symptomatic documents pertaining to individual topics, is to interpret simply observable themes. This could be achieved by means of thematic discourse analysis which would code the pictures into predefined discrete categories. As a result, the only effect of this methodology is quantitative augmentation of interpretative capacity.

Even though we understand such an analytical move for it is an intuitive and pragmatic one, it however reduces the range of empirical puzzles which can be solved by it. As can be gathered from the introductory section, we have chosen the issue of complexity since it represents a natural complement to thematic-oriented studies of any kind. This would settle one of the most general characteristics regarding the propagandist efforts aimed at status quo revision. We would argue that according to the observed level of complexity, one can judge whether the propagandist efforts describe a systematic alternative to the status quo or merely attempt to erode it without an ambition to redefine it.

To empirically demonstrate what we have outlined above, the following can be stated regarding the picture sets contained in the Appendix. The picture sets below are comprised of the symptomatic images exemplifying individual topics. Picture sets 1-6 display the level of complexity associated with a systematic attempt at articulating an alternative order. This is because among the individual symptomatic images, which constitute the unobservable topics, there is a considerable difference regarding the depicted activity patterns. At the same time, these are, however, convergent with respect to the conventionally conceptualized attempts of arranging human societies according to a meaningful principle. The composition of image sets 1-6 stands in stark contrast to that of image sets 7 and 8. These sets exemplify the topics from the low complexity segment of the input dataset and as such do not exhibit any unifying principle that could be considered generative of a coherent alternative order. If the application of the above described methodology yields a topic set comprised mostly of simple patterns based on the low-level visual correspondence, the input dataset falls into the category of erosive efforts without redefining

ambitions. However, if for the most part the resulting topic set is comprised of the image sets which are similar in their composition to sets 1-6, we would argue that the underlying propagandist effort is indeed a constitutive one. This is because the depicted activity patterns exceed in their complexity the discrete categorisation resulting from visual-based thematic discourse analysis. This result is possible due the applied Bayesian mixture model able to represent the exemplifying sets in terms of proportions of the unobservable structure, i.e. topics. More importantly, underlying of these mixtures are probability distributions which do not reduce the observable phenomena to discrete categories. Hence, they do not commit to unnecessarily distorted accounts of the phenomena predicated upon the limits of the anthropocentric cognition. In practical terms, this is most usually manifested as artificially parsimonious typologies to fit the coding capacity of the researchers. The proportion between simple and complex reported in the Appendix pertains to the whole of the resulting topic set as well. As a result, we would argue that the input dataset, i.e. the IS's visual propaganda, indeed represents a systematic attempt to establish an alternative socio-political order. This result does not stem from a reflexive analysis, but from a machine learning model thus complementing the state-of-the-art disciplinary knowledge of the phenomenon.



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Notes

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The EU, Kosovo and Serbia

The Quest for the Status

Andrej Semenov

The task of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it classifies and explores the three approaches to solving the conflict in Kosovo. The first approach, coined into the phrase ‘Kosovo as a unique case’, undermines academic debates revolving around Kosovo and it is of no use for scientific purposes. The second approach rests on the assumption that Serbia will eventually recognize Kosovo as a sovereign state in exchange for membership in the EU. However, there is no evidence for such a claim - quite the contrary, Kosovo remains an all-consuming issue for Serbs. The third approach states that Kosovo’s status will be of utmost importance only when Kosovo becomes fully ready for membership. This might have been the case prior to the Brussels Agreements; nevertheless, the agreements proved that even technical issues related to the improvement of Kosovars’ life cannot be achieved without touching upon the question of status. Secondly, this paper aims at setting prolegomenon for future discussions regarding the status. The formula runs as follows: Kosovo is to be independent of Serbia even if it means that Kosovo is not a sovereign country, and Serbia not to recognize Kosovo even if it means losing de facto and de jure authority over the region.

Keywords: European Enlargement, Kosovo Conflict, the West Balkans, Serbia

Introduction

After failing to impose itself as the ultimate power on its own turf during the conflict in 1999, the EU has since recognized its leverage and opportunity not only to facilitate peace, but also to create an environ-

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ment in which consensus can be reached. In October 2000, the citizens of Serbia decided to overthrow the regime of Slobodan Milosevic and elected a new democratic elite led by Zoran Djindjic, the president of Democratic Party (srb. *Demokratska Stranka - DS*), and Vojislav Kostunica, the leader of Democratic Party of Serbia (srb. *Demokratska Stranka Srbije - DSS*). Immediately after the election of the new government, the EU promised \$2 billion in reconstruction aid and \$300 million a year in aid over the next seven years.¹ This was the beginning of the process of Europeanization in Serbia, where the EU has been using a mechanism known as ‘reinforcement by reward’.² Increased European incentives did not give the expected results; while monetary incentives pushed the political elite towards the EU, primarily their standard of living, the process of normative transformation remained intangible. It seems that for the new political elite, governing Serbia has been more challenging than winning elections against Milosevic. Likewise, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) turned out to be a stumbling block on the road to Europe. The cooperation with ICTY became obsolete once a new challenge started looming – Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence in 2008. The former trade Serbia faced – ‘membership in the EU for cooperation with ICTY’, has been replaced by ‘membership for recognition’. Along similar lines, the ‘stick and carrot’ strategy at the high political level had been accompanied with, and sometimes entirely replaced by, the idea of deconstructing a highly political question into technical issues. This comes as a natural consequence of the split that occurred among the members of the EU on the question of whether to recognize Kosovo or not. While the majority of the members recognised Kosovo, there were still the five states which decided to support Serbia due to their internal issues of similar nature. This division demands that the EU crosses the borders of its own comfort and seeks new methods and arguments in order to reach a consensus. The EU Member States have opted for the option to forge a united position on essential points regarding the future of the region but remain divided on the question of Kosovo’s status. This tactic brought remarkable results such as the Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Brussels Agreements; nevertheless, the agreements on civil registry and cadaster, integrated boundary management and other agreements cannot be seen as a panacea for the Kosovo conflict. Even though technical agreements have

a spillover effect on sensitive political issues such as regional membership, this cannot overcome the major obstacle – the future status of Kosovo.

There are three approaches to tackling this issue: the first approach neglects the problem by introducing the thesis ‘Kosovo as a unique case’. The second approach, which assumes that Serbia is ready to trade Kosovo for membership in the EU, acknowledges the issue but assumes that time will water the problem down. The third approach acknowledges the existence of the problem and its solid structure, but reminds us that we still have several steps to take. Put differently, prior to the final settlement of the status of Kosovo, the region has to solve a variety of economic issues.

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Debates and Anti-Debates

In this section I will trace the history of the argument ‘Kosovo is a unique case’. In order to do so we need to be reminded of the four main debates across different fields on Kosovo. Each academic debate has been followed by anti-debate, an approach which is based upon loose argumentation aiming merely and primarily to undermine existing debates.

Ever since the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Kosovo has become a model employed in various fields of political theory, international relations, international law, ethics and philosophy. The complexity of the problem invites us to stop relying ruthlessly upon arguments from our own academic fields and to imagine ourselves as moral agents because Kosovo ‘has come to be a debate about ourselves, about what we hold as normal and what exceptional.’³ The case calls for participants to stray from their areas of comfort and utilize arguments from different academic fields. Therefore, rather than focusing on specific academic areas, the literature on Kosovo will be reviewed chronologically.

In the case of Kosovo, we find at least four major strands in literature. First, Kosovo has become the significant subject of scholarly research as the consequence of Yugoslav break-up. Before the internationalization of the case in 1999, Kosovo was studied mainly within the Yugoslavia’s specialist circles.⁴ Even though the crisis produced a number of meager writings as many authors never learnt the languages nor had any interest in the region prior to the conflict, this period produced

superb scholarship as well. One of the first attempts was to understand socio-historical ties between the region and the two nations.⁵ Second, owing to the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia outside the UN, based on the assumption of mass human rights violations, the question of legality and legitimacy of NATO's intervention in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia became the center of the dispute.⁶ This question contributed to the debate surrounding the use of military means against a sovereign state on the basis of mass human rights violations, but also contributed to the development of the framework of 'responsibility to protect' (R2P).⁷ The third debate revolved around the development of a sustainable international mission capable of managing the power vacuum and of subduing ethnic conflicts. In the early stage, the discussion revolved around the structure and mechanisms of a mission appropriate to regulate the conflict.⁸ In its mature phase, after the establishment of EULEX in 2008, the debate reflected on the role of the EU in mediating the conflict.⁹ The debate is partly the subject of this article with the difference that it neither sees the conflict as international nor as Serbia's internal question. The fourth debate appeared immediately after NATO's intervention but reached its culmination after Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence: it concentrates on the 'national self-determination versus sovereignty' question and its implication of this dispute for the future status of the region.

This debate completes an important concept which looms in the background - the thesis of Kosovo as a unique case. Namely, each of the debates I have presented, have their 'anti-debates' which postulates that Kosovo cannot serve as a precedent for other cases. The thesis is nothing but dislocation from reality: when we face things that are inconsistent with our beliefs we attempt to dislocate those things. Due to space constraints, let me only indicate the logic of my argument. The persecution which is inconsistent with human rights and liberal values nourished by the USA is dislocated to Guantanamo. Arguing 'Kosovo is a unique case' represents a similar dislocation, although not geographical but logical. The idea abolishes the fact that the solution is applicable to other cases, i.e. it allows solutions which fall outside the domain of logic. It is worth emphasising a fairly obvious point here: each anti-debate has the same goal - to avoid contested views and pave the way for Kosovo's independence. The first anti-debate goes as follows: the uniqueness of Kosovo occurs because the region is the last piece of the final break-up of Yugoslavia.¹⁰ The second denies the debate on the

“use of military force versus sovereignty” by assuming legitimacy and legality of NATO intervention: ‘Kosovo is a unique situation, because NATO was forced to intervene in order to stop and then reverse ethnic cleansing... Those conditions do not pertain to any of the conflicts that are usually brought up in this context.’¹¹ The third anti-debate holds that Kosovo is a unique case on the grounds of unprecedented involvement of the UN:¹² Serbia does not exercise any governing authority over Kosovo, thus the ‘new reality’ is to be acknowledged.¹³ Needless to say, these concepts usually come from politicians supported by dubious interpretations of legal documents; nevertheless, a majority of scholars vigorously reject their arguments.¹⁴

The main consequence of the three anti-debates is, however, obstruction of the fourth debate – the status of Kosovo. Therefore, even despite the fact that the conflict in Kosovo received extensive coverage in the global press, there are surprisingly few large-scale scholarly publications regarding the future status and development of the political system in Kosovo. The literature falls into two strands: a number of scholars believe that Serbia will accept the loss of Kosovo for in exchange for EU membership,¹⁵ while others develop the view that the determination of Kosovo’s status cannot cure the deep economic, social and political crisis in the region.¹⁶ In the next section, we will see that there is no evidence to suggest that Serbia’s government would have accepted the membership for Kosovo trade; quite the contrary, Kosovo is still an all-consuming issue.

Serbia: Kosovo or Membership?

In this section I will tackle the second approach which states that if the EU pushes Serbia to choose between Kosovo and membership, Serbia will choose the latter. It is rather difficult (almost impossible) to oppose a hypothetical claim and prove that there is no evidence for something. Therefore, the main focus is on breaking the assumption that Serbia’s politics are inconsistent and chaotic (when it comes to Kosovo). Quite the contrary – Serbia drew the red line in the early days after democratic changes and that strategy has become the cornerstone of Serbia’s politics regarding Kosovo.

Once Milosevic was removed, the international community enthusiastically responded by lifting economic sanctions, providing aid, and creating a picture of a new Serbia. Overall, it seemed that nothing could

stop the processes of Europeanization and democratization. However, there was cooperation with the ICTY and Kosovo. While cooperation with the Hague tribunal (ICTY) divided the new democratic elite, a red line regarding Kosovo had been drawn at the very beginning. The new president Kostunica believed that Milosevic should not be investigated for war crimes, but rather for abuse of power and that he should face a domestic trial. On the other hand, Prime Minister Djindjic insisted that there was no time to waste and despite the fact that the Yugoslav Constitutional Court banned any extradition of Serbs to the ICTY, he arrested and extradited Milosevic to the tribunal in The Hague. This depicts the essence of the Djindjic-Kostunica problem: Kostunica favored reforms based on the rule of law while Djindjic wanted reforms by any means.¹⁷

Unlike the question of cooperation with the Hague tribunal, the issue of Kosovo did not divide the two leaders. Kostunica's view is uncontested among the experts; he insisted that Kosovo is part of Serbia, claiming that Kosovo's Albanians can get the widest possible autonomy but that talks regarding Kosovo's independence are unacceptable.¹⁸ On the other hand, many scholars take for granted the political mantra 'Djindjic saw Kosovo as de facto independent'¹⁹ and once faced with a choice between Kosovo and the EU, he would have chosen the European path. This approach is not only questionable, but has the potential to be highly dangerous. In his last interview, Djindjic emphasized the importance of dealing with Kosovo at the time, stressing that the final solution should neither be to make Kosovo a Serbian province as it was before 1999, nor an independent Kosovo.²⁰ This is a forerunner of Kostunica's red line for Kosovo coined into the phrase 'more than autonomy and less than independence'. Djindjic put forward the claim that the optimal solution might be a federation, where the Serbs would be constitutive people with their own institutions within the framework of common institutions.²¹ Along similar lines, Kostunica later proposed cantonization for Kosovo.²² This proposal implies the same idea as Djindjic's federation; Kosovo can be free to build democratic institutions while the Serbs would retain power in the places where they constitute a majority.

There is another idea which the international community found problematic but on which Djindjic and Kostunica had common ground – the link between the status of Kosovo and the secession of the Republika Srpska in Bosnia (RS) and Herzegovina:²³ 'Kostunica is

attempting to link the final status of Kosovo to the RS secession from Bosnia, which will result in continued Western frustration with the implementation of the Dayton Accords in Republika Srpska.²⁴ Djindjic also warned that: 'if it cannot be applied to Serbia what was signed in Dayton, that all the national communities got their collective status and that borders are unchangeable... if this does not apply to Serbia, I think it cannot be applied to anyone in future'.²⁵

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By observing the comparison between Djindjic and Kostunica, we can see that the two agreed when it came to questions of national importance. What Kostunica however lacked, a sense for political reality, Djindjic had - he prophetically predicted that the worst for Serbia would be that Kosovo becomes de facto independent but yet Serbia will have responsibility for it, which could be the major obstacle on the path to accession to the EU.²⁶ Further, one should admit that they opted for different approaches: while the Prime Minister (Djindjic) found that Serbia earned credit in the international community and thus it was the right time to start solving painful questions, the President (Kostunica) believed that Serbia's national question is not a matter of political trade but a subject of international law. Undoubtedly, Djindjic and Kostunica had enormous differences in their approach but they 'shared the same overall goals'.²⁷

First, they had clearly established the red line regarding Kosovo - that Serbia cannot recognize Kosovo as an independent state. Second, they believed that Serbia should be fully integrated into the EU if the EU acknowledges Serbia's national interests.

The assassination of Djindjic in 2003 and the election of Kostunica as the new prime minister in 2004 did not lead to any substantial change towards Kosovo and the EU. Indeed, Kostunica's government prepared the Resolution on the EU Association in October 2004, specifying that membership in the EU was 'an undeniable strategic goal' and that Serbia was 'fully prepared to fulfil all the preconditions necessary to speed up integration into the EU'.²⁸

Only a year after the Serbian National Assembly adopted the resolution, the EU reacted with great enthusiasm and reward - negotiations for the Stabilization and Association. However, Kostunica was left without Djindjic, who advocated investigations and extraditions to the Hague tribunal, and had all the power to do what he thought it was right to do - to stop cooperation with ICTY. Consequently, Serbia lost precious time on the path toward the EU.²⁹

Cooperation with ICTY, as the main challenge, became obsolete as the new obstacle started looming, in February 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence just days after the EU had taken over the international role from UNMIK through its EULEX mission. Kostunica's government resigned and a new election was called for on 11 May. Kostunica's DSS was severely punished for the Kosovo failure, receiving only 12 percent of the vote. At the same time, Kostunica had realized that the politics 'Kosovo and the EU', created during the days of the Djindjic-Kostunica relationship, was unattainable. In a short period of time, DSS had turned over from an enthusiastically pro-European to a somewhat Eurosceptic nationalist party, basing its politics on anti-Western populism.

The new general elections launched a new strongman in Serbia – Boris Tadic. Tadic won the presidential elections against Tomislav Nikolic, a candidate from the Serbian Radical Party (*srb. Srpska Radikalna Stranka – SRS*), which were seen as a 'European Serbia versus Milosevic's Serbia' game.³⁰ In the parliamentary elections, Tadic's DS received 38% of the votes, while DSS 12% and the SRS 29%, which makes together 41% of the vote. Ivica Dacic, known as "Little Slobo", and his Socialist Party of Serbia (*srb. Socijalisticka Partija Srbije – SPS*) became the determining factor in forming the government. Eventually, Dacic successfully persuaded older party members³¹ and threw his 8% to the former Socialist's foes – DS, opting for the already well-established Kosovo and the EU politics. However, he recently confessed that his decision was made under pressure from Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time.³² Dacic replaced Milosevic's populism, which combined nationalistic and communist principles with a new Euro-Serbian populism, with pure opportunism. But how can one explain the politics of Tadic and his DS? Tadic wanted to represent himself as a progressive and pro-European leader while 'using nationalistic platitudes whenever he felt his popularity threatened'³³ which turned the concept of 'Europe and Kosovo' into politics between fear and trembling. A full mouth of Serbia's full integration in the EU whilst being afraid to confront Kosovo Serbs, the Church and ultranationalists did not have any concrete result. The outcome came in November 2011, less than four years after Kostunica's big turn; the EU did not grant Serbia candidate status. The President claimed that Serbia refused to recognize Kosovo, which was one of the conditions for Serbia to obtain candidate status.³⁴ It had become clear to Tadic that politics

of the EU and Kosovo was unlikely and unrealistic, therefore Tadic and his DS based their next campaign upon the idea of 'Europe has no alternative'. We can say that this was a big turn for Tadic. Between the EU and Kosovo, unlike Kostunica, he had chosen the EU. The outcome was the same – the voters penalized Tadic's politics.

In the parliamentary elections of May 2012, Tadic lost the battle. His DS won 22%, The Serbian Progressive Party (srb. *Srpska Napredna Stranka* -SNS) reached 22%, and Dacic's socialists were to play kingmakers once again.³⁵ SNS was party established in 2008, after general elections as a result of a clash within the Radicals (SRS): Tomislav Nikolic and Aleksandar Vucic, the two faces from the 1990's (Vucic was the information minister whilst Nikolic was a man who criticized Milosevic for being too soft), realized that Vojislav Seselj's (president of SRS) rhetoric was obsolete. Seselj advised his party fellows not to give up on the concept of 'Greater Serbia' and to focus on developing an allegiance with Slavic and Orthodox countries.³⁶ However, Nikolic and Vucic, like many politicians before them, had recognized that the EU and Kosovo narrative paved the way to seizure of political power in Serbia. They put forward the claim that 'Serbia should be a bridge between the East and the West' and further stated that Kosovo is Serbia and will remain part of Serbia.³⁷ As the US Ambassador to Serbia at that time, Cameron Munter, noticed: 'In 2008 and 2009 they told me so; and I recall thinking that the 2008 vote was a choice for forward-to-Europe Boris [Tadic] vs. back-to-old-Serbia Toma [Nikolic], while the next vote would be Europe vs. Europe. And so it turned out in 2012. Both sides used the EU-and-Kosovo mantra...'³⁸

In the second round of the presidential elections in May 2012 (in the first round no candidate had over 50 percent), Nikolic won or, to be precise, Tadic lost: people voted against Tadic than for Nikolic's political vision.³⁹ It is worth emphasizing a surprising point here; Nikolic won the elections despite his controversial views such as the denial of the Srebrenica genocide.⁴⁰ The unexpected results in the presidential elections turned to be a milestone in Serbia's political life, Dacic justified his decision to support SNS but not DS this time with the reasoning that people chose SNS by electing Nikolic instead of Tadic. He further explained that the international community does not see Nikolic and SNS as anti-European anymore and that the new government does not mean going back to Milosevic's era.⁴¹ The newly elected president, Nikolic, paid his first visit abroad to Russia. Vladimir Putin stressed

that Russians firmly believe that Resolution 1244 must be implemented and expressed satisfaction that trade between Russia and Serbia increased by almost 50 percent in the last year. He concluded by saying that 'Serbia is not only our traditional, highly valued partner in the Balkans; we see Serbs as our spiritual brothers'.⁴² Nevertheless, Nikolic did not use this visit to make closer ties with Russians but rather to send a message to the European officials: 'Serbia is moving towards joining the EU. We will build our nation in accordance with the rules of the European Union. I have not heard that one of the conditions is that we must recognize the independence of Kosovo and Metohija'.⁴³

Nikolic clearly showed that Serbia's choice was to join the EU; equally important, he marked the red line when it comes to the recognition of Kosovo. The President and the new government continued exploiting the politics of 'Kosovo and the EU' although with one difference; this time, the government had really made a concrete move. The technical dialogue signed between Prishtina and Belgrade under EU mediation (known as the Brussels Agreement) has produced valuable compromises, among others – regional cooperation and representation, integrated boundary management, and a promise not to obstruct the other's path to the EU. The importance of the dialogue was twofold - on one hand, it relieves the life of people in Kosovo; on the other hand, it facilitates further political negotiations. The Brussels Agreement and Dacic's attempts to earn cheap political points have launched a new strongman – Aleksandar Vucic. In September 2011, Dacic said: 'Of course they [the EU] will not ask us to recognize Kosovo, but [the EU] will insist on recognition of the elements of statehood. They will ask us to abolish our institutions in northern Kosovo, to recognize customs as if it is a border. What is the difference?'⁴⁴ In March 2012, only two months before the elections, he went even further by saying that 'for 10 years, Kosovo was taboo. No one could officially tell the truth. Tales were told; lies were told that Kosovo is ours'.⁴⁵ In order to understand the real messages, the two statements need to be set in the correct context. The first statement was given when it was evident that Serbia was not going to make compromises in the Brussels negotiations when the new elections were approaching. Dacic relied on patriotic clichés to increase his popularity. He compared relations between Serbia and Kosovo with relations between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo's institutions; he forgot that there is a fine difference between Serbia's rights and the rights of

Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo. From Serbia's perspective the Brussels Agreement is concerned with the rights of Serbs in the province. Obviously, a year later, Dacic recognized the difference and assured citizens that signing the Agreement does not imply recognition.⁴⁶ The second statement that Kosovo is not Serbian was followed with an explanation that 'the Serbian president cannot go to Kosovo, nor the prime minister, nor ministers, nor the police or army. Serbs can only leave Kosovo. That's how much Kosovo is ours and what our constitution and laws mean there.'⁴⁷ The art of this statement is that Dacic successfully sent a message to EU officials that he would cross the red line, but at the same time he softened it by using the ubiquitous cliché 'Kosovo is de facto not part of Serbia' for the domestic audience. In September 2012, several months after the elections, Dacic sent a new message offering a new solution: he claimed that the EU cannot force Serbia to recognize Kosovo, therefore, division of Kosovo is the only possible solution.⁴⁸ While Dacic had continued Tadic's politics between fear and trembling, being feared by his own voters and trembling in front of changes, Vucic has insisted that Kosovo is part of Serbia⁴⁹, reminding Serbs that the Brussels Agreement is not perfect but 'it is the only way for Serbia to survive, to exist and remain united in the search for a path to a better future'.⁵⁰ In the latest elections in April 2016 Vucic and his SNS won an absolute majority in parliament, therefore we can confidently conclude that Serbia is not going to change its position regarding Kosovo and the EU.

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The EU in Kosovo: Time for Status

Following the fact that the case of Kosovo cannot be expected to be solved by facing Serbia with a stark choice 'Kosovo or the EU' and cannot be seen as a unique case, this section explores the third approach – there are still several steps to make before the status becomes of utmost importance. It is my contention that the Brussels Conclusions have shown that even agreements aiming to improve the life of ordinary citizens cannot be fully realized when touching upon sensitive questions. On two occasions so far, the EU saw a very European issue as non-European and allowed others to arrange its own garden thus it is not a surprise that American-Russian relations have resulted in the ignominy of the Brussels administration.

Humiliation

On the 10th June 1999, almost three months after NATO's intervention, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244.⁵¹ The Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led the Kosovo Force (KFOR) missions responsible for ensuring peace catastrophically failed: 230,000 Serbs and Roma immediately fled from Kosovo.⁵² Ironically, UNMIK and KFOR proved to be successful in protecting Serbs as much as the Serbian police were in protecting Albanians. The second wave of violence in March 2004, 'spurred by sensational and ultimately inaccurate reports that Serbs had been responsible for the drowning of three young Albanian children,'⁵³ signaled that UNMIK and KFOR lost their authority in Kosovo. Kofi Annan, at the time the UN Secretary-General, appointed Kai Eide to deliver a report on situation in Kosovo. Eide concluded that the UN 'leverage in Kosovo is diminishing' and the EU 'will have to pay the most prominent role in Kosovo'.⁵⁴ He further stressed the importance of integration of Kosovo and Serbia into European-Atlantic institutions and the necessity of status talks.⁵⁵ It became apparent that Kosovo was a European issue and that the EU had the highest leverage inasmuch both sides had opted for the European path.

The Security Council welcomed this recommendation and decided to 'start a political process to determine Kosovo's Future Status'.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the power was still in the hands of the USA and Russia. Following the Council's recommendation, the Contact Group, composed of the USA, the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, delivered guiding principles for a settlement of the status of Kosovo: *inter alia*, the Group concluded that the future status should conform to European standards and values, while excluding the possibility of returning to the pre-1999 situation.⁵⁷ The Contact Group regularly met Martti Ahtisaari, who was soon afterwards appointed by the UN to oversee the process. He launched direct talks between Prishtina and Belgrade where it became evident that the two sides were not able to find common ground on the status issue.

A year later, Ahtisaari presented the final plan to Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General: besides a comprehensive plan regarding the structures and institutions, Ahtisaari proposed 'provisional independence'.⁵⁸ The UK, the USA, and France endorsed Kosovo's independence while Russia was against imposed solutions and demanded further negotiations. It very soon became apparent that new negotiations needed to be held, therefore the new process, on German suggestion, was

launched under three sides – the USA, the EU, and the Russian Federation. The process was best summarized by Glenny, an expert on South-eastern Europe:

For several months, both Russia and the us have in effect supported the maximalist demands of their chosen proxies in the Balkans: Serbia and Kosovo. This neutered the most recent negotiations of the US-EU-Russia troika, which were a last-ditch attempt to hammer out a compromise between Belgrade and Pristina... Neither side had any incentive to compromise, and the EU was exposed again as incapable of managing a political crisis in its own backyard, while its taxpayers will be compelled to clear up the resulting mess.⁵⁹

The conflict of Kosovo was a forgotten European issue which returned with vengeance as an imminent impediment to the EU's common policy. Instead of taking control over its soil, the EU allowed the USA and Russia to humiliate the Union.⁶⁰ The final act of this humiliation was Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence on 17 February 2008. The EU ended up as an instrument of American and Russian machinations because they took even stronger positions than Albanians and Serbs themselves:⁶¹ as a result the EU was unscrupulously forced into an onerous challenge – to maintain a status neutral mission in Kosovo whilst its members were everything but neutral to Kosovo's status.⁶²

Kosovo as a European Issue

Just a day before the declaration was passed, the EULEX mission (the most ambitious and numerous EU mission outside the EU) had begun. Brussels did not have time to recover from the previous humiliation but already has faced legal chaos and rage of both ethnic groups.

For Kosovo Albanians, the EULEX was supposed to be an organ invited and welcomed to supervise the implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan,⁶³ nevertheless they very soon realized that because the EULEX operates under the UNMIK umbrella, the UNMIK maintains its executive and legislative authority in Kosovo under Resolution 1244. Thus 'circumstances on the ground due to Kosovo's declaration of independence merely limited UNMIK'S operational but not legal capacity.'⁶⁴ The UNMIK, and consequently the EULEX, are not compatible with Kosovo's status as an independent state as 'from the perspective of a Kosovo

constitutional law, UNMIK does not exist as an authority but merely as a historical fact.⁶⁵ This issue has open space for anti-European populism among Kosovo Albanians based on narratives that the EULEX legitimizes Serbia's demands; not only does it not recognize Kosovo's independence but it also exercises unlimited executive power.⁶⁶ This rhetoric came from a group named "Self-determination" (alb. Vetëvendosja), which organized a series of violent events against EULEX's personnel.⁶⁷ On the other hand, for Kosovo Serbs and Serbia, the EULEX cannot be a status-neutral mission as it operates under Resolution 1244, which guarantees Serbia's sovereignty over Kosovo. Furthermore, Kosovo Serbs saw the EULEX mission as a Western attempt to implement the Ahtisaari Plan without the UN Council, and it was no surprise that they reacted by firstly attacking⁶⁸ and then boycotting the international missions in Kosovo.⁶⁹

It was under these circumstances that the EU decided to take an active role and mediate between Kosovo and Serbia. On one side there was the EU, effectively pushed by the UN, and on the other were Kosovo and Serbia, which were driven exclusively by European integration. The result was the technical dialogue which has brought agreements on regional cooperation and representations, integrated border management, regulation of customs steps, return of cadastral records and civil registry, and recognition of university diplomas. The technical dialogue aimed to promote cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia, and to improve the lives of ordinary people.⁷⁰ Even though the agreed conclusions use technical language, they had a spillover effect on sensitive political issues such as the removal of barricades made by Kosovo Serbs and recognition of Prishtina's authority over the north of Kosovo. Undoubtedly, interim options can pave the way for a future solution; nevertheless, the implementation process has demonstrated that utilization of the agreements is a rather difficult task as the question of the status overshadows the process itself. The best illustration is the Agreement on Customs Stamps and Cadaster, which the Constitutional Court of Serbia proclaimed as unconstitutional. Consequently, the 'agreed conclusions' are not ratified by the Serbian parliament and therefore are not binding under international law. In other words, there is no guarantee that these agreements will be obeyed by a Serbian government in the future. If we add that Kosovo's opposition parties have perceived the agreements as harmful to Kosovo's sovereignty⁷¹ and that most of political statements on Kosovo are related to the sta-

tus of Kosovo,⁷² we can confidently conclude that the status is still an all-consuming issue.

To sum up, after the machinations performed by the USA and Russia, the EU was pushed to take responsibility for the conflict and its answer has been rather effective but one should not foster the illusion that reaching the agreements are a means in itself. Put bluntly, not only will full membership in the EU require the question of status to be solved, but even the idea of improving ordinary people's lives cannot prosper without prior settlement of the status.

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Conclusion

The unilateral declaration of independence has opened an interesting paradox. Under the UN administration, Kosovo was universally accepted; however, after the declaration that was no longer the case. At this point, Kosovo has operated under a supervised independence and such 'independence' is not compatible with EU norms. In other words, it seems that the declaration is the noose around the neck of Kosovo Albanians. As Ker-Lindsay and Economides conclude:

There is a good argument to be made that it should have simply continued in this format with indigenous Kosovo institutions gaining more and more authority, thereby replacing UN control in real terms and avoiding the problems that have now arisen. In this regard, the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) has in fact created many more problems than it has solved.⁷³

In the same vein, the declaration has put the Serbian government between two fires. On one hand, the Serbs are aware that the current solution for Kosovo is nothing but recognition which will bring defined borders to the state.⁷⁴ On the other hand, recognition of the situation when the vast majority does not support such a decision would lead to further political instability.

Even though the situation looks demoralizing, there is a grey zone in which a solution can be found. Due to space constraints, let me only indicate the logic of the solution. Instead of merely focusing on Kosovo Albanians – independence and Serbs – sovereignty, we should turn their desire and wishes upside down. From the discussions above, we can see that Kosovo Albanians do not compromise when it comes to their independence regarding Serbia.

Put it differently, they strongly oppose Serbia's authority over the region and strongly advocate their independence from Serbia, nevertheless they obediently accept EU authority. Similarly, Serbia denies Kosovo as a sovereign state but has no illusion that it has lost jurisdiction over the region and again has no problem accepting the EU supervision in Kosovo.

Taking into account what was previously said, the solution has to satisfy the two criteria: (a) Kosovo to be independent from Serbia even if it means that Kosovo is not a sovereign state; (b) Serbia not to recognize Kosovo even if it means that Serbia will lose *de facto* and *de jure* authority over the region. What I have in mind is that Kosovo should acquire a special status within the EU where 28 members of the Union would share sovereignty over the region. Based on the fact that both nations see themselves with a European heritage and future, there is no doubt that European supervision is most welcome: what would further amplify the sense of belonging is that Kosovo should be regarded not merely as a supervised region but as a European patrimony. How does Kosovo as a European patrimony differ from Kosovo as a supervised independence? Kosovo's status would not be contested and Kosovo would be on a fast track to the EU, which is the main carrot for the citizens of Kosovo. In the same vein, losing Kosovo would be a tailwind for Serbia: firstly, that would permanently solve chapter 35, and secondly, joining the EU would automatically mean that Serbia regains authority over the province (although shared with other members).

Finally, finding a solution for the status means that future failures could be addressed to particular institutions. At a moment, Kosovo is in legal chaos: supervised by several civilian missions, peace is provided by NATO, while Kosovo Albanians possess *de facto* institutions of a sovereign state and Serbia claims *de jure* right over the province. Everyone's house is usually no one's house. Such a claim is best illustrated in the series of scandals related to the EULEX mission,⁷⁵ and more importantly in the exodus of young people from Kosovo.⁷⁶ We need to acknowledge the fact that if Europe does not come to Kosovo, Kosovars will come to Europe.



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Kosovo
and Serbia*

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Securitizing Migration, Europeanizing Czechs?

Kristýna Tamchynová

Lately, we have witnessed continuing heightened migration to Europe. Despite this not being a new phenomenon, it has been often described as such. One of the possible explanations for this narrative of exception is that migration is being securitised in order to strengthen the EU, and its identity. The article analyses a specific part of Czech discourse in a key period of May 2015 to May 2016 to analyse whether that is true in the rather EU-sceptic Czech Republic. It argues that rather than a sense of EU-ness, a sense of Europeanness is present in the analysed part of discourse. The article further suggests that the main difference between those two concepts is that while Czechs accept that they belong to Europe and European civilization and they accept the EU as a framework of operating, they still tend to perceive the EU as an 'imposed' political project and that there still exists uncertainty about what the shared values of the common European civilization are. Nevertheless, despite the critics of the Czech attitude towards Europe and the EU specifically, a sense of Europeanness is present in the face of the current 'crisis'.

Keywords: EU, Europeanness, identity, migration, securitization, the Czech Republic, media discourse

In recent years, we have witnessed continuing heightened migration to Europe. In media discourse, this process tends to be depicted as an unprecedented phenomenon threatening the security of European societies. Surprisingly, this is even truer in the case of the Czech Republic, where recent African and Arab migrants are almost non-existent. While the securitisation process is often used as a tactic in the fight for

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political power, it also has an important side effect of strengthening the in-group identity. In other words, for every 'evil other', a 'good we' exists. Some authors, in particular Jef Huysmans, then see the securitisation of migration as a by-product of European integration and see such discourses as possibly strengthening the political unity of the EU.¹

While the article accepts the idea of the sense of unity being born in the face of crisis, namely what is labelled the migration crisis, it questions the idea of political unity, or rather of unified 'EU-identity'. Drawing on further authors dealing with Europeanisation and European identity such as Habermas, della Porta and Caiani, Kantner, Katzenstein and Checkel, and others, the article explores the collective European identity as it appears in Czech media discourse securitizing migration.² This paper specifically uses the case study of the Czech Republic to show whether and how the securitisation of migration may strengthen a notion of Europeanness, even in a country which is otherwise known for its EU-scepticism. The article uses qualitative analysis of selected Czech media sources to show that in writing about the migration crisis, there is indeed a sense of Europeanness present as well as acceptance of the EU as a structure. Yet, in agreement with the theoretical discussion, it proceeds to add that this 'European identity' or sense of 'Europeanness' is very vague and doesn't hinder criticism of the EU as an actor. Being distinct from the 'EU-identity' it therefore does not serve as a basis for legitimizing the EU. Thus, it differs from what I labelled 'EUNESS'. On the other hand, stating that one's position is in Europe allows one to claim the benefits of belonging to the European club with all its privileges.

Securitisation and Europeanisation

Securitisation theory, made famous by Weaver and Buzan,³ was a very innovative concept, bringing constructivist and post-structuralist insights into the realist domain of security studies. It accepts that, to some extent, reality can be constructed and therefore threats are constructed as well.⁴ Those same authors broadened the scope of what could be feared even further when they, within the framework of what later was to be known as the Copenhagen school, introduced new security sectors and stated that there might exist not only military threats, but economic, societal, political and environmental ones as well. The scope of threatened referent objects also broadened, since suddenly it

was not only the physical existence of the state which could be threatened, but also its identity or autonomy.⁵ Yet, Buzan and Weaver were not the only ones making a connection between securitisation and the dimensions of security, since other authors such as Balzacq⁶ developed their concepts even further. In contrast to the well-known military sector and the still tangible economic sector, some sectors of security were a kind of breakthrough in conceptual thinking – especially that of societal security and of identity as a threatened object. This development went hand in hand with new kinds of threat – real or created – being presented by both academicians and politicians. And migration was prominent among those.

Elspeth Guild, drawing from other authors such as Gellner and Bauman, explains that the exclusion of migrants has roots in the change of society according to nationalist lines and also in the economic changes in the society, because now it is mainly the poor migrants who are being excluded as threatening our culture and system.⁷ Her co-authors Bralo and Morrison then add that the tensions in Europe regarding the migrants exist also because of broader problems, not related to migrants as such. Some groups of people feel that they cannot decide on matters which concern them and that the migrants receive more attention than they themselves do.⁸ This explanation strikes close to home in the Czech context, where the securitisation of migration is accompanied by a critique of the EU for providing attention and funds to migrants. That is why there might at the same time exist a sense of Europeanness, while there is also persistent criticism of the EU. Even though the constructed threat unifies the people at some level, they still feel marginalised by specific political decisions.

A further explanation is offered by Didier Bigo, who looks at the process of securitisation of migration and relates it to the sense of insecurity after the end of the Cold War (as did Bralo and Morrison), trying to explain how much of this insecurity was caused by the end of the Cold War and the end of a territorialised enemy.⁹ Similarly, Jef Huysmans takes an even more philosophical look at the securitisation of migration and its relation to the sense of insecurity and in greater detail analyses how the securitisation of migration helps societies to fight what he calls epistemological fear (fear of the unknown). He also proceeds to scrutinise how during the process of securitizing the migration an identity of those ‘in’ facing the challenge is created. He argues that today’s societies live in a state of epistemological fear (fear

of an unknown enemy) and to curb the fear, a more substantial threat is created and a solution offered.¹⁰ As shall be argued, one of the handy 'scapegoats' lately have been migrants.

According to Huysmans, describing the danger a political unit is in serves to draw attention away from its inner problems, creating an image of 'a harmonious unit that only seems to be experiencing conflict, disintegration, or violence if external factors, such as migration, start disrupting it'.¹¹ Huysmans further argues that putting an entity such as the EU within a dangerous environment '...is a peculiar process of constituting a political community of the established that seeks to secure unity and identity by instituting existential insecurity'.¹²

This paper draws on this notion that through securitizing migration and migrants a common identity is created, and that the 'benefit' of strengthening the identity in this way is that it doesn't have to be precisely defined. The article further argues that this is precisely the case of the notion of 'Europeanness' in the Czech context, which is more defined by what it is not, while at the same time some concepts of 'uniformity' are generated.

This is in line with the recent discussions on Europeanisation and European identity as presented by della Porta and Caiani. Della Porta and her co-author analyse the different versions and levels of Europeanisation. One of the very key findings is that while the 'EU' as such was somewhat imposed on people from above, and it is more or less taken for granted by now, the true discussions with people on the content of the given framework have only recently started, thus making room for Europeanisation from below.¹³ These discussions and inner political conflicts are inevitable for creating a common identity, as Kantner explains.¹⁴ Yet, according again to della Porta and Caiani they bring with them both a strong criticism of the EU and its decisions as much as they show that at this point there is hardly any consensus among societies on what the EU or the new European society should look like.¹⁵ Furthermore, Koopmans warns that the debates and the criticism of the EU need to be scrutinized further to ascertain what exactly they mean regarding the scope and aim of the present Europeanisation process.¹⁶

The inner dilemma of the present state of Europeanisation could also be perceived through previous studies by Habermas who distinguishes between '*Staatsbürger*', the citizens who somewhat accept the

political unit they are part of, and the *'Volkgenossen'*. In Habermas's view, *'Volkgenossen* or nationals find themselves formed by the inherited form of life and the fateful experience of a shared history'.¹⁷ According to Habermas, when the state in its modern form first appeared, it needed a source of legitimacy and therefore the sense of nationalism was awakened in the people. Therefore, there exist two distinct 'statuses' or 'identities' – the technical or political one – the *'Staatsbürgerschaft'* and the 'emotional' one based on values and culture – the *'Volksgenossenschaft'*.¹⁸ We might see this as similar to Kantner's distinction between two kinds of qualitative identities: on one hand, the rather rational cooperation of what Kantner calls the *'we-commercium'* group and, on the other hand, the cooperation based on the shared values of *'we-communio'*.¹⁹ This also corresponds with arguments presented by Katzenstein and Checkel. According to them, there are multiple European identities and even the Euro-sceptic one belongs among them. The major distinction is between the identity created as a social process and as a political project.²⁰

This argument is in line with the distinctions made by other authors: Europeanisation from below, as della Porta and Caiani claim, versus the political project (systematically created by those in Brussels or at the national level) of the *Staatsbürgerschaft* waiting for its cultural content, as defined by Habermas.²¹ Fukuyama in this regard states, when talking about European identity, that 'European identity remains something that comes from the head rather than the heart'.²²

Yet, as Kantner and della Porta and Caiani posit, it is exactly in discussions and conflict situations when the collective identity is created,²³ and the migration crisis is exactly such a situation. The analysis of one sector of the Czech discourse presented below seems to conform to this assumption. While at this point there is more or less acceptance of the technical status quo and the EU as a framework to operate within, there is a lack of the *we-communio* or the *Volksgenossenschaft*. However, Europeanisation from below slowly appears in the discussions, although, at this point this identity is very vague, loosely defined, and not very much linked to the EU. Even the politicians themselves have differing views on how the political project of Europe should be conceived and criticise some of the recent actions of the EU. In debates the EU is thus rather the 'criticised other' than the main 'we-group'.

The Czech Case

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The Czech Republic is a very interesting case study for any issue related to possible securitisation of migration. The actual number of recent migrants and refugees from the most discussed areas such as Syria is nearly non-existent, while the media coverage of the issue is thriving and catastrophic scenarios are presented in relation to migration. The contrast between the real situation and that depicted by part of the media is striking. The Czech Republic is also a good example to study whether a sense of Europeanness might be present in the face of crisis – and whether this Europeanness is different to the sense of belonging to the EU, because the Czech Republic tends to be viewed as EU-sceptic.

Before proceeding further to the analysis itself, a few facts about the situation in the Czech Republic should be presented to illustrate the context in which the discourse on migration and the EU reactions takes place. According to the latest *Basic Facts about Migration* published by the Ministry of the Interior, foreign nationals constituted, as of 30 June 2015, 4.3 percent of the Czech population, most of them being from neighbouring countries or from Ukraine, Russia and Vietnam.²⁴ Therefore the ‘new’ Muslim immigrants who are the source of the news comprised only a marginal part of the population.

Although in 2014 the number of asylum seekers rose, according to the same source, by 63.5 percent in comparison to the year 2013, the total number was merely 1156 applications. Other statistical data show the same trend – a rising tendency yet low absolute data.²⁵ Therefore, although the numbers of migrants are rising, the absolute numbers are still hugely irrelevant when compared to a) the situation of countries like Germany or Turkey and b) the size of the Czech population. The continuous presence of migration and migrant-related articles in media shows that attention is brought to the issue on purpose, especially as significant portion of the migrants in the Czech Republic are for example Ukrainians while the news focus mostly on the ‘new’ Arab/Muslim migrants. Sensationalisation of the topic could be one of the reasons why according to the Spring 2016 Eurobarometer survey, 32 percent of respondents in the Czech Republic perceived migration as one of the two most important issues the country faced (immigration ‘won’ over all other problems).²⁶ That is where we can see the strength of the construction of threat – the migrants are not even present and it is to be discussed whether they are threatening at all, yet the people

are persuaded that the threat is real. To achieve this result, it is not only the Czech Republic which is taken as the threatened referent object, but the whole of Europe. In this way also the sense of the Czechs' belonging to Europe is strengthened, as the idea of a common European problem exists there. Yet, sometimes this also supports anti-EU rhetoric in the sense of 'Why should we suffer for what is not our problem?' Here we can clearly see the lack of solidarity with fellow Europeans, showing that other Europeans are still not taken as the Czech 'in-group' per se. That the migration was perceived more as a problem for the EU was visible also in the Eurobarometer survey, where 67 percent of the Czech Republic respondents perceived immigration as one of the two most important issues the EU was facing at the moment (again, the winner over other problems).²⁷

Regarding the Czech attitude towards the EU as such, Czechs are known for their EU-sceptic opinion. The 2016 Eurobarometer statistics show that this is still the case, since 62 percent of Czech respondents do not trust the EU (the EU28 average is 55 percent).²⁸

According to the same Eurobarometer factsheet, 40 percent of Czechs are neutral while 34 percent have a totally negative image of the EU²⁹ – that means the Czechs are more EU sceptic than the average of the EU. The statistics therefore support the idea that there is a base for criticism of the EU, yet as della Porta and Caiani or Katzenstein and Checkel explained, that doesn't mean there cannot be 'Europeanisation' going on³⁰ and that is what the analysis attempted to find out.

Content Analysis of Czech Media Coverage of Migration

Due to the large database of articles related to migration and refugees, the analysis covered the four main Czech journals operating at the national level: *Hospodářské noviny*, *Mladá fronta DNES (MF Dnes)*, *Lidové noviny* and *Právo*, and it focused on their printed versions (although accessed electronically). The Newton database was utilised for text, with a time frame set between 31 May 2015 and 31 May 2016. The reason was to collect a larger number of articles from the recent period which were not connected to a single event, as might be the case with a shorter time range, and which might then be influenced by the nature of that event. Therefore, stories were used from the last year preceding the first draft of this article.

The analysis focuses on the securitisation of migration as a base for creating identity, and the possible creation of European identity is examined only in connection to this. To make the base for analysis broad and covering different aspects of the issue, the key words searched were *migrant* [migrant], *migrace* [migration], and *uprchlík* [refugee]. *Asylum* and *asylum seeker* were left out due to their very specific meaning and connotations. The word *refugee* was included because it is widely applied in the Czech media, sometimes irrespective of its true legal meaning. The Czech media in the beginning had a problem with mixing different migration-related terms and with using them rather haphazardly. The logic operator OR was used allowing for the selection of articles with one or more key words. A full text search was applied. As the analysis was qualitative, not quantitative, the results were sorted by relevance (according to Newton) and the analysis focused on the first 100 articles and more in depth on the first 50. From these, the duplicates and irrelevant articles (such as on the migration of frogs) were deleted and the final overview of the analysed articles is listed in the annex to this article (in alphabetical order).

Firstly, the analysis focused on whether and how the threat is constructed, to analyse whether the community is indeed positioned in a dangerous environment. It further scrutinised what the main arguments used to picture the migrant as a threat are, to ascertain what the main characteristics of the opposing society might be. Based on a preliminary study of the materials, as well as the background literature, the main themes of focus were: the language of flood, wave etc. and the threat by huge numbers (previously examined for example by O. Kaleta³¹) and then notions of migrant(s) as problematic or threatening (as criminals, a burden for the economy, etc.)

Secondly, the analysis focused in more detail on who the community facing the crisis is – and specifically it looked for the representations of Europe and Europeaness in the text to analyse whether there are any notions that hint at a common ‘European identity’ present in the times of crisis as well as on what that identity is grounded. Here one of the prominent themes was a territorial one – Europe as one territorial unit. This corresponded with the first part and the language of flood or onslaught – affecting indiscriminately the whole territory. The analysis further focused on notions of common civilisation and values, and examined the texts to find out whether they specified what those notions are.

Thirdly, the analysis proceeded to scrutinise the difference between the sense of Europeanness examined in step two and the attitude towards the EU, to explore whether there is the before-mentioned difference between the EU as a political project, somewhat imposed on the people, and Europeanisation from below. Here the analysis explored the moments in the discourse where the EU has been positioned as the 'other' rather than as the frame for the 'in-group'.

Is There a Threat?

According to the above-mentioned literature, the first step for strengthening unity is to position the community in a threatening environment. Therefore, firstly it is analysed whether and how the migrants are positioned as a danger in the chosen Czech media.³²

The Wave, Flood and Numbers

As other authors analysed before,³³ the popular terms in addressing the incoming migrants to create a sense of danger in the host society are 'flood', 'wave' or 'onslaught', a typical example from the analysed media being the title 'A migration wave is rolling towards Europe',³⁴ suggesting the apocalyptic vision of Europe being submerged and destroyed. The idea of a 'wave' is especially popular in the Czech media.

Another popular theme is to use the force of statistics or just to make remarks on vast numbers of migrants coming such as 'Taking into account that the numbers of migrants started to rise massively only half a year ago, it is thus not clear how many asylum seekers will settle in Europe for good'.³⁵ Implications that the system will just not be able to cope with such unexpectedly high numbers of people are added: 'While Europe ponders over what to do with tens of thousands of refugees which roll onto it from the impoverished countries of Africa and the Middle East, one of the biggest immigration waves of this year has been detected at the South-Eastern coasts during the weekend'.³⁶ In both cases, the main message is that migration in its current form is something very powerful, out of one's control. This way, the feeling of insecurity and fear takes ground.

Now, danger is created. The image of wave or flood is also a useful tool in supporting the mutual solidarity as it is a threat common for all parts of Europe, for the wave does not choose which part of the

continent it hits. It indiscriminately destroys. This imagery enables the writers to include the Czech Republic (which if we speak about rational decisions of refugees is at the very bottom of the list of desired destinations, as the numbers of asylum seekers showed) in the securitizing discourse.

In this first step, the epistemological fear of the unknown, as Huysmans calls it, is turned into objectified fear – a serious threat is presented.³⁷ Huysmans further proceeds by stating that the process of inclusion and exclusion follows.³⁸ Therefore, after presenting the threat coarsely, the characteristics that distinguish ‘them’ - the migrants - from ‘us’ (whatever the ‘us’ may be at that moment) are explored. By elaborating on the dangerous characteristics of ‘the excluded them’, we may elaborate on what are the characteristics of those included.

The Threatening Migrant

To intensify the fear and the need of common defence, the migrants tend to be depicted as a *security threat*. Examples are presented to prove the claim that the migrants do not deserve pity, as they are criminals such as the quote: ‘Is it possible to identify with this beaten man [refers to the beaten man from the Biblical *Parable of the Good Samaritan* ... note of the author] also Ahmed H., who was captured in Hungary with nine passports?’³⁹

The motive of the migrants being sexual abusers is present, too, for example in the quote: ‘Is Germany really managing it, when women are being raped in the refugee centres? Is Britain coping, when police in middle-sized city tolerate for eleven years that youngsters are being raped because the police fears being labelled as racist?’⁴⁰ or in the quote ‘Now more than half of Germans doubt that their country can cope with the problems related to the migration crisis, as the new survey made for ARD television showed. This survey was the first after the New-Year’s Eve scandal with sexual assaults on women in the centre of Cologne.’⁴¹ Sometimes simply the rise in criminality due to migrants is implied. For example in the headline ‘Germany: Migration raised criminality.’⁴² Furthermore, links to illegality (being smuggled, illegal organisation involvement, etc.) are stressed. This way an objectified threat, the dangerous migrant, coming to breach the law is presented and therefore it is implied that the ‘area of justice and freedom’ is threatened.

Another dimension is that of economy and welfare. We can find the mentions of the distinction between the refugee and the economic migrant, such as 'She [Angelina Jolie] said that it is necessary to maintain the distinction between refugees and economic migrants',⁴³ but there are also statements about migrants misusing the welfare system such as 'If the refugees do not want to work here, we cannot solve the situation by letting the ghettos grow, not integrating people into society, but giving benefits instead. The Nordic countries, where the welfare system is the most generous, now admit that some of the migrants misuse their system.'⁴⁴ Those more optimistic at least disagree with the argument that more workers bring an economic boost. Yet, the term 'economic migrant' is at the top of the argument – thus denying arriving migrants our pity or compassion, as they come 'only for economic gains'.

It is precisely this idea of the welfare state which is embedded in the perception of life in Europe.⁴⁵ It is perceived as something special, nowadays being in danger – yet a benefit envied by many, therefore a privilege to protect. The notion of threat to our income is a specifically sensitive issue in the Czech Republic. Therefore it is stressed, how much money is given – especially by the EU – for different migrant/refugee related causes. As Bralo and Morrison suggested, the migrant is hated because (s)he at least receives attention or some support, while the communities at the periphery do not get even that.⁴⁶ An example of the economy related discourse is 'Billions of euros for helping Africa, for financing refugee camps in Turkey and other countries should, according to the European Commission, together with a plan for the return of economic migrants to 'safe countries', be a remedy for the unprecedented wave of refugees which has hit the European Union in the last few weeks.'⁴⁷

All in all, the migration is, as Huysmans writes, reified as 'a force which endangers the good life in west European societies'⁴⁸ and we can broaden that to life in European societies. Yet, it is a question of what the good life is and what the characteristics of the societies are. That is where the *cultural distinctiveness* of migrants comes to play a role. The cultural distinctiveness of migrants is mentioned in the Czech discourse (and the religion plays part in that). The fact that they are culturally distinct and hard to integrate is a very important part of the discourse, because by stressing the fact that they are different we imply who we are, that there is in fact some common culture among us –

whatever that 'us' is for this moment – and what 'our' values are. We also stress the distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Examples of such discourse are 'However, for the majority of citizens they [migrants] represent a security threat, the citizens are afraid of them [migrants], many because the migrants threaten their life-style and their standard of life',⁴⁹ or 'The German party AfD, which is with 11 percent of preferences the third strongest party of our western neighbours, warns against the change of traditional European society',⁵⁰ or 'Citizens may be more worried by the fear that the migrants come from a culturally different environment and that they will not want to integrate into Europe, rather than by the payments they receive, as examples from Belgium and France show',⁵¹

At this point, we can also comment on what the threatened community is. It can be noticed that it is integrating into Europe which is mentioned, as well as traditional European society, yet closer specification regarding what that means is not provided, with one exception being religion. Religion is sometimes stressed in regard to cultural distinctiveness.

The reasons might be twofold. The first is the mental link people make between Islam and terrorism, which is sometimes even mentioned multiple times. The second is that keeping the 'us-them' logic in mind, defining the other by religion means also defining ourselves like this. If they are Muslims it means that we stress the religion-related side of our own identity, the Christian-related values, yet this is another trait typical for the all-European identity which is said to rest on Christian values. Again, some examples of the religion-based discourse could be 'Most of the Czechs link the word refugee with fear and, among the various worries, that of the spread of Islam clearly dominates.

That is what arises from the STEM agency survey conducted among 925 respondents, published yesterday',⁵² or 'On their web page, the group [Soldiers of Odin...Finnish extremist group, note of author] claims that they protect Finns against "Muslim intruders"',⁵³ or 'Muslims prevail among the migrants. Most of them are ready to spread Islam. According to intelligence services some should even organise terrorist acts',⁵⁴ or "I do not like the idea that Islamic migrants will want to change European culture, our values", reasoned Mrs. Jana as an explanation for why she attended the demonstration'.⁵⁵ It is then interesting to note that an ordinary citizen (Ms. Jana) says 'change Euro-

pean culture, our values.’⁵⁶ This suggests that the idea of some common European culture might pertain in the face of crisis to the ‘broader’ society.

Who Are ‘We’?

As the previous part of the analysis showed, through media discourse the community is presented as being in a dangerous environment. The image of numerous migrants who are culturally distinct, hard to integrate, misusing the welfare systems while threatening the common way of life is presented. In the face of this crisis a notion of some common European ‘we’ appears. Yet, what is the ‘we’ that figures there? Who exactly is the community which existence is threatened? And if there is really a European identity, which characteristics does it pose, given that Katzenstein and Checkel suggested that there might be many different European identities?⁵⁷

The Continent of Europe, the Space of the EU, the European Whole

This community is a community of shared territory, which is an important part of the discourse. As della Porta and Caiani quoting Anderson explain, ‘territorial dimension will appear as strictly intertwined with various identities’.⁵⁸ For Kantner, shared territory is one attribute according to which we can label people as belonging to one group. It is part of the so called ‘*numerical identification*’ – which means a statement that a group of people share some objective criteria by which they can be described.⁵⁹ But this does not tell us anything about whether the bearer of such identification truly feels as if they are a member of the group. Nevertheless, shared numerical identifications might be, according to Kantner, a good start for the collective identity to appear.⁶⁰

In the analysed articles, the sense of unity is very much based on the territorial argument. It is the continent of Europe that the migrants are heading to such as in the quotes: ‘...which limits the migration to Europe... Madrid strives for refugees not to get to Europe...’⁶¹ or ‘Ankara will again send the refugees to Europe’.⁶²

Furthermore, this shared territory is put into dangerous environment, as the logic of securitization dictates. What more, it is faced with the terms wave, flood, and onslaught: ‘How are those hundreds of thousands of migrants from Africa, which left for Europe different...’⁶³

or 'A migration wave is rolling towards Europe [title]'.⁶⁴ The image of wave is used as it both dehumanizes the migrants and unifies those facing them, as the wave hits the whole European territory indiscriminately. This way the sense of 'we are all in the same boat' is created, the weaker of the two kinds of qualitative collective identities defined by Kantner as '*we-commercium*'⁶⁵, and it takes root due to the concept of the borderless united territory under threat. The concept of shared borderless territory echoes especially strong in the Czech Republic where 84 percent of Czech respondents of Eurobarometer survey agree with the free movement of citizens (this statement 'winning' over all others offered such as common defence and security policy, common migration policy and etc. and plus EU28 average was 79 percent),⁶⁶ so the possibility of free movement is felt as a strong benefit.

When analysing the emerging European identity, we can therefore state that there is agreement on the existence of a shared European territory, yet who are the people residing there? What values do they have in common, if any? While there is also a sense of the shared civilisation being in danger, what this shared civilisation is remains rather unclear.

European Civilisation

We move now from the domain of the 'objective factors' such as territory to the domain of value sharing. There are, so far, not precisely defined common values shared by the group (maybe with the exception of Christianity). It is exactly at this point when identity loses its contours. This is in accordance with Huysmans who points out that the 'benefit' of creating an identity through securitizing is that one doesn't need to be precise about its attributes.⁶⁷ Even in the previous section the quotes spoke about 'culture' or civilisation more broadly, without hinting more specifically what it consists of. We can further read quotes such as: 'It [the performance of Grey People] wanted to say to the spectators, that these grey people, the refugees, have their place in European civilisation',⁶⁸ or further articles such as Rašek's (who sticks out from the collection of articles as a harsh migration critic fond of catastrophic scenarios), stating 'We cannot forever overlook the argument that we were not able to achieve it [integration] with Roma people, even though they have been in contact with European civilisation

for six hundred years',⁶⁹ or 'Some politicians, analysts and commentators are even afraid, due to our friendliness, of the Islamisation of Europe and of the perishing of our civilisation'.⁷⁰

One exception to that might be the idea of 'welfare' and the economic dimension. For example there is the statement that 'The European welfare state is based on the help for the economically weakest members of the society by redistributing the social wealth'.⁷¹ This quote hints at the welfare system as one of the core elements of modern European culture, and this is also in line of presenting migrant as an economic threat as shown in the previous section; nevertheless, this is still only one part of the whole picture. More details on what the shared culture and values are still missing. Furthermore, as visible from the quotes, the felt commonness is related to Europe rather than the EU. But is there really a difference?

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The EU as 'Us' or the EU as the 'Other'

So far the article has argued that migration is genuinely securitised and that the sense of commonness takes root in the process. In addition, it tried to defend the suggestion that this commonness might have the features of Europeaness, a vague sense of shared civilization resting on more specific knowledge of shared territory. This allows claiming the benefits of being European – linking 'us' to the developed civilisation, welfare provisions, history, Christian values. However, this does not in any way prevent criticism of the EU and its decisions. This is also somewhat mirrored in the discourse of some of the prominent Czech politicians. While they use migration to criticise the EU and score points on the home front, which is as statistics showed rather EU-sceptic, these same politicians never imply leaving the EU – they only suggest its alterations. Even in part of daily media discourse as the analysis above showed, there is a sense of belonging to Europe. Even in the EU-sceptic Czech Republic, a sense of common European identity exists, at least in part of the discourse.

The argument is nicely summed up in the article by Rašek: 'Too much is at stake, Schengen and the EU. Even though we are increasingly dissatisfied with how it functions, and this crisis very clearly showed it, can a disintegrated Europe, crumbled into fifty independent states, face the confrontation with the Islamic world, China, Russia and the

competition of the USA?⁷² Thus we might say that the EU as a technical framework of operation was therefore accepted, that the *Staatsbürgerschaft* is there, yet there is lack of agreement over how it should operate.

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What seems to be lacking further so far is the acceptance of shared values or rather their definition, the *Volksgenossenschaft* as described by Habermas⁷³, or the *we-communio* according to Kantner⁷⁴. The thing that has to be therefore kept in mind is the difference between the European identity as political project being imposed and that of social process taking place naturally.⁷⁵

EU as the Other

The strongest argument for a division of the European identity as an imposed project vs social process from below is that there are still several examples of the EU being perceived as ‘the other’ rather than as the frame for the ‘in-group’.

Firstly, when speaking about the EU, the term Brussels is used in a sense of an actively (and independently) acting ‘person’. That the actions of the Union are attributed to the personalised centre, which is geographically distant from the Czech Republic shows the felt distinction between ‘us’ on the one side and the other actor – the Brussels – on the other. Short examples are ‘assess the expert the proposal by Brussels’⁷⁶ or ‘... for what [strengthening borders of the EU] Brussels wants to relocate over 15 billion CZK in the next year’⁷⁷ or ‘However different our opinion on the refugee quota is, Brussels is not interested at all’.⁷⁸ The discourse practice of showing the EU as an actor, a kind of person which acts on its own, is multiple, even without the ‘Brussels’ metaphor. The sentences do not read ‘we decided to do’ or ‘it was decided that...’ but rather ‘the EU did that and that’ or more specifically: ‘The EU missed the starting point. Yet, it cannot be blamed for inaction’⁷⁹ or ‘The Union pledged to...’⁸⁰ and many other examples.

Secondly, far from the discourse showing common action, there is the specific part of the discourse criticizing the fact that the EU doesn’t listen to ‘us’ as seen in the quote ‘However different our opinion on the refugee quota is, Brussels is not interested at all’.⁸¹ There are further examples of that such as ‘If the Czech government declares that it refuses to let Brussels dictate the quotas for refugees (rightfully, in my opinion), but that it instead wants to help in the places where the

people come from, it has now a great opportunity to prove it with its actions'.⁸² The term 'dictated' from or by Brussels illustrates quite nicely the 'us' (Czech Republic) and 'them' (EU) position, which is common for the refugee quota case.

Therefore despite the sense of Europeanness, the EU is still to a certain degree taken as the other to be argued with, leading to vocal criticism of different EU actions and positioning against Brussels, as the Czechs try to find their place within this framework of operation. The dichotomy is mirrored also at the political level. While on one hand some of the politicians criticise the present EU, its form, shape or actions and they try to win points at home by 'protecting' independent Czech interests and its position, on the other hand they are painfully aware of the need for European cooperation.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the migration in at least a segment of Czech discourse is, indeed, described as a threat. The migrants are depicted as illegals, criminals, and economic migrants not needing help but instead coming to endanger our culture, which is so different to theirs that they cannot be integrated into it. They come pouring to Europe, flooding in as a wave. The threat is portrayed as a threat to the whole of Europe and its values. The territory endangered is therefore the whole of Europe and the community put into dangerous environment is 'European'.

The vague sense of Europeanness is present in the analysed Czech discourse, mainly resting on these territorial arguments of one continent and one space. There are also notes on common European culture and civilisation, although those are very broad, without specifying what the precise characteristics are. This is in line with Huysmans' argument that the threats are good in the process of creating identity as this doesn't have to be described as it exists in opposition to what threatens it.⁸³

Throughout the discourse we can therefore trace the distinction between what Habermas calls the *Staatsbürgerschaft* and the *Volksgenossenschaft*.⁸⁴ While the EU as a political framework is at this point accepted, the values and culture filling this framework are points of contention. The EU tends to be criticized for specific actions or even presented as an independently acting 'other' rather than part of the

'we-group'. This way the benefits of belonging to the European club can be claimed, while the EU-sceptic part of the public is appeased. Yet despite the Czechs being perceived as EU-sceptic and the politicians and media themselves being EU-critical, there is, at least in these 'times of crisis' a sense of Europeanness, of the Czech Republic belonging to Europe and Czechs to European civilisation. Whether and how this vague sense of Europeanness will converge with the more specific political sense of EU-ness remains a question for the years to come.



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Annex I: Overview of the analysed media articles

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3. ČTK, and MF Dnes (2015), 'Město nepovolilo demonstraci pro migraci – je plno,' *MF Dnes*, 16 July.
4. Oldřich Danda (2015), 'Zeman: S migranty přichází i teroristé,' *Právo*, 25 November.
5. Dan Drápal (2015), 'Církev a migrace,' *Lidové Noviny*, 25 September.
6. Michal Dvořák (2016), 'Odpůrci migrace zablokovali hraniční přechod na Cínovci,' *MF Dnes*, 11 April.
7. Jan Gazdík and Marek Hudema (2016), 'Problém s uprchlíky teprve přijde,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 29 January.
8. Hospodářské noviny (2016), 'Berlín: Počet migrantů v lednu opět stoupl,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 03 February.
9. Hospodářské noviny (2015), 'Česko letos nepočítá s převzetím migrantů z EU,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 10 November.
10. Hospodářské noviny (2016), 'Do EU nejezděte, vyzval Tusk ekonomické migranty,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 04 March.

11. Hospodářské noviny (2015), 'Fico využívá téma migrace v předvolební kampani,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 13 November.
12. Hospodářské noviny (2016), 'Na jihu utonulo 340 dětí migrantů. Za půl roku,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 22 February.
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14. Hospodářské noviny (2016), 'Studie: Česko dokáže přijmout 80 tisíc migrantů,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 12 May.
15. Hospodářské noviny (2016), 'V otázce migrace nabízí Varšava ústupky Londýnu,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 04 January.
16. Hospodářské noviny, and ČTK (2015), 'Fico souhlasí s přijetím uprchlíků,' *Hospodářské noviny a ČTK*, 18 June.
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18. Housková, Silvie (2016), 'Z Evropy mizí důvěra ve společné řešení migrace,' *Hospodářské noviny*, 22 January.
19. Miroslav Hradil (2016), 'Odborníci probírají rizika migrace,' *Právo*, 12 May.
20. Blahoslav Hruška (2015), 'Češi pro EU vyslýchají migranty,' *Lidové noviny*, 13 June.
21. Blahoslav Hruška (2015), 'Češi se bojí víc islámu než migrace,' *Lidové noviny*, 07 November.
22. Blahoslav Hruška (2016), 'Turci přijali uprchlíky s porozuměním,' *Lidové noviny*, 10 May.
23. Blahoslav Hruška (2016), 'Zimní přestávku migrace nezná,' *Lidové noviny*, 04 January.
24. Lukáš Jelínek (2015), 'Hledá se ideální uprchlík,' *Právo*, 18 July.
25. Martin Jurečka (2016), 'Další vábničky pro migranty,' *Právo*, 14 January.
26. Michaela Kabátová (2015), 'Migrant, uprchlík, nebo azylant?' *Lidové noviny*, 28 December.
27. Pan Ki-Mun (2016), 'Uprchlíci a migranti: krize solidarity,' *Lidové noviny*, 11 May.
28. Václav Klaus (2015), 'Migrace a pomýlení Evropané,' *MF DNES*, 11 September.
29. Marie Königová (2016), 'Česko daruje 150 miliónů kvůli migraci,' *Právo*, 06 April.
30. Štěpán Kučera (2016), 'Jsem vlastně taky uprchlík,' *Právo*, 18 February.
31. Tomáš Lébr (2015), 'První zastřelený uprchlík zahýbal i summitem EU,' *MF Dnes*, 17 October.
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36. Lidové noviny (2015), 'Do Evropy dorazilo 1 005 504 migrantů,' *Lidové noviny*, 23 December.
37. Lidové noviny (2015), 'Mělo by se o efektech migrace mluvit?' *Lidové noviny*, 05 October.
38. Lidové noviny (2015), 'NE kvótám pro uprchlíky.' *Lidové noviny*, 19 June.
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41. Lidové noviny (2015), 'Strach z migrantů tu živí politici.' *Lidové noviny*, 07 November.
42. Alois Löser (2016), 'Tváří v tvář migraci překonejme strach,' *Lidové noviny*, 07 March.
43. Jan Macháček (2016), 'Dopady migrace? Odborníci jsou zdrženliví,' *Lidové noviny*, 22 January.
44. Jan Martinek (2016), 'Klaus: Eurobossům se migrace hodí,' *Právo*, 16 April.
45. Judita Matyášová (2015), 'Historie migrantů se opakuje,' *Lidové noviny*, 05 December.
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47. MF Dnes (2015), 'Konzulka končí. Prodávala čluny migrantům,' *MF Dnes*, 14 September.
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50. MF Dnes (2015), 'Příliv migrantů do Řecka je stále mohutný,' *MF Dnes*, 19 December.
51. MF Dnes and ČTK (2016), 'Tři čtvrtiny Pražanů nechťejí uprchlíky,' *MF Dnes*, 05 April.
52. Ivana Milenkovičová (2015), 'Do Evropy už připlul milion migrantů,' *Lidové Noviny*, 23 December.
53. Lucie Němečková (2016), 'Literatura na vlnách migrace,' *Lidové noviny*, 07 May.

54. Pavel Nováček (2015), 'Migrace a rozvoj - spojité nádoby,' *Lidové noviny*, 07 July.
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56. Luboš Palata (2015), 'EU dá miliardy na zastavení migrace,' *MF Dnes*, 24 September.
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59. Jiří Pehe (2016), 'Migrace je u nás riskantní volební téma,' *Právo*, 25 May.
60. Petr Pietraš (2015). 'Migranti mění německou demokracii,' *Lidové noviny*, 28 November.
61. Radek Plavecký (2016). 'Kraj plánuje cvičení na migranty,' *Právo*, 02 February.
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63. *Právo* (2016), 'Bránil ženu, migrant ho zbil,' *Právo*, 03 February.
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66. *Právo* (2016), 'Kraj cvičil na příchod migrantů,' *Právo*, 13 April.
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69. *Právo* (2016), 'Několik stovek kritiků migrace zablokovalo tři hraniční přechody,' *Právo*, 11 April.
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78. Právo (2016), 'Tusk k ekonomické migraci: Nejezděte!' *Právo*, 04 March.
79. Právo (2016), 'Vídeň: Migranty přímo do Německa!' *Právo*, 03 March.
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Normalization of U.S.–Cuban Relations

The End of the ‘Wet Foot, Dry Foot’ Policy – the End of the Cold War?

Lucia Argüellová

After the 1959 triumph of Cuban revolution and before the 2017 U.S. policy change that ended the preferential treatment of Cuban arrivals, the U.S. approach to Cuban migrants and refugees reflected U.S. foreign policy goals locked into the Cold War mind-set. This article argues that over a five-decade-long hostility and the subsequent normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations played a crucial role in the push-pull framework of Cuban exodus. It interprets the U.S. open-door policy favouring Cuban immigrants as an inherent component of the U.S.-Cuba policy that has sought to destabilize Cuba. This article also asks whether the U.S.-Cuban rapprochement and the 2017 policy change could signal the end of the Cold War between the two historical foes.

Keywords: Cuba, United States, migration, foreign policy, Cold War

Introduction

When in January 2017—just a few days before the end of his second presidential term—President Obama announced the end of the so-called ‘wet foot, dry foot’ policy, which popularly served as a synonym to preferential treatment of Cuban arrivals in the United States, prospective Cuban emigrants as well as Cubans waiting for entry at the

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U.S.-Mexican border felt a significant dose of resentment. Until this historic decision, the 'wet foot, dry foot' rule of 1996 was implemented in tandem with provisions of the Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA) of 1966, a law enacted in times of Cold War animosity, allowing most of the undocumented Cubans to become legal permanent residents (LPRs) in the United States. Although the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy slightly narrowed the open-door character of the CAA after the 1994-95 Cuban migration wave, the U.S. immigration policy remained benevolent to Cubans for another two decades, as opposed to other foreign-born immigrants. Such treatment of Cuban arrivals was related to specific goals of U.S. foreign policy and thus did not follow otherwise protectionist immigration laws.

As a consequence of this long-lasting approach, the estimate derived from the 2010 census crossed for the first time the imaginary line of one million foreign-born Hispanics of Cuban origin in the United States,¹ a population that corresponded to about 10 percent of Cubans living on the island at that time. Likewise, well over half a million of Cuba-born arrivals have become LPRs² since the turn of the century and over one and half million Cubans left the island between 1960 and 2016.³

Under the 'wet foot, dry foot' rule, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) granted parole to Cubans based solely on their nationality, which automatically gave them the opportunity to apply for permanent residence and welfare benefits. This is no longer the case after Obama's policy change. Nowadays, Cuban nationals who enter the United States without inspection or valid permit cannot benefit from the CAA and thus face similar barriers as any other foreign national arriving to the United States without prior authorization.

The CAA, as a key element of the Cuba-specific immigration policy, has roots in traditionally antagonistic U.S.-Cuba relations and the anti-Communist positioning of the United States during the Cold War era. Originally, the CAA was enacted by the Johnson administration (1963-69) due to the influx of Cuban migrants to the United States, which followed after the 1959 triumph of Cuban revolution and after the unsuccessful attempts by the Eisenhower (1953-61) and Kennedy administrations (1961-63) to destabilize and overthrow the Castro regime. The anti-Communist policy underlying the preferential treatment of Cuban immigrants, who were accepted in the United States

as refugees fleeing Castro's Cuba, also inspired the language of the U.S. immigration law, i.e. the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which was created in 1952 and amended many times over the years. Importantly, this public law classifies, among other things, aliens ineligible for admission. For instance, the ACT 212 of the INA takes into account whether the immigrant 'has been a member of or affiliated with the Communist or any other totalitarian party'.⁴ The presence of this wording in immigration legislation shows that the anti-Communist mind-set has not only shaped U.S. foreign policy after 1959 but also related immigration policy that eventually came to represent another source of pressure on the Cuban government.

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In the Cold War context, U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba is often analysed in terms of U.S. interventionism in Cuba, the economic blockade of the Castro regime and diplomacy. Cuban migration flows and the Cuba-specific U.S. immigration legislation are often discussed within migration studies, that is, as a separate area of interest. However, U.S. immigration and refugee policy that allowed and even motivated many Cubans to leave Cuba is not commonly approached as an intrinsic part of U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba. This article thus seeks to interpret the long-lasting open-door policy of the United States favouring Cuban migrants and refugees as an inherent component of the U.S.-Cuba policy, drawing the parallel between nearly six decades of U.S.-Cuba hostility and Cuban migration flows to the United States that were discouraged only recently. Understanding changes in the U.S. approach toward Cuban arrivals is important especially in light of Obama's efforts to normalize U.S.-Cuban relations that raised hopes for ending the Cold War strategizing of both neighbours that have lasted into the twenty-first century.

Cold War Roots of the U.S. Open-Door Policy

The unpredictable triumph of the Cuban revolution leading to the emergence of a Soviet client state in the 'backyard' of the world's champion of capitalism defined U.S.-Cuban relations during and even after the Cold War. While most of the states started adjusting themselves to the new world order of the 1990s, the U.S. policy toward Cuba was unable to abandon the bipolar mind-set of previous decades. In spite of the fall of the Soviet Union and with Castro still in power, the Bush

administration (1989-93) as well as the Clinton administration (1993-2001) did not downgrade but rather strengthened U.S. policies seeking to instigate a regime change on the island.

About two years after Fidel Castro came to power and Fulgencio Batista fled the island, the new Cuban government proclaimed itself socialist. In the meantime, the outcome of Cuba's nationalist and anti-imperialist revolution—which was only later branded by Castro as a socialist revolution aligned with Marxist-Leninist ideology⁵—started having an impact in the Latin American region. As a consequence, political developments in Latin American states have become increasingly important for both the United States and the Soviet Union that competed for spheres of influence. As an important Third World protagonist of the anti-U.S. sentiment, Cuba inspired proponents of political change across Latin America, which represented a threat to U.S. dominance in the hemisphere. Emerging challenges to U.S. regional hegemony caused by polarization in numerous countries then motivated U.S. counterrevolutionary policies directed at Cuba and the rest of Latin America and Caribbean.

The economic embargo, a U.S.-Cuba policy that would stubbornly outlast the bipolar politics of the Cold War, was originally initiated by the suspension of Cuba's sugar import quota in the U.S. market in July 1960. For the United States, this was 'a tactic that had worked marvellously to bring the island into line in 1933',⁶ relying on the fact that Cuban economy was highly dependent on trade with its closest neighbour. Yet this economic pressure, which indeed had a significant negative impact on Cuba's economy in the upcoming months and decades, failed to reach its objective this time. It rather became part of the mosaic of push-pull factors driving Cuban emigration.

The Eisenhower administration did not only fail to undermine Castro's power, but even had to face expropriation of all U.S.-owned properties. It did not take long for the Cuban people and U.S. policy makers to realize that Castro would bring substantive changes under his emerging authoritarian regime. As pointed out by Portes or Pedraza-Bailey, a changing domestic environment—especially the October 1960 nationalization of industries and reforms fulfilling aims of redistributive policies—represented an important push factor for Cuba's emigrating upper and middle class executives, manufacturers and other professionals.⁷ Nonetheless, the framework of push factors motivating Cuban emigration remains incomplete if it relies on this

relatively narrowed focus of sociologists and migration scholars who study predominantly socio-economic aspects. With the exception of work by Cuba-born U.S. scholar Masud-Piloto, not much attention has been paid in a structured way to the goals of hostile U.S. foreign policy, whose impact on Cuban emigration has been essential.

In 1961 and 1962, the Kennedy administration challenged Castro's Cuba in the military, economic and diplomatic fields, which eventually proved to be counterproductive as it contributed to solidification of Cuba's new anti-imperialist government, enhancing the on-island polarization that came to be one of the push factors of the early-1960s exodus. Besides affirming the economic blockade, President Kennedy also decided to follow his predecessor's plans to sponsor a counter-revolutionary force, whose U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 failed. The so-called 'freedom fighters' that aimed to overthrow Castro were not only defeated because the Kennedy administration in the end resisted an open U.S. military involvement through the air,⁸ but also because 'the revolution retained wide support and could easily crush a much stronger force than had invaded.'⁹ This tough defeat made U.S.-Cuba policy switch to the diplomatic arena, forcing the expulsion of Cuba from the OAS in January 1962. Since the United States remained uncomfortable with even stronger Cuban revolution in the 'backyard', the leadership of the counterrevolutionary movement was increasingly entrusted to the CIA, and joint efforts with the mafia to eliminate Castro continued under the 1961-62 Operation Mongoose.¹⁰ This sequence of threats and attempts to destabilize Cuba led Castro to align Cuban revolution with the political ideology of the Soviet bloc, which was a base for future economic as well as military cooperation. This antagonised already tense U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Cuban relations, escalating to the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

Hostile U.S. foreign policy and its failure to overthrow Castro's regime, as well as Cuba's domestic reforms, contributed to advance the first exodus from revolutionary Cuba. According to Cuban official statistics, almost 200,000 people left the island between 1960 and 1962.¹¹ Interestingly, Pedraza-Bailey explained that the first group of Cuban emigrants that fled even prior to the early-1960s exodus was composed of predominantly political supporters of the previous Batista regime.¹² The 1980 report for U.S. Congress gives further details on the migration of 'close associates of Batista' who left already in 1958 as they were 'the first to leave', adding that these migrants 'were not regarded as

refugees by INS [the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service], and hence are not included in the annual refugee entry figures.¹³ Thus, departure of this group is not reflected in Cuba's 1959 data on migration from and to Cuba, which even shows that more people immigrated to the island than emigrated—with a positive total value of more than 12,000 arrivals—during the first year of Castro in power. The apparent influx in 1959, however, lacks analysis in existing sources on Cuban migration that largely focus on the early 1960s exodus. According to Berrio Sardá, most of the 1959 migrants that arrived to Cuba were Cubans possibly hopeful of Castro's new leadership that had been exiled in Spain, Latin America and the United States during Batista's regime.¹⁴

The unequal treatment of 1958 and post-1959 arrivals signals the first steps towards politicization of the U.S. approach to Cuban immigrants. While Batista's associates might have had more serious reasons to fear Castro, they were not treated in a preferential way as they left before Castro seized power and, maybe more importantly, before the nationalization of U.S. companies and Cuban economic reforms took place. The new approach to Cubans fleeing from the island thus seems to be in line with the Cold War position of the United States, which 'lost no opportunity to evidence its dismay at the losses suffered by U.S. interests'.¹⁵ The relation between U.S. foreign policy goals and the special treatment of Cuban immigrants was pointed out for instance by Masud-Piloto, according to whom 'President Eisenhower initiated an unwritten open-door policy for Cuban refugees to weaken and discredit Castro and the revolution',¹⁶ or by Nackerud and co-authors in 1999, who similarly perceived Eisenhower's 'automatic acceptance' of early 1960s arrivals 'as an element of foreign policy that relied on hard-line resistance to the Cuban regime', explaining that 'the open door policy set a precedent which would sustain the Cuban contradiction as a viable foreign policy based on national interests for the next 35 years'.¹⁷ Nowadays, we know that U.S.-Cuba policy remained in the Cold War realm for much longer: fifty-four years passed between Eisenhower's offensive steps and Obama's push for normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations.

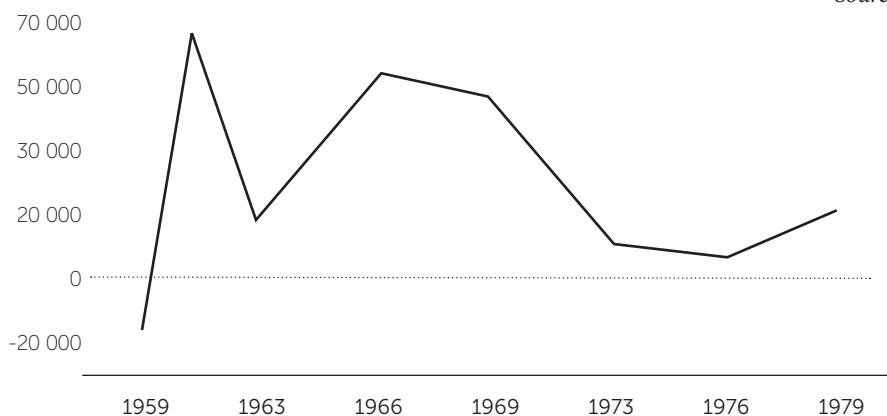
In 1960, more than 62,000 Cubans that were often politically and economically tied to U.S. capital left, hoping for U.S. intervention, Castro's fall and their early return. In 1961 and 1962, over 67,000 and 66,000 Cubans respectively,¹⁸ emigrated as the Cuban economy encountered repeated setbacks and amidst insecure environment de-

fined by the Bay of Pigs invasion, OAS expulsion, CIA operations and the missile crisis. According to U.S. statistics on Cuban arrivals to the United States, most of the early 1960s émigrés—i.e. 153,000 of 200,000 Cubans—arrived during the twelve months of tensions culminating in the Cuban missile crisis.¹⁹ While regime changes and especially revolutions often push people who disagree, fear political persecution or lose power out of their countries, both Castro's reforms and intense involvement of the United States in Cuban affairs represent the two sides of the coin and as such are equally relevant for the structural perspective of the push-pull migration framework, in the case of revolutionary Cuba. If it had not been for U.S. interventionism, the new Castro's regime would not have experienced the same way of consolidation of power, which occurred thanks to the U.S.-enhanced polarization of Cuban population and subsequent success of Castro's anti-imperialist rally around the flag strategy.

After regular flights between Havana and Miami were stopped during the missile crisis in October 1962 and before the Camarioca airlift was initiated in December 1965—allowing for eight years of 'freedom flights' from Varadero to Miami that transported relatives of Cuban émigrés settled in the United States—, Cuba's external migration rate, counted from the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants with respect to average population, was rather low. Thus, no more than 43,000 Cubans left the island between 1963 and 1965.²⁰ In the same period, no major confrontations took place between Cuba and the United States and on the international scene the two Cold War superpowers experienced changes in leadership, leaving U.S. politics in the hands of President Johnson to be balanced by the Soviet bloc under Brezhnev's lead.

Table 1.
Emigration from Cuba
(number of migrants)

Source: ONE



The Camarioca air bridge agreement between the U.S. and Cuban governments gave way to Cuban lengthy yet mass emigration under the Memorandum of Understanding and brought more than 264,000 Cubans to the United States between 1965 and 1973.²¹ This wave was characterized mainly by departure of the lower-middle class, predominantly motivated by family reunion and economic reasons, which resulted in a technical and administrative drain for revolutionary Cuba.

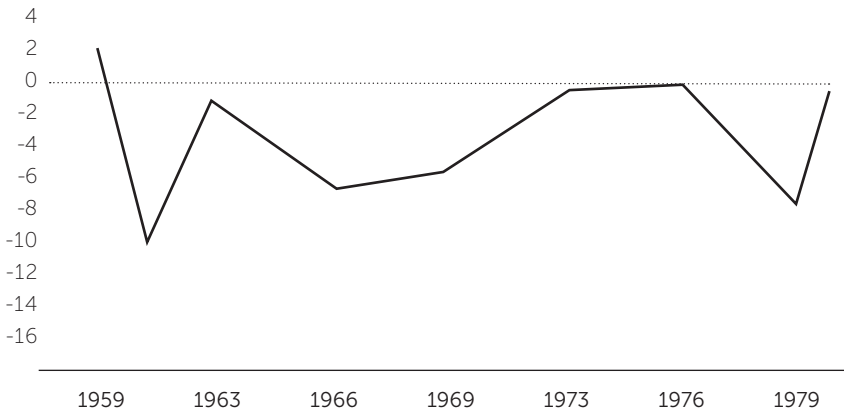
In 1966, the open-door approach to Cuban influx was formalized by the Cuban Adjustment Act, which regularized the status of Cuban immigrants and refugees that were living in the United States with no status since early 1960s and with no plans to return to the island. The original wording of this public law assured that ‘the status of any alien who is a native or citizen of Cuba and who has been inspected and admitted or paroled into the United States subsequent to January 1959 and has been physically present in the United States for at least two years, may be adjusted (...) to that of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence (...).’²² Thus, the CAA was to apply retrospectively to cover all Cuban entries since Castro’s revolutionary triumph and is still in place today, even though in practice Cuban immigrants cannot benefit from its provisions since the January 2017 termination of the ‘wet-foot, dry-foot’ policy.

Throughout past decades, the CAA has been criticised for its political nature and linkages to the historically antagonistic U.S.-Cuba policy. A common critique is that the CAA is ‘obsolete and locked into the mind-set of the Cold War era, as well as unnecessary since Cubans may seek asylum under the refugee laws enacted since 1966.’²³ Nevertheless, most Cubans that emigrated from Cuba during and after the Camarioca airlift would not possibly qualify for traditional refugee status since their motivations were often economic. Indeed, the embargo affecting Cuban economy augmented shortages on the island and ‘pushed’ many Cubans—who increasingly resembled lower classes immigrants from other countries, habitually ‘pulled’ to the United States by attractive economic opportunities—to emigrate, turning Cuban political exile into economic exile.²⁴ The critique of the CAA opposed this preferential treatment given to Cubans whose motivations for emigration were each time less political, as other foreign-born nationals could not enjoy this open-door policy, needing to give proper explanation based on political arguments in order to justify their request for asylum and to eventually benefit from U.S. refugee laws.

Shift from Political to Economic Exile

Cuba's insignificant external migration rate of the second half of 1970s—that is, in times when the U.S. economy suffered recession accompanied by high unemployment and when Cuba's real GDP was growing—increased sharply again in 1980 when Cuba experienced, or rather allowed for, another wave of emigration. Between April and September 1980, 125,000 Cubans departed to the United States from the Mariel port, leaving an unexpected challenge to the Carter administration (1977-81).²⁵ According to Cuban official statistics, in the whole year of 1980, the number of Cubans who emigrated equalled 141,742, which accounts for more departures in only five months that in the previous nine years. This might be to a certain extent linked to economic developments in both countries as after the 1973-75 economic downturn in the United States, Cuba's GDP growth dropped briefly yet significantly into negative values in 1980.

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It is important to note that at that time U.S. policies were led by President Carter who decided not to follow in the footsteps of some of his predecessors that were actively seeking regime change in Cuba and other Latin American countries within the Cold War competition for spheres of influence. Carter's vision of foreign policy rather favoured human rights protection and even sought to halt the tradition of U.S. interventionism in Latin America. It was also during the Carter administration when tensions between the two neighbours eased, bringing about the opening of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana and a Cuban

*Table 2.
External migration rate (per 1000 hab.)*

Source: ONE

diplomatic office in Washington, D.C. In this context, it is clear that 1980 Mariel exodus was not actively ‘pulled’ by U.S. policies seeking to debilitate Castro’s regime. Yet favourable laws giving advantage to Cuban migrants were still in place benefiting most Mariel arrivals, and Cuba’s economic difficulties possibly further motivated Cubans thinking about leaving the island.

The Mariel boatlift was possible thanks to Castro’s decision to let go those who wanted to leave—and also many others whom the Cuban authorities deemed as convenient to leave. Thus, family members of Cubans living in the United States, economic migrants, dissidents, but also common as well as political prisoners or individuals that were treated in Cuba’s mental health institutions left the island in masses. Prior to the Mariel crisis, U.S. open policy to Cuban migrants was widely supported. However, following this significant influx of so-called *Marielitos*, whose arrival to the United States led to noteworthy economic and social challenges (including increased crime rate), the indiscriminate acceptance of Cuban immigrants started changing. In December 1984, the Reagan administration (1981-89) even managed to reach an agreement with the Cuban government, seeking repatriation of 2,746 criminals and mental patients back to Cuba.²⁶ In return, the United States agreed to resume issuance of preference visas for up to 20,000 regular Cuban immigrants per year and admit 3,000 Cuban political prisoners and their families. Already at that time, any dialogue or agreement between the United States and Cuba earned the U.S. administration negative points from those Cuban Americans opposing any political move that would lead to improved relations between the two countries and recognition of Castro’s regime. Luckily for the traditional opposition, Castro suspended the agreement in 1985 after Miami-based Radio Martí—labelled by Cuban official media in 2015 as an “unsuccessful subversive project” launched by Regan’s “aggressive administration”²⁷—began broadcasting to Cuba,²⁸ which demonstrated that the Cold War ideological struggle defining foreign as well as migration policies was still far from over. Indeed, it was the Reagan administration that added Cuba to the lists of state sponsors of terrorism for its support of revolutionary movements abroad.

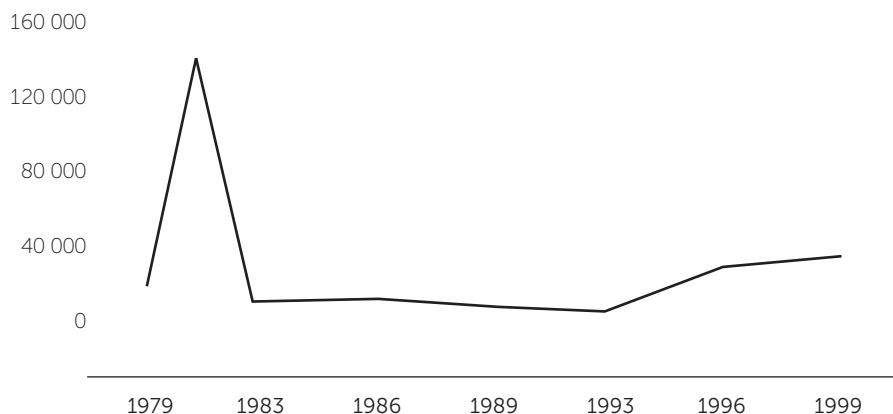
Following the Mariel exodus, Cuba’s external migration rate remained low until the economic crisis of the 1990’s, declared as ‘special period in time of peace’ which followed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These developments left Cuba without its main trad-

ing partner and the United States with a tempting opportunity to strengthen the existing embargo under the enduring Cold War antagonistic rationale, indicating that Washington remained ‘more frozen in time than Havana’,²⁹ which might be the case even nowadays. As a consequence of the Soviet Union collapse, the cooling of relations with Eastern and Central Europe, a stricter economic isolation advanced by the Cuban Democracy Act enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1992 with the aim to weaken or rather overturn the authoritarian character of Castro’s government, and the failures of Cuban economic system characterized by energetic deficit or declining agricultural production, Cubans increasingly struggled to cope with their day-to-day economic battles. Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba’s GDP fell by 35 percent, imports declined by 75 percent, the budget deficit rose to 33 percent of GDP and 85 percent of export and import markets were lost.³⁰

It was also during the 1990s crisis when higher education enrolments begun to decline, hospital infrastructure suffered and inequalities started rising, letting the income share of the poorest 40 percent drop from 23.3 percent to 13.9 percent between 1989 and 1996.³¹ Although Castro tried to prepare the Cuban population for a difficult period well ahead of time, stressing the need to fight for socialism, while arguing against multiparty systems and the market economy, famously proclaiming “Socialism or Death, Marxism-Leninism or Death”,³² the socioeconomic difficulties faced by Cubans—further enhanced by the long-lasting and strengthened embargo sustained by unchanged foreign policy goals of the United States—led to the Balsero crisis that started in 1994 and finally brought about the first revision of the U.S. open-door policy.

*Table 3.
Emigration
from Cuba
(number of
migrants)*

Source: ONE



While the new wave of exodus did not reach the early-1960s or the 1980 levels, the departure of 81,492 Cubans during the 1994-95 Balsero crisis was significant after more than a decade of constantly low emigration.³³ Initially, Castro perceived the new wave of incidents, such as hijacking of vessels or storming of foreign embassies by desperate Cubans, which took place between May and August 1994 and preceded the Balsero exodus, as a result of rumours of another U.S. sponsored boatlift to Miami, accusing the United States of encouraging illegal migration from Cuba.³⁴ However, the Clinton administration seemingly was not interested in 'pulling in' Cubans; his aim rather was to prevent another exodus.

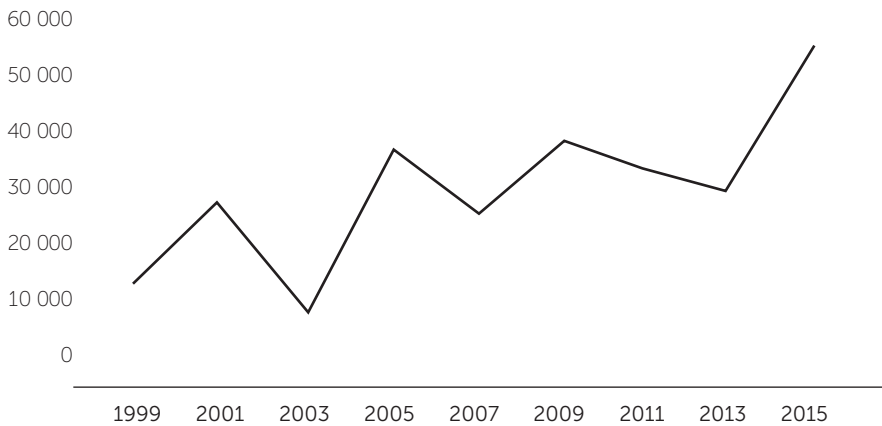
The change of receptive approach toward Cuban arrivals and Clinton's authorization of the interception, detainment and transportation of Cubans fleeing by rafts and boats from the island resulted in growing numbers of Cuban emigrants detained at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay. After a brief involvement of Panama, which agreed to place over 8,600 Cubans in its temporary camps,³⁵ the U.S. administration signed an agreement with the Cuban government in September 1994, which was expected to normalize migration between the two nations as 'the status quo of U.S. policy toward Cuban migrants was altered significantly'.³⁶ Before it became apparent that the new agreement would not put an end to Cuban migration flows to the United States, some anticipated a more consistent U.S. refugee policy and the speedy end of preferential treatment of Cuban immigrants.³⁷ In wake of the 1994 events, the United States decided to start using parole to allow Cubans to immigrate and become LPRS under the CAA. In May 1995, another agreement sought to resolve the situation of 33,000 Cubans detained in Guantanamo Bay, and allowed most of these Cubans to come to the United States through the humanitarian parole provisions of the INA.³⁸ While paroling of Cubans to the United States became a common practice after the 1994-95 exodus, it was possible only for those Cubans reaching U.S. soil, as those intercepted on the sea would be deported. This change in the U.S. approach put certain restrictions on Cuban entries to the United States, but did not discourage Cuban migrants as the road to benefits under the CAA remained open for those who managed to reach U.S. shores or cross to the United States by land, which became increasingly popular and was halted only by the Obama administration in January 2017.

Belated Cold War Termination?

Obama’s Cuba policy received a good deal of both praise and criticism. Since the normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations announced in December 2014 and the establishment of the U.S. embassy in Havana in July 2015, Cuba has come increasingly into the attention of the international community as well as the general public. The U.S. policy toward Cuba started significantly changing direction after more than five decades, which was widely welcomed by the Cuban population as well as international actors, while commonly criticized by a generation of traditional Cuban opposition on the island and in exile.

With the warming of U.S.-Cuba relations, the fears of potential U.S. immigration policy change, possibly affecting preferential treatment of Cubans, spread among prospective Cuban emigrants, leading to a steep rise in Cuban migration to the United States. In the first two months of 2016, U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported 25,806 entries via ports of entry, which is more arrivals than in the whole

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year of 2014 during which 24,277 Cubans entered the United States.³⁹ Throughout the 2016 fiscal year, i.e. between October 2015 and September 2016, the number of Cuban entries rose to 56,406, signalling a 31 percent increase compared to previous fiscal year, during which 43,159 Cubans entered in the same way.⁴⁰ Typically, Cubans entering

*Table 4.
Cubans becoming LPRs in the United States*

Source: DHS

the United States became LPRs about a year later. After Obama's January 2017 announcement, which terminated the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy, Cuban migration flow to the United States significantly diminished. Many prospective emigrants were possibly discouraged from risking an often dangerous journey to reach U.S. soil without having an assured access to residency and work permit. Accordingly, 49 Cubans were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard off the coast of Florida between February and March 2017, compared with 407 in the same period in 2016, and 86 Cubans arrived at ports of entry at the U.S. southern border between February and March 2017 to make credible claims of fear of return to the island, which is significantly less than in the same months of 2016, when 11,895 Cubans sought entry under the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy.⁴¹ Another factor that could have to a limited extent influence Cuban arrivals is the changing political environment in the United States. Particularly, Trump's anti-immigration stance and declining support of some Cuban-American Republicans for the CAA constructed a less favourable ambience for Cuban arrivals even prior to Obama's 2017 announcement. The Miami-Dade County Commission in Florida voted unanimously to ask Congress to revise the CAA in January 2015, when Republican U.S. Representative Carlos Curbelo complained that this 'generous law' was systematically abused,⁴² and U.S. Senator Marco Rubio—one of the most vocal critics of the Castro regime—introduced legislation to the Senate in January 2016 seeking to 'roll back some benefits to Cubans unless they are legitimate political refugees'.⁴³ While the normalization of the U.S.-Cuba relations and the increasing reluctance to keep the CAA privileges alive initially sped Cuban influx to the United States, Obama's termination of the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy, accompanied by change in the historically benevolent attitude to all Cuban arrivals, clearly represents the decisive factor dissuading Cuban emigration. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether this change in the U.S. approach to Cuban migrants could signal fading away of the Cold War tendencies of U.S.-Cuba policy, as hostility between the two neighbours significantly increased after the Trump administration halted rapprochement promoted by the Obama administration.

While the United States started separating its immigration from foreign policy, Cuban leaders came to understand that more open borders, which would give Cubans greater opportunities to travel and even emigrate, increase the possibility of the actual regime perpetuating. Thus,

the Cuban government decided to ease travel restrictions for the first time after almost five decades by the 2013 migration reform, according to which Cubans were no longer required to obtain an exit permit to travel abroad or leave. This decision did not have a major impact on Cuban exodus by itself, but it could have facilitated emigration stimulated by the anticipation of the U.S. open-door policy termination.

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Future migration flows of Cubans might be influenced by new immigration measures, announced in October 2017 by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez. According to Rodríguez, Cubans living abroad will be able to travel to Cuba more freely as of January 1, 2018; they will no longer need a qualification stamp permitting travel to the island, children born abroad to Cuban parents will be able to apply for Cuban citizenship, Cubans who emigrated illegally will be also allowed to visit Cuba and Cuban Americans will newly have the opportunity to travel to Cuba recreationally by boat.⁴⁴ This will possibly lead to greater exchange between the two nations. Yet it is unclear whether there will be any impact on Cuban migration flows. More Cubans might find an easier way to leave the island either illegally by sea, or legally, for instance, through marriage and subsequent family reunion. On the other hand, the Cuban economy and population might benefit from a higher amount of goods and remittances reaching the island, which would weaken traditional economic push factors. Importantly, pull factors bringing Cubans to the United States are no more the same, as preferential access of Cuban migrants to U.S. residency and the labour market ended in January 2017. In some cases, these measures might even motivate some Cubans currently residing abroad to develop businesses in Cuba. Such an influx would bring substantial benefits to Cuba, whose aging population and long-term exodus of young and middle-aged Cubans is at the core of the island's demographic crisis. However, none of this will happen if the Trump administration continues to play the Cold War chess tournament, strategizing to achieve the fall of Cuba's political and economic system, which apparently still corresponds to its foreign policy goals.

In the period of Raúl Castro's expected departure from the presidency in February 2018 and related uncertainties, these immigration measures could rather strengthen the position and even nurture the popularity of Cuban policy makers. While the Trump administration rather seeks to reverse Obama's non-confrontational U.S.-Cuba policy, the Cuban government aims to safeguard further a U.S.-Cuba opening,

having in mind that improved U.S.-Cuban economic relations would aid Cuba's weak economy. At the same time, contemporary Cuban rhetoric intentionally puts Trump's increasingly antagonistic attitude toward Cuba in contrast with Cuba's 'open' approach to the United States. This is in line with Cuba's foreign policy strategy that typically focuses on highlighting flaws of U.S. politics on one hand, and winning hearts and minds in the international political arena on the other one, which is timely especially when U.S.-Cuban relations are experiencing a political and diplomatic crisis caused by mysterious sonic attacks that led the United States to withdraw its embassy staff from Havana and expel two Cuban diplomats from Washington.⁴⁵ As Chaguaceda put it, 'the Cuban political elite wants to portray itself to the world as the open antithesis of a belligerent Donald Trump, in the wake of the crisis generated by the alleged acoustic attacks on diplomats on the island. Above all, Raúl Castro and his heirs need minor allies to sustain their nascent authoritarian capitalism and compensate for the national economic and demographic crisis'.⁴⁶ In November 2017, Cuba's future migration flows are rather unpredictable as well as the general political situation on the island challenged by economic recession stemming from the ticking crisis in Venezuela. At the same time, the exact direction of U.S.-Cuba policy is uncertain as the Trump administration itself and as the U.S.-Cuban relations began rapidly cooling down after about a two-year-long attempt for normalization.

Conclusion

The nearly automatic acceptance of Cuban migrants in the United States has evolved significantly since the 1960s exodus, yet was not halted until U.S. immigration policy was set in line with attempts for normalization of U.S.-Cuban relations. While in the 1960s and 1970s the open-door policy toward Cuban refugees and migrants was a product of rapid Cold War polarization and thus was in line with increasingly hostile U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba, the U.S. administration became less welcoming to Cuban migrants after the 1980 Mariel crisis, which brought a different migration population to the United States than previous waves. In spite of this, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and change of power dynamics on the international scene did not result in significant immigration policy change nor warming up of

relations between the two countries and rather inspired the United States to further deepen Cuba's economic isolation. Nevertheless, this foreign economic policy has been rather short sighted, as it enhanced the 1990s exodus, allowed for the 2010s migration flows and even contributed to the solidification of Castro's regime that learned to use the embargo as the scapegoat for all Cuba's macroeconomic problems. The U.S.-Cuba policy—composed of foreign, economic and migration policies that share identical goals based on a historical anti-Communist stance—thus became increasingly inflexible and mired in the past.

It was in the mid-1990s when a rapprochement between the two Cold War foes was anticipated following the narrowing of preferential treatment of Cuban migrants in the wake of the Balsero crisis. It was in December 2014 when the U.S. and Cuban public welcomed Obama's announcement of expected improvement in U.S.-Cuban relations and in January 2017 when the 'wet foot, dry foot' policy was to consistently follow normalization of relations. However, at the end of 2017, it is unclear whether the Trump administration will entirely retrocede steps taken by previous administration within the normalization process in line with already developed antagonistic rhetoric. In terms of U.S. immigration and refugee policy, it is not expected that the U.S. laws would allow for preferential treatment of Cuban arrivals in the same way as it had been done in the past. However, Cubans can still request asylum as other nationals that fear returning to the country of their origin. It remains a question whether Cubans will be treated differently in this asylum process. While it is certainly not easy anymore for Cuban migrants to install themselves in the United States, the elimination of the 'wet foot, dry foot policy' does not necessarily mean that the bipolar character of U.S.-Cuban relations has faded away. Current tensions, sharp rhetoric of both governments, on-going U.S. control of the naval base in Guantanamo Bay and, importantly, the U.S. embargo (whose distinct aim to affect Cuba's political and economic system) rather prove that the Cold War between the two countries is not yet fully over.



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Book Reviews

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David Held and Charles Roger. *Global Governance at Risk*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2013. ISBN 9780745665252

Global Governance at Risk

Reviewed by Simone Selva

This collection of articles lies at the intersection between disciplines in economics as varied as international political economy, international economics, development studies and the history of economic thought. It is deliberately aimed to pinpoint the unprecedented trouble that global governance is currently muddling through since the great crisis of 2007-08. The assumption on which this collective work is premised over is that the late twentieth-century process of globalization has nurtured and spread across the globe a still unmet demand for increased global governance: within this framework, the historical institutions set up since the end of WWII to enhance and shape international interdependence have proved to be ineffective, whereas we are far from building up a new global governance framework capable of superseding the interests of nation-states.

According to the editors of the book, a variety of complex and multifaceted stumbling blocks hinder both the process of international financial and monetary integration and the construction of a global security system, as well as a stable environmental regime. According to this perspective, in their introduction Held and Roger draw our attention to the multiple means available today to national policy makers across the globe to sidetrack international trade integration and monetary convergence compared to the past, when trade barriers were essentially represented by tariffs and taxes on international trade. Likewise, they point to the intricacy of problems that multi-centered world political systems posit in terms of international security and ecological stability. The rampant ascendancy of new economic powers on the world economic stage, such as China and India, trigger inter-

state instability in Asia and global tensions between the East and West, whereas the development of former least developed countries make much-needed worldwide agreements on gas emission reduction and other measures to protect the environment nothing but fruitless and vain. In contrast to this multifaceted approach to the issue of global governance that integrates economic and financial problems with matters of international security and environmental sustainability by the editors, the book's chapters are all focused on different aspects of governing and resurrecting the process of international monetary, financial and trade integration, along with the collateral problems of industrial hiving off and restructuring of the manufacturing production chain in light of the effects of the Great Crash on the world scale. Therefore, in essence this work is a collection of essays on the state of international economic institutions and Western powers in light of the recent ascendancy of new nations, most notably China, and of macroeconomic dynamics that anticipated and followed the 2008 crisis. This research trajectory is quite consistently pursued through a comparison between the present and the Great Depression of 1929, but little space is left for any comparison between the current global economic disorder and similar problems that arose within the framework of the economic downturn of the 1970s.

The centerpiece of the analysis is that the historical shift in manufacturing production and wealth from Western countries to the Asian continent that has occurred from the late 1980s through to the eve of the financial crisis and continued from 2012 to 2016 is the long-term cause for the acceleration of industrial and financial globalization at the end of the last century and the following economic downturn. Consistent with this analysis, some authors make the argument that the crucial effects of the 2008 financial crisis have been a staggering deterioration in balance of payments by Western countries that, prior to it, enjoyed a stable and orderly current account equilibrium. Wolf's contribution set the path for this analysis in making the argument that the process of catching up in wage levels between some developing countries and most advanced industrial economies registered since the last quarter of the twentieth-century has prompted the Western world's manufacturing system to curb real wages to keep up its competitive edge in world trade markets: this triggered first a deflationary spiral in the West and then an inflationary upsurge on a world scale. Such great global convergence and the decline in the competitive edge

of Western economies lie at the origins of a historical shift in investments from the equity and stock markets as well as the public debt into real assets that caused the early twentieth-century real estate market bubble. In order to cope with the resulting downward sloping current account deficit and in order to reshuffle the supply side, most advanced economies struck to fiscal tightening, increased foreign borrowing and suffered from a plummeting public debt (pp. 20-28). In his chapter on the analytical contribution of intellectuals like Marx, Hobson and Keynes to the reasons that hindered investments, consumption and wages, Skidelsky stresses both the Keynesian argument of under-investment relative to saving as the key node to understanding a structural economic and financial crisis, and the role of financial intermediaries in striking the balance between the supply side and aggregate demand in order to account for the downfall of the real economy that followed the two-fold historical shift in investments at the turn of the last century and the collapse of giant financial institutions in 2007-08 (pp. 154-168). Wolf tackles a number of consequences that stemmed from such widespread fiscal restraints in the West to counteract disinvestments and capital flight from Western economies: among others, it is worth noting a stunning decline in the contribution of the advanced industrial economies to development assistance programs to the least developed countries (p. 24). Both Chang in his chapter on the changing concept of development, and Wade in his assessment on the ways in which the Western powers have recently striven to retain control of the commanding heights of the international economy, focus attention on the repositioning of developing and former developing countries within the architecture of contemporary global economic relations. According to Magnus, although differentials in growth rates and export rates between the West and new world powers have dwarfed, there is an increasingly unmanageable growing gap in terms of wealth and standard of living both within the West and between countries like China and some developing countries. Within this framework, Wade argues, in light of their growing economic might, the institutions of Bretton Woods are recalcitrant to make way for increasing quotas and voting power for these new world powers so much so that they oppose UN developmental agencies and other development programs and institutions.

Though most authors refer to many countries, they all consider China the real issue in order to reshape global economic governance. In

particular, in his contribution on the current world monetary order, Cohen focuses on the Chinese manipulation of foreign exchange rates in order to sustain Chinese export, increase foreign currency reserves, and hold down the value of the Yuan in foreign exchange markets: an exchange rate policy that in his view accounts for the largely unsuccessful IMF surveillance mandate (pp. 37-38). Likewise, the authors question in many respects the foreseeable capability of China to lead the United States in world markets: Magnus argues that in order to sustain its recent economic expansion, the Chinese economy should modernize its manufacturing system and increase the technological content of its productions in order to perform Total Factor Productivity Growth (p. 54). According to Magnus, the Chinese monetary and exchange rate policy prevent foreign central banks from holding the Yuan on reserves, thus hindering the ascendancy of China on world monetary and economic leadership (pp. 72-73). On the other hand, according to Wade the unfinished commitment of Western powers to rule the institutions of Bretton Woods and the UN organizations revolves around their shared economic and political fear of the rising power of Beijing (p. 105).

The interpretative path of the book follows well-established economic and historical literature on the end of the great divergence as the fundamental economic cleavage of our times. In delving into it, the authors of this book rightfully stress a number of key components through recurrent comparisons between 1929 and 2008. Some of these issues should be explored further in order to increase our understanding of the international economy and its governance. Among others, it is crucial to understand the role of financial intermediaries in laying such historical shifts from productive investments to capital assets; likewise, the role of former developing countries and the new powers within the Bretton Woods institutions deserves better attention. Through a comparison between the global economic effects of the 2007-2008 financial crisis and the crisis that churned the world economic system during the 1970s, it would be possible to track some antecedents to today's problems of governance.

Cillian McBride. *Recognition*. Cambridge. UK: Polity Press 2013.
ISBN 9780745648484

Recognition

Reviewed by Tanya Narozhna

Recognition is central to constructing, maintaining and realizing one's personhood. It affects who we are, where we stand in relation to others, what kind of beliefs we form, which institutions we support, and how we act in the world. In this carefully researched and thought provoking book, Cillian McBride delves deep into complex, dynamic, and often antagonistic relations of recognition and misrecognition and underscores the importance of a struggle for recognition in shaping various aspects of modern life, from inter-personal relations to interactions with social and political institutions. Following extensive critical engagement with existing literature on recognition, McBride develops an 'interactive' account of recognition that links social norms with individual moral agency and sensitivity to recognition of others, while keeping analytical focus on the issues of power and authority inherent in recognitive relations (Ch. 5).

A good portion of the book is devoted to a systematic critique of recognition scholarship. McBride observes, correctly, that the existing literature has been dominated by two distinct approaches, both of which reject the atomist view of self-sufficient individuals, and embrace instead 'Hegel's vision of human beings as essentially social creatures, whose capacity for freedom is inextricably linked to the norms and institutions of their particular communities' (p. 3). The first one, heavily influenced by the ideas of Charles Taylor, directs analytical attention to the predicament of cultural minorities, whose distinct identities are not recognized by the wider society. Importantly, this account brings to light the fundamental tension between demands for universal equality and demands to recognize cultural particularity (Ch. 1). On the downside, however, this approach blends the politics

of recognition with multiculturalism (p. 9), eclipsing demands for recognition based on non-cultural identities, including gender, sex, age, etc. The second approach that shapes much of current thinking on recognition is inspired by the Critical Theory tradition, especially the works of Axel Honneth, who sees 'the modern world as the product of a series of struggles for recognition' (p. 2) and is interested in unearthing 'the conditions under which individuals develop their capacities for self-determination and self-realization' (p. 2).

Both approaches underline the harms done by misrecognition, shaping prevalent thinking about recognition in terms of the 'recognition deficit' logic, i.e., 'the minority cultural group feels that its achievements are not adequately recognized by the dominant cultural group, and seeks that the dominant group correct this misrecognition' (p. 35). Effectively, more recognition is proposed as an ethically and politically appropriate solution to the problem of misrecognition. The 'recognition deficit' model truncates the complexity of recognitive relations by turning a blind eye to the potentially oppressive character of particular recognition, the unequal power relations that underpin concrete recognitive relations (pp. 35-39), the importance of individual moral agency in endorsing or rejecting the authority claims of others, and the relationship between recognition and social justice (Ch. 4). These blind spots become the primary building blocks in McBride's own 'interactionist' account of recognition (Ch. 5).

McBride develops his 'interactionist' account explicitly in contrast to Honneth's 'developmental' approach to recognition. The latter views recognition as essential for the achievement of autonomy and self-realization, i.e., personhood. On this view, once our conception of self has been formed, recognition 'becomes redundant' (p. 139). McBride clearly disagrees. To demonstrate the ongoing centrality of recognition in 'the *exercise* of our capacity for knowledge and action' (p. 141), McBride illuminates the importance of normativity in social life and its connection to recognition, arguing that our thoughts and actions are deemed recognizable as long as they can be interpreted in terms of authoritative social norms (p. 148). Social actors are 'guided, but not determined, by social norms' (p. 157). Moral agency is, thus, developed and sustained as we learn to navigate the normative field, in which multiple normative demands are made upon us, and recognize the authority of those who project these claims, or refuse to do so. This idea has far-reaching implications, for it shows clearly that in

an ethically plural modern world we can never reach a consensus on how to interpret infinite normative demands or who the authoritative interpreters are. In this sense, there can be no end to the struggles for recognition.

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While McBride's 'interactionist' account fills in critical lacunas in the current discussions on recognition, especially the relationship between recognition and social justice, the role of individual agency, and the place of authority in the struggle for recognition, it comes too late in the book and could benefit from further elaboration. It encourages the reader to think about moral agency, authority and recognition sensitivity in highly contextual ways but it is not clear from this account what factors determine the extent to which we are 'guided, but not determined, by social norms.'

Despite this shortcoming, the book is a must read for students in social sciences and readers outside academia with interest in the role of recognition in social and political life.